

## EDITORIAL: MOVING FORWARD

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In the life of any journal or a research periodical the first volume is the most difficult, the toughest. In essence, a journal attempts to position itself in the academic circles in a distinctive manner which is not an easy task. This issue of Archnet-IJAR marks an important milestone that is completing its first cycle or like some of my colleagues would name "passing the test successfully." Simply, it marks the completion of the first volume.

More and more people from both the academic and the professional communities are expressing interest in the journal and in contributing review articles, position and research papers. This is evident in the wide spectrum of contributions this third issue witnesses. Strikingly, these contributions are coming from distinguished scholars and practitioners throughout the world. One can state confidently that the first volume is covered by articles from every corner of the globe. The first issue marked contributions from Brazil, Singapore, the Middle East, United Kingdom, and United States. The second issue involved contributions from North America, the Arab World, Europe, Africa, and India. This issue completes the cycle and includes contributions

from Australia, Kenya, Nigeria, Malaysia, the Middle East, India, Norway, and United States. This tells a lot about how Archnet-IJAR is gaining excellent momentum.

In this issue, ten contributions are included in the research section while eight contributions are accommodated under the section of reviews and trigger articles. Two characteristics appear as important qualities of these contributions, the first is that all introduce and debate issues of concern to the global community that range from urban and housing issues, to education and research concerns, and from different professional interests to technical aspects of architecture, and the second is that all argue for the creation of more responsive and live-able environments.

Two papers of M. Salim Ferwati and Abeer A. Hasanin introduce discussions that pertain to urban scenes in specific contexts and how the urban environment as a whole may enhance the overall human experience. M. Salim Ferwati argues that human curiosity never has a limit, it always occurs as people observe, stare at, and listen to whatever exists

in the surrounding context. Introducing the notion of "head-turning situations," Ferwati analyzes the old city of Damascus and the visual cues involved in a street walk in the city. On the other hand, taking the example of the ASIA-D, the 15<sup>th</sup> Asian Games held in Doha in December 2006, Abeer Hasanin discusses the issue of urban legibility environmental graphics and how specific events can contribute to the overall image of the city. Utilizing Rapoport's integrative model of environmental quality, she analyzes the visual elements of different types of graphics and their role in enhancing the urban image of the city of Doha during the games event. As well, an attempt is made at understanding residents' reactions to different urban settings. She concludes by arguing for the need to include environmental graphics into architectural and urban design practices.

Three papers discuss notions underlying the heading of "form and form making processes. Dongre, Deshpande, and Ingle dramatically differentiate between emerging forms and designed forms. They argue that emerging forms are not preconceived as they come into existence through a process and a chain of events that take into account the external forces acting on the form and the interaction between individual elements of a composition. Designed forms however are a development of an idea or a concept that may be a result of intuition or impression. Their work explores a method and a process for conceptualizing emerging architectonic forms.

Izham Ghani explores the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) on building forms and how they function. Ghani argues that the emergence of the new

'Information Age' suggests a challenge to the common relationship between form and function. Spaces are more intelligent and interactive while circulation is becoming more fluid and flexible. Building forms tend to be more invisible as users turn to the World Wide Web for routine activities that was once achievable only through physical interaction. His position is based on the argument that as computers and humans are adapting more towards each other, buildings are just becoming a matter of platform to store the software and hardware.

Dolapo Amole analytically describes the typological characteristics of students' residences in Nigerian Universities. She asserts that utilizing typology as an analytical tool is useful as it provides insight into the architect's thought processes, design culture and also because it offers a typological dimension to the evaluation of buildings-in-use. In fact, Amole capitalizes on many of the ideas introduced to the design community by Attilio Petruccioli as she adopts a morphological approach to typological analysis of twenty selected halls of residence in Nigeria.

Two papers argue for a more responsive architectural pedagogy by introducing frameworks either at the level of new degree programs or going beyond traditional teaching practices. Rahinah Ibrahim and her co-authors present a conceptual framework for an architectural-construction integration (A-CI) design studio curriculum in the context of an architectural graduate program. They introduce an application of trans-disciplinary principles in education. The A-CI curriculum emulates the computer-integrated Project Based Learning Laboratory (PBL) model

developed at Stanford University by building on the PBL's framework, and principles of learning and teaching professional, cultural, technological, and spatial differences amongst the building stakeholders. An important benefit of the proposed curriculum is that it allows students from different parts of the worlds to collaborate and work together across the boundaries of cultures on Trans-disciplinary issues that aim minimizing communication and knowledge flow problems typically inherited in design and planning processes. As well, trans-disciplinarity is advocated in the sense that attempts at crossing the the boundaries of different disciplines involved in the creation of a responsive built environment.

Ashraf Salama's work advocates the integration of research into undergraduate architectural education. He argues for the exposure of students to primary source materials that enable them to get as close as possible to the realities being studied. Introducing the concept of "utilizing the built environment as an open textbook" he outlines a framework within which an impressionistic approach for evaluating the built environment through experiential learning can be incorporated. Implementing this argument takes place as an approach for learning from Qatari architecture by conducting procedural evaluation of ten buildings identified based on discussions with students. Findings indicate that students were able to make judgments about the built environment and to give reasons for those judgments. However, students' analyses reveal shortcomings in their abilities to comment, where some could not express their concerns verbally while few could not write an understandable reporting statement. Students' feedback on this experiment reveals that this approach helped

them recognize what to look for in the building, understand relationships between different design factors, while comprehending the impact of one factor over others. Based on these results the need for incorporating evaluation research through experiential learning into architectural pedagogy is emphasized.

