



Asia Centre, University of Melbourne, Victoria

The University of Melbourne is located in a prime, leafy, cosmopolitan area within walking distance of the centre of the city. Along one of its principal boundaries, Swanston Street, the University has raised its profile by placing public cultural institutions and entries into the campus. The Sidney Myer Asia Centre is a new academic, cultural and business centre. A scrappy car park was cleared to make way for the building designed by Nation Fender Katsalidis. It reinforces the University's presence on the street and creates a gateway. A major sculptural wall in rusted Cor-ten by the late Akio Makigawa signals the Centre and also entry to the campus.

Tract's landscape design transforms the original car park from an expanse of bitumen into a stylised garden setting that evokes the calm order and serenity of Asian gardens. The focal point of the space is the linear water feature framing an elevated lemon-scented lawn and defining a bluestone pathway leading into the courtyard from Swanston Street. A gently rippling reflection pond flows through a bluestone trough into a lower pond. A line of black bamboo frames the courtyard lawn and creates a green veil to the lecture theatres overlooking it.