

ISVS-6

6th International Seminar on Vernacular Settlements - 2012

Contemporary Vernaculars: Places, Processes and Manifestations

April 19-21, 2012, Eastern Mediterranean University, Famagusta, North Cyprus

Vol I



The 6th International Seminar on Vernacular Settlements – ISVS Sponsored by

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The 6th International Seminar on Vernacular Settlements – ISVS

Contemporary Vernaculars: Places, Processes and Manifestations'

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This conference would not have been possible without the support of our sponsors including: the Presidency of TRNC, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, the Ministry of National Education and Youth. It is also our pleasure to take the support of M. Candemir Construction Ltd.

Finally our thanks goes to many other supporters including our families and colleagues who, even though their names are not in the organizing committee.

ISVS-6 Conference Organizing Committee

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PREFACE

North Cyprus as the sixth destination of the journey of ISVS, with an exceptional geographical location between the East and the West, once again in its turbulent history, welcomes the people from different cultures. This time, it is the venue of an academic event, the Sixth International Seminar on Vernacular Settlements (ISVS-6) to explore the vernacular of the contemporary world.

ISVS as a movement started from Indonesia in 1999, has been a remarkable achievement to promote awareness and research on Vernacular traditions and the Sixth International Seminar on Vernacular Settlements which is hosted by the Eastern Mediterranean University in April, 2012 has aimed to contribute to this accumulation of knowledge, research and practice with the theme: Contemporary Vernaculars: Places, Processes and Manifestation. The last seminar, ISVS-5 held in Colombo, Sri Lanka focused on Vernacular Futures provided a great opportunity to explore the future of the vernacular traditions resulting in a suggestion that the survival and continuity of vernacular traditions may lie in ordinary informal buildings which are usually not regarded as vernacular. Building upon this insight, ISVS-6 in 2012 is delighted to lead the debate on vernacular traditions of contemporary societies and their building and settlement forms which display the same characteristics of the conventionally conceptualized 'vernacular'.

For far too long, vernacular has been relegated to the past. It has always been assumed that it must be native or unique to a specific place, produced long-ago with available sources and skills, and possibly built by the ancestors who occupy it. For anything to be considered vernacular, this is the assumed process experienced, transmitted and completed in the past with the aid of tradition. However, recent debates reveal that continuity of tradition is still valid and it is not over. The architecture with dynamic and changing vernacular traditions is still emerging in new forms, processes and modes. As it was in the past, the practice of transmission has let the way of understanding vernacular tradition and maintaining it in newly built forms. The only difference is possibly that the practice of transmission is experienced differently in an era of technological advancements and increased communication. In fact, the acts of the present societies have often been accused of being insensitive, if not 'destroying' and therefore being a threat to the vernacular of the past. There is no doubt that there are many situations where these assertions stand well justified. However, at the ISVS-5, the keynote speaker Dr. Peter Kellett called for a re-examination of this perception and argued that in fact, the ordinary informal buildings of the present societies also display the same characteristics of the conventionally conceptualized vernacular. As Dr. Kellett argues, 'if our definitions are appropriately framed, we may regard much contemporary construction to be a continuation of existing vernacular traditions'.

In current thinking, what has invested value in the vernacular is the presence of tradition. Beyond its visual and symbolic qualities, in a time of rapid ecological, social and physical changes, concerns for the maintenance of local identities and an awareness of the need to provide sustainable built environments have entailed the interest in vernacular traditions and their advantages in terms of cultural and environmental appropriateness. Tradition is considered as an entity which has been 'handed down' and will also be handed down to the future. In looking at the contemporary built-environments, the argument that modernity has banished tradition can thus be problematized and more appropriate meanings for both vernacular and tradition need to be sought. The terms 'traditional' and the 'vernacular' meet where vernacular

