“Architecture is an art form which can and should inspire people”

George Pullicino
Fifteen months ago, in parallel with the re-launch of The Architect, the KTP opened a discussion on the merits of the development of a national policy for architecture. The event was very well attended and included the Architect (and I have to be prefaced with Dr. Torpiano’s assessment of the relevance to the training of our ‘periti’ academic qualifications. There is a need for a healthy dialogue on the organisational, educational, and professional structure of the profession locally to remain abreast of the latest developments. It is made whether to join the architectural profession or not, and which will increase with the gradual cutting into force of the building regula...
The exhibition of work by local periti and its members, the tA editorial team, the Council of Architects, the AON Malta Ltd, Elmo Insurance Brokers, Vassallo Builders Group Ltd, and MEPA for the design of an extension to the Auberge d’Italie. The vast range of projects on display is a testimony to the diversity of approaches in design, as well as a snapshot of the profession at this time.

A full report on the event will be carried in the Winter issue of tA. On behalf of the KTP Communications Standing Committee, I wish to thank the following institutions for their patronage: the Minister for Tourism and Culture, is aimed at bringing the architectural debate in Malta to the forefront and continue and unfold.

A future exhibition of work by local periti and students run until 7th October at the Auberge d’Italie. The vast range of projects on display is a testimony to the diversity of approaches in design, as well as a snapshot of the profession at this time.
In 1995, the Architects Council of Europe (ACE) published the White Book, entitled ‘Architecture and the Quality of Life’. This document facilitated the coming together of all the outstanding elements, as represented by the ACE, and also initiated the process of a number of national policies in the field of architectural policy in different European states. Since this document’s publication, there have been important political developments that have fostered the increase of national and European policies, but little progress in the improvement of the living environment for European citizens. In 2004, the ACE published ‘Architecture and the Quality of Life’, with the principal objective of making politicians, decision-makers and professionals themselves aware of the pressing need to bring together major political goals that encompass progress and compatibility of the one hand, and sustainability on the other, all relating to the quality of life.

In an increasingly well-educated and knowledgeable society, people’s expectations of the quality of the environment have risen and the creation of green space is seen as an important ingredient of what constitutes the quality of an environment.

The challenge was to steer away from an industrial look and feel, while still retaining the industrial feel. A key point of the design is the skin, providing long and thin slits of light punching through the station's skin, creating a play of light all over the surface. The façade is made legible through the way it treats the actual needs and the major political goals that are being sought for. The façade is made legible through the way it treats the actual needs and the major political goals that are being sought for.

The first thing that came to mind when designing the站 for the Grazing Station was that a large open space was required, a space free from columns and any obstructions. Therefore, the plan had to have an open lighting for the workers to perform. The best response to this was to design a portal frame with north lighting. The challenge was to steer away from an industrial look and feel, while still retaining the industrial feel.

The grading station spans 26m in width and 55m in length, along a North-South orientation, with the long way being the gable end. The station is mainly made up of four units: one for the rearing process, one for the loading process, one for the main processing area, and one for the loading area. It is being displayed alongside that of the Women’s Design exhibition will form part of this event. Both these exhibitions will be part of another exhibition of works by local artists, so as to give them an insight to the world of an “architecture student-to-be, so as to give them an insight to the world of an “architecture student-to-be, so as to give them an insight to the world of an “architecture student-to-be, so as to give them an insight to the world. The Designs exhibition will form part of this event. Both these exhibitions will be part of another exhibition of works by local artists, so as to give them an insight to the world of an “architecture student-to-be, so as to give them an insight to the world.
Filfla Chapel
From the Womb of the Earth to the Navel of the Sea

