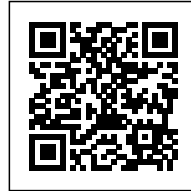




## THE BROOK: BARELY TOUCHING THE GROUND

*Posted on July 20, 2021 by martabuges*



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This house is positioned along the Moyne River in Rosebrook. It sits in a paddock on top of a disused gasometer among the ruins of an old flour mill. Because it is next to a river, this site experiences heavy flooding. It has historical and cultural significance to the Gunditjmarra people so we wanted to barely touch the ground it stands on. When the building is moved again it will look as if it were never there.



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The staircase and landing at the entrance is recycled. We found the concrete slabs in a paddock outside our factory. We also scrounged metal mesh from an abandoned pig shed; it allows you to scrape your dirty boots before entering the house through the pivot door.



The double height gives the lounge an additional sense of space. The lower section is encased by steel glass windows and pivot doors. Copper and ply louvers run horizontally along the glass, giving the opportunity to hide the flywire but coax the south-westerly winds of Port Fairy to travel

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diagonally out through the bedroom windows upstairs in the summer. The living room floor floats above the kitchen to create bench seating at the dining room table and provides an enormous storage area hidden below your feet, masked by salvaged ironbark floorboards.



The kitchen is rough and compact. Materials were chosen to contrast each other: harsh textures and subtle colors. Concrete, galvanized steel and bluestone sit against smooth surfaces; oranges in the spotted gum, blue grey, olive green and glass. Our sliding door closes off the bathroom but reveals hidden storage with steel mesh shelving. The door handle is greeted at the other wall by a hanging utensil rack. The dish rack is enclosed behind cupboard doors over the sink. The table, made with

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recycled hardwood, has a subtle hinged top for access and space. Furniture designer Michael Gittings produced chairs that reflected the external skin of the building by using woven copper.



The staircase at the kitchen bench can be moved out of the way by turning the wheel by the entrance. This turning mechanism engages with the house frame during transport but operates the staircase during occupation. The curve of the balustrade is purely ergonomic: it runs along a track with chains, folding out of the way.

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Our office is a split level. The mezzanine floor becomes a seat for the study and the desk becomes the guardrail. It's a small space, but it feels large given it shares the height of the lounge. The essentials are present – storage, seating, workspace. The desk is recycled hardwood with a steel border and piano hinge for easy access. There is currently a cactus growing through the desk, of course. The bookcase/storage behind forms the wall of the bedroom.

The bedroom has everything you would expect: a wardrobe and cupboard, bedside lighting and shelves. Drawers underneath the bed for more clothing or storage. The windows are less expected. Small frames on either side create picture-like compositions of the outside world. The wide, low window at your feet encourages you to sink into bed and enjoy the view.

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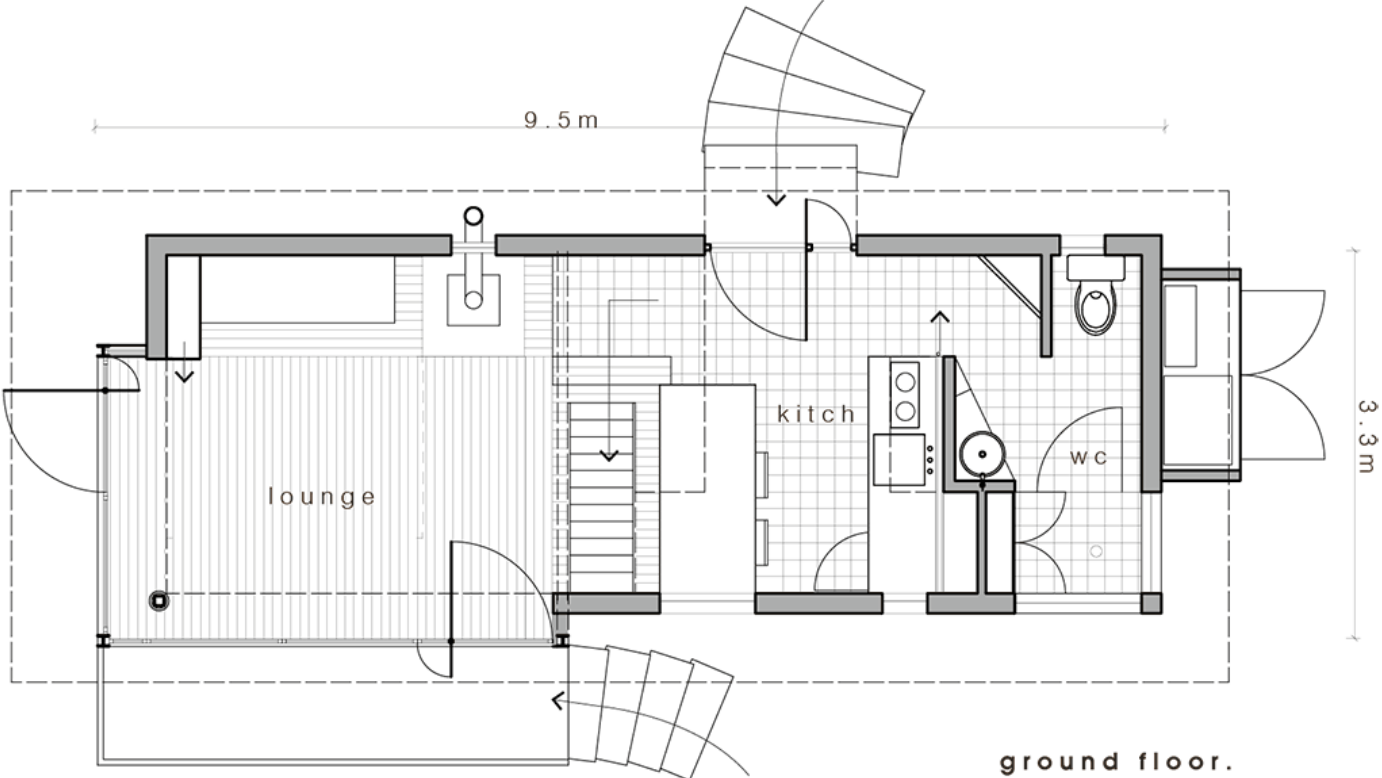
Rather than making a light and airy space with the obvious size constraints, we instead chose dark and luxurious textures. Comprised of volcanic cobblestones, exposed copper pipes and a slatted timber ceiling, this room is intended to feel more like a sauna than a home bathroom. The windows again celebrate different parts of the landscape. The long rectangular window is positioned to be viewed from the toilet. Windows in the shower can be closed with wooden shutters for the shy, but while open it feels as though you are almost showering outdoors.

The house is completely off-grid, with a water tank, solar system and compostable toilet.

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