goes back to its Latin meaning as 'things that are home-made, home-spun, home-grown, not destined to the market place, but are for home use only'. When the concept of home is this much associated with tradition and thus vernacular, the contemporary informal settlement is suggested as the epitome of contemporary vernacular arises indeed as the natural place of their manifestations. Informal housing and all housing activities for that matter which produce things involving processes within families and among communities are then also places where such manifestations of contemporary vernaculars exist. Simply put, whatever people do by themselves without professional involvement and for their own purposes of 'being in the world' is indeed vernacular; whether it's making food, clothes or buildings. In this self-production process, contemporary vernaculars are still the medium of creative and innovative forms and ideas in which knowledge of the past and the demands of the present society interact. Tradition associates with the expectations and social acceptance rather than, as is often recorded, constraints. It is changing and varied through active processes of transmission, interpretation and negotiation. However, the change and adaptation of vernacular building traditions in the twenty-first century to new circumstances occurred in a context of unprecedented advancements in technologies and ideologies all of which need to be pursued.

The idea of cities as not only spaces that supports or fosters the ingenuity associated with vernacular in various forms, but also as an idea or a mental construct needs to be understood further to make sense of its material cultural productions. The material reality and the tectonics of these new vernaculars have been largely ignored in place for systemic or visual studies. There is a gap of knowledge about the material constructs' structural systems and skill productions associated with vernaculars today. The role of urban and rural community structure with the contemporary process of construction also needs to be further deconstructed to locate the vernacular in the particular socio-economic context.

In this context, the theme of the ISVS-6 explores contemporary vernacular: the places where they occur, the processes involved and the ways in which they manifest. This does not mean that the 'historical vernacular' has been abandoned. Rather, we have invited the juxtaposition of 'historical vernacular' and the 'contemporary vernacular' in such a way that the nuances of their makings and relevance in today's world are more fully understood. Accordingly, 107 papers from 31 different countries have been submitted for presentation at the ISVS-6 held in Gazimagusa, North Cyprus under the sub-themes: (1) Contemporary Vernaculars: Theory, philosophy and ideology, (2) Vernacular from past to present: History of 'here and now', (3) Vernacular futures: Trends, fashions and inclinations (4) Mobility and Adaptability of Vernacular Traditions, (5) Migration, Displacement and Vernacular Practices, (6) Practicing vernacular: professionals and people, (7) Temporary vernaculars: Sheltering, camping, rituals and ceremonies, (8) Informal settlements and the vernacular practices: slums villages and cities, (9) City as a staging ground of Contemporary Vernacular, (10) Language and tectonics of Contemporary Vernacular.

This book is outcome of those papers submitted to the ISVS-6 as the enduring endeavor of the conference. ISVS considers publication and expansion of knowledge and experiences on Vernacular traditions as one of its key objectives. With this purpose in mind, three selected papers which meticulously deal with the themes of ISVS-6, will also be submitted for publication in the journal, Open House International.

Hifsiye Pulhan
Chair, ISVS-6
Faculty of Architecture, EMU
Gazimagusa, North Cyprus

OPENING ADDRESSES

ISVS aims to promote awareness and research on vernacular traditions by organizing seminars focused on important aspects of vernacular every two years in specifically chosen places across the globe.

On August of 1999, the Department of Architecture of University of Indonesia held the first International Seminar on Vernacular Settlement, ISVS 1, at the Depok campus with the theme "The Role of Local Knowledge in Built Environment". There were participants from five countries, including Indonesia, who presented their papers. The second ISVS, also held at Depok, was titled "Resistance and Resilience of Local Knowledge in Built Environment", attracted participants of 13 countries presenting their papers in February 2002. After hosting two ISVS, Department of Architecture of University of Indonesia considered it important to expand the network and host this seminar across Asia. However, the disaster in Aceh struck, and the consequent international attention on issues specific Vernacular Architecture in Indonesia made it important for the seminar to be held in that country for one more time. Consequently, the Third ISVS was held at the Department of Architecture of Petra Christian University and the Department of Architecture of Parahyangan Catholic University, in Surabaya, Indonesia; in association with the Lembaga Sejarah Arsitektur Indonesia (Institute of Indonesian Architectural Historian). It attracted participants from the 13 countries, who presented their papers in March, 2006. The fourth international seminar on vernacular settlements was hosted by School of Architecture, CEPT at Ahmedabad, India in February 2008. Since then the ISVS secretariat has been hosted at CEPT University, Ahmedabad, India. The theme of the seminar is "Vernacular Settlements and Architecture in Transition". The last seminar, ISVS-5 held in Colombo, Sri Lanka focused on Vernacular Futures provided a great opportunity to explore the future of the vernacular traditions resulting in a suggestion that the survival and continuity of vernacular traditions may lie in ordinary informal buildings which are usually not regarded as vernacular. Building upon this insight, ISVS-6 in 2012 is delighted to lead the debate on vernacular traditions of contemporary societies and their building and settlement forms which display the same characteristics of the conventionally conceptualized 'vernacular'.

