IBP Awards 2019: Editorial Brand of the Year – The RIBA Journal

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**Design**

We relaunched the RIBA Journal in January 2019 with a new “Big J” cover design by Linda Byrne of graphic design firm Alphabetical Order. Linda’s design evolves the previous identity created in 2012 by Matt Willey, now of the New York Times Magazine among much else. The “J” becomes the logo for the RIBA Journal but does much more than that.

This was the most radical of the design options put forward. We chose it because such a supergraphic can be used in a variety of ways: solid colour, ghosted out over a full-bleed cover image, used in outline only, or with the cover image entirely contained within it.

We also chose it because it is highly distinctive and flexible. It allows for surprise and delight and clearly distinguishes the Journal from its rivals in the field. It has been very well received by our 28,405 readers (ABC certified) and by our editorial panel drawn from RIBA members around the country and overseas.

Over the course of the year to date we have used the cover design in several ways: here we select three different treatments from our February, July and August issues with appropriate editorial content from each.

**Multi-platform content**

The RIBA Journal is the members’ journal for the Royal Institute of British Architects which by long and honourable tradition has an independent editorial voice. It operates on a commercial basis, financed predominantly by advertising and sponsorship.

Today it is a multi-platform enterprise operating a digital-first policy: [www.ribaj.com](http://www.ribaj.com) (itself redesigned in late 2018) also carries extra online-only content, especially cultural reviews and technical material for architects and others in the built environment. Online it is updated daily with fresh stories: the monthly print journal is conceived as a desirable object in itself, divided into three sections mirroring our readers’ interests: “Buildings”, “Intelligence” and “Culture”. The head and the heart. Extra material appears bi-monthly in our Products in Practice supplement which is again editorially-driven.

We run our own free-to-enter annual awards including the [MacEwen Award](https://www.ribaj.com/macewen) for buildings and places of strong social usefulness; the [Eye Line Award](https://www.ribaj.com/eyeline) and exhibition for the best in architectural drawing; and our [Rising Stars Award](https://www.ribaj.com/risingstars) which identifies the up-and-coming talent in architecture and associated fields.

We organise live events (Rising Stars and Eye Line again, plus a series of [industry technical seminars](https://www.ribaj.com/events/office-developments-seminar-presentation) under the aegis of our bimonthly supplement Products in Practice or PiP)

And in July 2019 we inaugurated a series of podcasts [RIBAJ Meets](https://www.ribaj.com/meets/ribaj-podcast-simpsonhaugh-caruso-st-john-waugh-thistleton), informal and revealing interviews with leading practitioners in architecture.

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**Material entered for IBP Awards 2019**

We present three “mini-magazines” comprising the covers and selected content from our February, July and August 2019 issues.

**February:** our MacEwen Award issue (“Big J” cover at its most minimal, enfolding a colourful architectural drawing). Editorial content is three of the winning projects around the country visited by different writers, only one of which is a conventional all-new building.

**July:** selected for its variety of content and design (“Big J” here translucent over full-bleed image of the new Cambridge Mosque). Articles include an exclusive look at a very unusual new museum in industrial northern France; the remarkable new Cambridge Mosque appraised by a member of that faith; and a pdf taken from ribaj.com of our [RIBAJ Meets podcast series](https://www.ribaj.com/meets/ribaj-podcast-simpsonhaugh-caruso-st-john-waugh-thistleton), launched that month.

**August:**  An unusual issue. The cover is of our annual Eye Line drawing award, with one of our most colourful and elaborate winning entries contained entirely within the “Big J”. The editorial content submitted, however, is entirely different: a trio of reports from Hong Kong.

We visited Hong Kong – home to the largest community of RIBA members outside the UK – as the anti-government protests were starting. The articles are: an overview of how the former colony is developing in its key areas with our own photos; a profile of emerging Irish architects/academics Superposition, based there and working in Hong Kong University and rural China; and interviews with the key Western practices based there. It was a thoroughly eye-opening visit which we felt merited this special coverage.

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