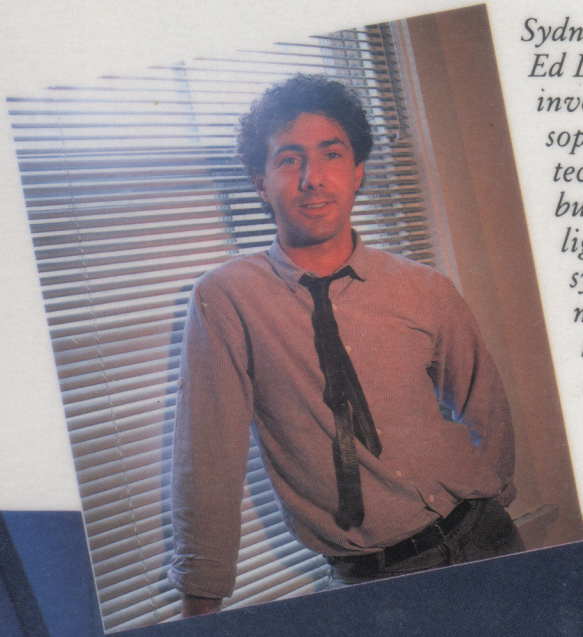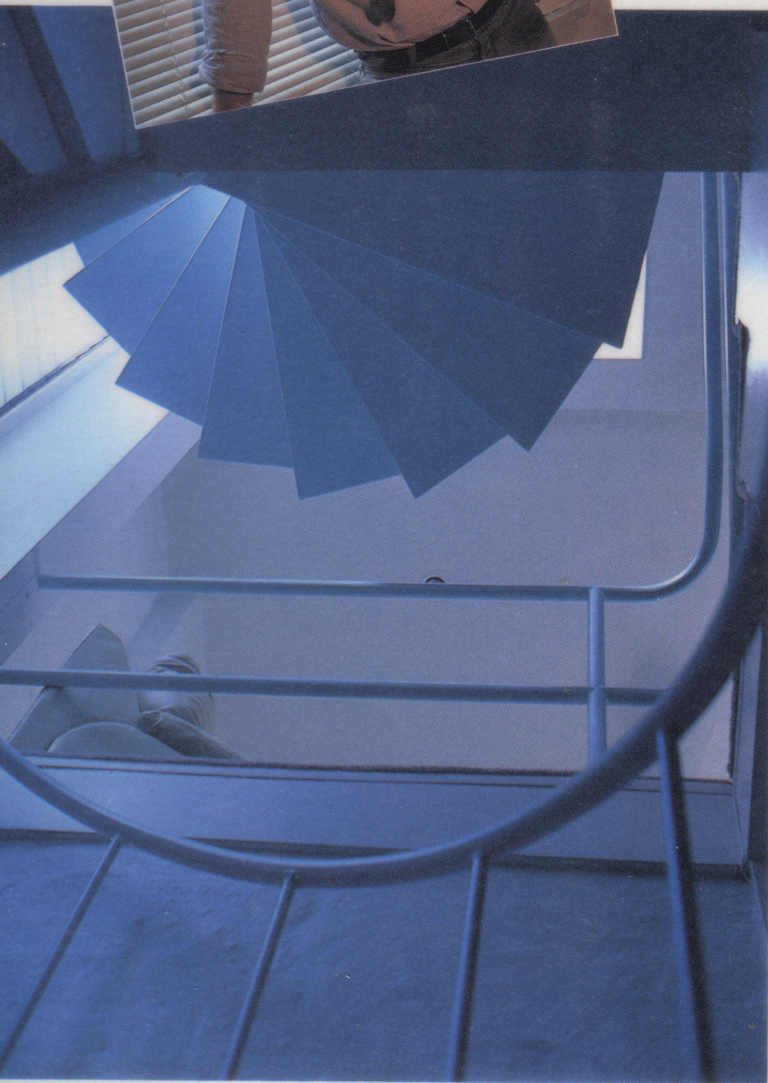# HIGH-TECH LIVING

Sydney architect Ed Lippmann is involved with sophisticated techniques in building and lightweight synthetic materials for high-tech design.
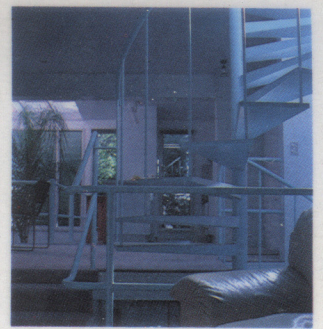
"I'm excited about high-tech architecture because it answers our needs and reflects a positive view of the age we live in," says Sydney architect Ed Lippmann.

While many of his peers are looking back for inspiration, Ed is looking ahead. "I'm developing new solutions to old problems. High-tech architecture is based on rational planning; sophisticated building techniques and lightweight, synthetic materials such as steel, plastics and glass. It strives towards new futuristic forms rather than to the regressive styles of the past."

Flexible floorplans and moveable walls are part of Ed's plan for the ideal Australian house: "Australians want buildings that are comfortable, yet adaptable to their changing, modern lifestyle. We don't want to be encumbered by heavy, monumental enclosures of timber and brick," says Ed.

Having recently spent time in Europe and New York, Ed believes "we're a very extroverted nation; Australians like to feel they're outside, they don't like feeling enclosed. A direct contrast to the UK and Europe where people like to feel cocooned safely inside.

"People have turned back to traditional forms as a reaction against the sterility of modernism. I feel something will emerge that blends both. You can't ever abandon the human element, even if trying to gain a mechanical, high-tech expression. No one wants to live in a steel box."

One way he softens the streamlined look is through the sensitive use of light and colour. His concern is to model space, to maximise light; so he treats the walls and ceiling as individual surfaces, "planes of colour". He may use up to four or five tones of blue and green ("the palest tints") in one room. Yet the change in tone is so subtle, it works — and makes you question the old idea of walls in one colour, ceiling in another.

Through such imagination and his fresh, innovative design approach, Ed is aiming to "create more interesting spatial dimensions, making the most of light and space. A minimal approach, simple, not sterile.

"We're beyond the colonial mentality," says Ed. "We're living in a modern world with modern needs. High-tech architecture is a product of our time." JL.

"You can't ever abandon the human element, even if trying to gain a mechanical high-tech expression."

PAUL CLARKE ED LIPPMANN