“The idea of the holy was inherent in the landscape from all time.” Paul Douveux

THE ISLAND
The island of Filfla, a mere 2.5 hectares in area, floats five kilometers off the south coast of the Maltese mainland. Its cliff-shaped silhouette resembed it as an important alignment altar-stone for the Neolithic builders of the 3500BC twin Megalithic temple shrines of Hagar Qim and Mnajdra on the main island. The upper Hagar Qim structure at one stage turned its axis 90° towards the iconic upper Hagar Qim structure at one stage and Mnajdra on the main island. The Megalithic temple shrines of Hagar Qim the Neolithic builders of the 3500BC twin south coast of the Maltese mainland. Its in area, floats five kilometers off the island of Filfla, a mere 2.5 hectares in and aligns its view onto the islet rock as a natural matrix. The doorway of the East temple of the lower Mnajdra complex also looks out afloat in dramatic geo-physical locations. It is interesting to note that in the 14th cen-berg. The doorway of the East temple of the lower Mnajdra complex also looks out the islet rock as a sacred locus, perhaps as a shrine or some out-looking subterranean altar of truce for this turbulent earth and the navel of the sea, the horizon as the sea and the horizon of the sea. The chapel however was destroyed a relic of ancient wisdom reawak-ing into the earth, the walls are the wind and the altar-stone the site. One sits in the presence of the Holy, the pagan altar stone of the sea, the walls are the wind and the altar-stone the site.

The chapel itself strangely extends itself as it metamorphoses into a hallowed transfiguration from pagan pantheon to monarch-istic Messiah. In the process the site retains its hallowed sanctity as a luminous place of veneration in a transformation into what will hopefully become a contemporary Mediterranean altar of truce for this turbulent arena of violence – a sanctuary of peace tied to the sky, bound to the sea and charmed to the earth, balanced between remembrance and desire.

"Below you the land
Above you the sky
Within you the ladder." Sándor Weöres

Within you the ladder. "Sándor Weöres

Prof. Richard England

This project is dedicated to the memory of Gabriella Solano.

This project is one of those currently being established at the Anglican Diocese of Valletta, as part of the schemes of the Anglican National Development Trust, due to be completed in the latter years of the decade.
During the last week of July, I had the pleasure and privilege of participating in the Salzburg Seminar on Architecture and Public Life. The seminar was convened in collaboration with the Yale School of Architecture at Schloss Leopoldskron in Salzburg, Austria. The Salzburg Seminar is a non-profit organisation, incorporated in the United States and Austria. Since 1947, the Salzburg Seminar has been a leading forum for global dialogue dedicated to the professional advancement of tomorrow’s leaders in government, business, academia, and the non-profit sector. The Seminar’s mission is based on a vision of a world where dialogue inspires mutual understanding, where the exchange of perspectives fosters enlightened decision-making, where differences among values and ideas are respected, and where individuals are committed to creating change in their societies, organisations, and institutions.

The purpose of this session was to explore the relationship between architecture and public life. Architecture is about the built environment, but it is also much more. Architecture provides the physical framework for all human activity and thus shapes the way we live and interact with each other. Architecture is the interface between the human and the physical environment. It gives structure to all economic, political, social, and cultural activity. Thus, what and how we build shapes and forms our civic realm, our environment, and influences all aspects of public life. Architecture is about shaping our environment past, present, and future. Buildings and public spaces mould our societies and cultures. Therefore, in order to think about where and how we live and interact today, and to affect and improve the way we live and interact in the future, it is crucial to look at ways in which architecture intersects with the economic, environmental, historical, philosophical, and cultural fabric of our societies and to explore and analyse the complex interrelationships between architecture and public life.

Of course architecture is neither created nor does it exist in a vacuum. The building of physical infrastructures is subject to a variety of constraints and conflicting demands, including political factors, financial realities, spatial and technical limitations, historical considerations, and public opinion. Therefore it is important, when considering the interface between architecture and public life, to take a multi-disciplinary approach and enrich the discourse with a variety of perspectives and viewpoints. To this end, this session brought together architects, urban designers and planners, politicians, public policy experts, and architectural critics and to identify ways in which buildings and public spaces can shape our societies and cultures in positive, beneficial ways.

The chairperson for the seminar was the distinguished architect Robert Stern, currently serving as Dean of the Yale School of Architecture, and one of the leading architects in the United States. Bob Stern with his irresistible New York humour set the ball rolling for the week-long symposium with a lecture entitled ‘The City as Theatre’. As an erudite architectural historian and writer of several urban historical texts on New York City, it was inevitable that Stern would use the city of New York as the backdrop for his lecture. He touched upon the rich cultural diversity of the city and architectural realm of this city as the backdrop for a wide range of human activities. The case study of an on-going urban design project intended to rework the urban setting of Times Square replete with its complex dynamics of multi-national and corporate advertising was in many ways thought-provoking.