In addressing the technical aspects of architecture, two papers of Zbigniew Bromberek and Mirjana Devetakovic and Milan Radojevic appear to place high value on the engineering side of architecture as it relates to human occupancy, comfort, and facility management. Z Bromberek introduces an important and critical argument against the use of air conditioning systems in tropical resorts. He argues that although conscious of detrimental implications for the environment, economics and even operational aspects of the use of mechanical devices to provide indoor comfort to visitors, his investigation reveals that resort managers claimed market pressure has been the driving force behind the installation of air-conditioners within their facilities. Presenting the findings of his intensive investigation of a considerable number of tropical resorts he draws conclusions that pertain to the perceptions and policies influencing the design of tropical resorts.

In their paper titled facility management: a paradigm for expanding the scope of architectural practice, Devetakovic and Redojevic discuss a number of challenges and obstacles that relate to contemporary architectural practice and the expanding facility management (FM) sector. They identify possible interests in combining and integrating knowledge of the two fields: architectural practice and facility management. Taking

Serbia as an example, their aim is to recognize key actors and their role in the FM knowledge exchange on the national level, as well as to understand current position and propose possible activities for the local architectural community.

Based on qualitative ethnographic methods Crispino Ochieng introduces the important role of the different actors in private tenement housing delivery in a developing city such as Nairobi, where more than half the population is poor. In Nairobi, the private tenement housing delivers both conventional as well as non-conventional housing with the majority of the poor being able to access only the later. Non-conventional housing includes the informal as well as the slum. Although still targeting the poor, with time, the majority of what started as non-conventional housing undergoes greater physical development. This process ensures access to enough affordable low-income housing. Development in housing delivery has been supported by the government through encouraging creation of relevant housing institutions, developing relevant byelaws and regulations and putting in place an appropriate framework for housing delivery. Ochieng concludes his work by arguing that for a developing city encouraging the participation of the private sector in housing delivery for the different socio-economic groups is a sure guarantee of providing housing for a large percentage of the population.

The reviews and trigger articles section is wide and rich in scope, arguments, positions, and understandings. In this section, two contributions encompass issues that pertain to traditional architecture and urbanism at

different scales, the city and the building. It includes contributions from Besim S. Hakim on establishing a common understanding of how traditional towns in the Arab-Islamic world were formed and how they underwent change and growth managed by a dynamic system of codes. Kulkarnic and Bharat introduce Vastushastra as a way of understanding and analyzing traditional buildings in India, a concept which is hinged on the notion that the surrounding energies as affecting the earth should be optimally utilized in such a way as to be compatible to the laws of nature and functional requirements. They argue that the implementation of vastu edicts prevents and/or cures the stress conditions and pin-point the saying "prevention is better than cure". The two contributions offer insights toward the creation of built environments amenable to support, enhance, and celebrate human activities, actions, and choices.

Other contributions of Ann Forsyth and Stefanos Polyzoides discuss the nature of architecture in the academia and in practice. Such contributions are based on intensive and long experience of each contributor in his field.

An important but perhaps a controversial argument and position is presented by Ann Forsyth on the value and nature of research in architecture. She outlines the current opportunities for interdisciplinary work then examines why architecture may not be in a position to engage with this energy chiefly because of differences in values between the scientific research culture and architecture programs. Forsyth states that the clash of cultures of interdisciplinary work could cause confusion and competition in architecture

programs as the traditional ugly ducklings of design schools become scientific swans. In an optimistic manner however, she argues that architecture programs can also embrace these differences and see them as a way of creating multiple paths to prominence in the field that has tended to be rather hierarchical in its educational programs at least, with design stars on the top of a steep pyramid, followed by those teaching history, theory and criticism. Social factors and building science folks, currently at the bottom of the pile, may well be able to use this renewed interest in their skills as a way to take a more central position in architectural thought and education and to promote more collaborative models of practice. While some scholars may argue that the position taken by Forsyth is only valid in the North American context, I would argue that her position is applicable in many parts of the world where architecture is looked at as an odd academic discipline.

Warning the architectural and planning communities and those who make decisions about cities and built environments, Stefanos Polyzoides introduces a marvelous argument that reflects a voice of logic and reason. He concisely outlines five points of circular thinking imbedded in the way in which architects think about the creation of buildings and built environment, and the conflicting fundamentals of inner ego and the public interest. As a concerned and also an accomplished architect and new urbanist, Polyzoides offers excellent guidance to young architects under important headings such as continuity, urban heritage, appropriate means, environmental regeneration, and civic engagement.

This is not all; three important books are in-depth reviewed. Eman El-Nachar and Raghda Salama offer a comprehensive review of "Cities in Transition: Transforming the Global Built Environment," edited by Tasleem Shakur. Two reviews of *Design Studio Pedagogy: Horizons for the Future*, edited by Ashraf M. Salama and Nicholas Wilkinson are offered by two distinguished academics; Halina Dunin Woyseth of Oslo School of Architecture relates her intensive experience in higher education pedagogy within the European context to a comprehensive discussion and debates of the arguments introduced in the book, while Julia W. Robinson of the University of Minnesota offers a concise review. *Designing for Designers* edited by Jack Nasar, Wolfgang Preiser, and Thomas Fischer is reviewed by the editor of Archnet-IJAR.

The wide variety of ideas, concepts, arguments, conclusions presented in this issue develop excellent insights and in-depth understandings. They offer a wide avenue for achieving excellence in online publishing in architecture and urbanism, while paving many roads for debating the complexity of built environment related fields.

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