Under this scope, ISVS-6 is structured around the theme of 'Contemporary Vernaculars: Places, Processes and Manifestations' to incite and welcome interdisciplinary scholars and practitioners from around the world working in the disciplines of architecture, art & architectural history, urban studies, city & regional planning, cultural studies, anthropology, sociology and environmental studies for proposing papers and meeting in North Cyprus in April 2012.

Pratyush Shankar
Secretary - ISVS
Associate Professor, Faculty of Architecture
CEPT University

Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) Faculty of Architecture is honored to host the Sixth International Seminar on Vernacular Settlements (ISVS-6) in Famagusta, North Cyprus.

EMU Faculty of Architecture trains innovative professionals and academics that have a contemporary approach in the field of design while simultaneously being aware of local and environmental values and assets. The Faculty adopts a holistic educational system which combines theory and practice. The main objective is to train architects, who would execute buildings and groups of buildings of various sizes in compliance with contemporary norms, and interior designers who would apply the same principles in their concepts as well as industrial designers who would be compatible in their field.

Research is in the core of the vision of the Faculty, and thus, it has been supported with several academic activities, conferences, seminars, workshops at both national and international levels; and these activities are sometimes guided, supported and/or hosted by two research centers of our Faculty - Design and Research Center (TASAR) and HERA-C: Housing Education, Research and Advisory Center. Within the research arena of our Faculty, i.e. our members of staff and graduate students, housing, housing design, vernacular architecture and settlements play an important role.

Within this perspective, EMU Faculty of Architecture HERA-C: Housing Education, Research, Advisory Center is hosting ISVS-6 on the theme of 'Contemporary Vernaculars: Places, Processes and Manifestations' in April 2012, in order to continue the debate on vernacular architecture and settlements in an international scientific platform.

For realization of ISVS-6, more than thirty people have put their efforts in various levels. On behalf of the EMU Faculty of Architecture I would initially like to thank EMU Rector, Prof. Dr. Abdullah Öztoprak and Vice Rector (Academic Affairs), Prof. Dr. Osman Yılmaz, who have supported the organization of this international activity from the beginning. Our special thanks go to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hifsiye Pulhan as an academic member of Department of Architecture and the Executive Committee of HERA-C: Housing Education, Research and Advisory Center, for initiating the hosting process of ISVS-6. I would also like to express my gratitude to all Organizing Committee Members along with the Chair of ISVS-6, who have worked extremely hard throughout the overall organization period; without their valuable efforts this event would not have been realized. I would also like to extend my deepest appreciation to the Advisory and Scientific Committee members for their precious comments and contributions through the organization process. I would like to thank all our sponsors for supporting the realization of this event; their support to such educational and academic activities is highly appreciated. Our special thanks also go to the Heads of the Departments of Architecture, Interior Architecture and Industrial Design, who have provided a full support in many different ways for ISVS-6. Last but not the least; I would like to thank all key-note speakers and participants, without whom it would be impossible to realize this seminar.

Şebnem Önal Hoşkara, Prof. Dr.
Dean, Faculty of Architecture
Eastern Mediterranean University