

Melbourne Postcard [XL] an iridescent surface draped over central pier

situation.
Melbourne Docklands, the ongoing renewal of the city's previously industrial waterfront into a 'world-class' mixed-use precinct, is the largest construction project in Australia and is expected to reach completion around 2020. At its heart is Central Pier, a site which, owing to its prominent position, has inevitably attracted copious interest and debate about its immanent potential as a location for a landmark building or a cultural space emblematic of Melbourne. Everyone seems to want something done there and have their own ideas about what it should be! Perhaps the most sensible suggestion made so far however, is that it takes years to formulate the direction and garner the collective will necessary to create an iconic project of genuine value. Accordingly, the following proposal limits its self to the interim development of the pier.

proposal.
The urban skyline image or 'bird's eye view' of a city has become a readily marketable representation of the contemporary metropolis, appearing for instance on postcards and television studio backgrounds. If we examine aerial photographs of Melbourne we find that, much like the experience of walking the city, there is no singular focus such as a building or bridge. Rather, each image is an ensemble of key elements: parks or green recreation spaces in the foreground, the vibrant downtown in the background, and sports and cultural hubs in-between.

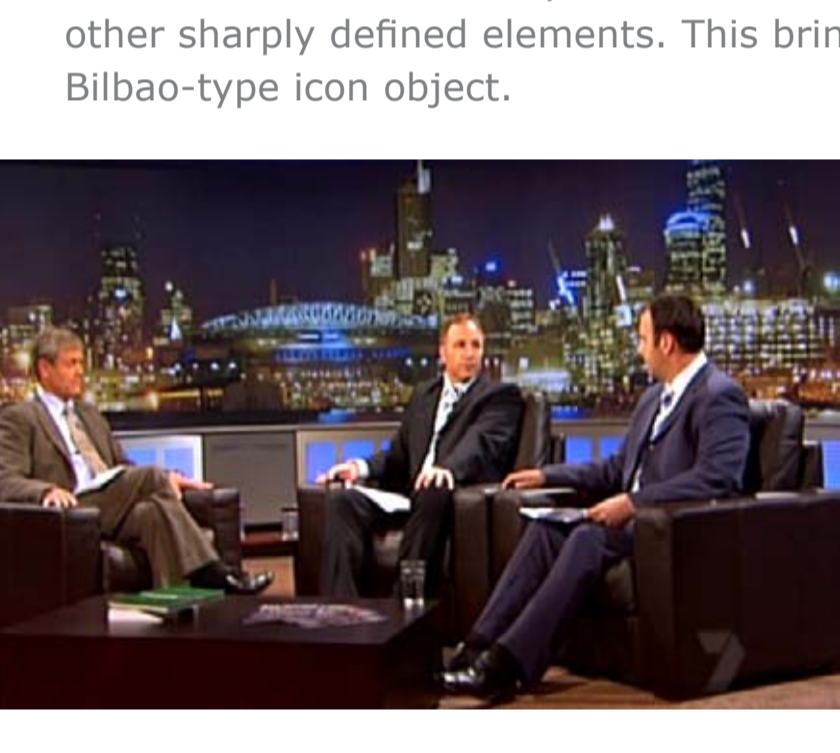
In line with this interpretation, Victoria Harbour can be conceived as a 'blue park', an open area that allows for various forms of recreational use (and indeed it is similar in size to the other parks around the CBD). On this basis, Central Pier can potentially be read as a focal point for recreational and leisure experiences. Simultaneously, the opportunity for aerial scenography could be capitalised on by overlaying the pier surface with a large-scale 'urban screen', complementing the colossal form of Docklands Stadium. This might attain a similar or even greater iconic value than a physical building would have. On the other hand, the screen would have very little presence in eye level views. This is not undesirable as the site lacks a neutral background - a condition of urban framing that is essential to the success of an icon project.

also see
THE BOOK
in the cafe

continues
next-door...

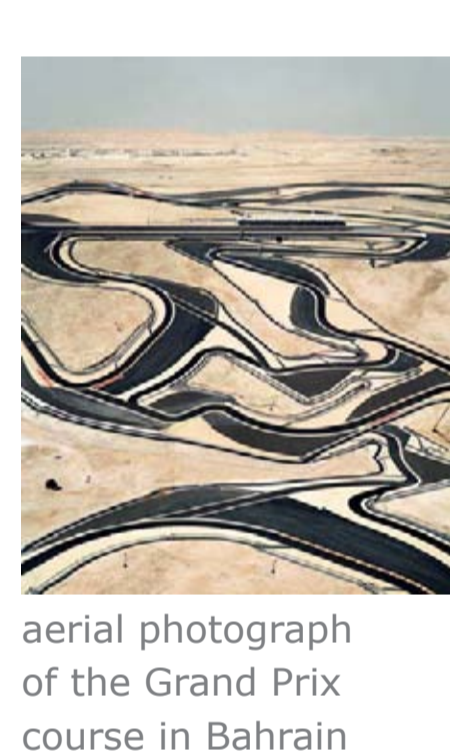


While the Sydney Opera House is projected out at the end of a peninsula - putting it at some distance from the visual clutter of the Sydney CBD, Central Pier is surrounded on all sides by a dense assemblage of buildings, boats, wharfs and other sharply defined elements. This brings into question it's suitability for a Bilbao-type icon object.



The aerial view of the Docklands basin with Central Pier, the Stadium, and the CBD skyline behind is already very popular for TV studio backgrounds.

postcards of
Shanghai and
Chicago



aerial photograph
of the Grand Prix
course in Bahrain
by Andreas Gursky



from all key directions the aerial view of the city is made up by:

- 1 park/green recreation space
- 2 sports/events venues
- 3 CBD/urban areas