Richard Burnet, centennial professor of architecture and urbanism at the London School of Economics and Political Science in London as a case study for analysing urban transformations. Burnet currently serves as an advisor on architecture to the mayor of London and is also director of the Urban Age project, which has been organising conferences analysing the dynamic of mega-cities such as Shanghai, Mexico City, London, etc. The lecturer took a macro-level of the growth of cosmopolitan urban metropolises and their transformations over time in response to socio-economic forces. One of the most topical and provocative lectures was that delivered by Patrick Bello, and entitled ‘From Anthills to Labyrinthine Engineering: Sustainable Engineering’ Bello, as principal and founding director of Ascher Ten in London, has completed projects around the world noted for their innovative design as well as their sustainability. He started his lecture by scientifically analysing the ways termites build anthills, and proceeded to human-engineering with minimum reliance on fuel-engines. Perhaps the most innovative example was his lecture on the evolution of the rapid-transit transportation system. The symposium was a highly intensive and intellectually-stimulating experience, where one could freely intermingle with architects, planners and academics from all over the world. The lavish banquets and dinners that were held daily at the seventeenth-century Baroque saloons were also welcome occasions for cultural exchanges and informal discussions. Following the seminar, one could not feel but better equipped to understand, to approach and perhaps to solve complex contemporary problems as they arise in specific local, regional and professional circumstances. That is why the Salzburg experience was “educational” in the broadest and best sense of the word.

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“Any city which stands still is dead”

Robert Stern

ARCHITECTURE AND PUBLIC LIFE

AT THE SALZBURG SEMINAR, AUSTRIA

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Paritosh Theaker
Architecture – Striving for Quality and Sustainability

Architects are always involved in a competition of some sort, whether it be to produce a piece of work that is aesthetically pleasing, functionally efficient, or environmentally sustainable. This competition is essential as it drives architects to continuously improve their designs and techniques. In our current world, with the increasing focus on sustainability and energy efficiency, architects must push the boundaries of what is possible and strive to create buildings that not only look good but also perform well. This is the goal of the Environment Planning Awards, which recognize and celebrate outstanding architectural projects in Malta.

The Environment Planning Awards are presented annually to projects that demonstrate excellence in terms of sustainability, energy efficiency, and social impact. The awards are open to architects, developers, and clients, and are judged by a panel of experts in the field of architecture and sustainability.

This year’s Environment Planning Awards were held in March, and the winners were announced. The awards were presented to projects that demonstrated a commitment to sustainability and innovative design. The awards included categories such as Environmental Solutions and Urban Design, Special Award for Engineering, and Special Mention for Engineering.

One of the projects that received an award was the Xarolla windmill, which was designed to reduce energy consumption and improve the quality of life for the residents of the area. Another project that received recognition was the Sea Passenger Terminal, which was designed to be energy-efficient and to provide a high level of comfort for passengers.

Overall, the Environment Planning Awards are a testament to the dedication of architects and designers to create buildings that are not only beautiful but also environmentally responsible. These awards encourage architects to think outside the box and to push the boundaries of what is possible in terms of sustainability and energy efficiency.

To me, quality architecture is that which provides for functional buildings and has good sustainability and solidarity. It does not unduly impose itself on its surroundings and strives to have the least possible impact on the environment. This does not preclude innovation and new design approaches as long as this is respectful of the context.

In recent years there has been a renewed effort by several Maltese architects to strive for quality. The number of notable buildings which provide a positive experience is increasing. There is, however, more room for improvement. The approach of some developers and architects to be more proactive in seeking ways of reducing energy consumption and to incorporate features in the design of buildings aimed at reducing energy consumption. This could include good insulation, reducing heat load during the summer and providing for passive solar heating during the winter.

My Ministry has taken the initiative to appoint green leaders in various ministries. Their responsibilities include, amongst others, identifying ways of reducing the energy consumption of ministry buildings and the commissioning of an energy audit of at least one building within that ministry. There have been various architectural initiatives in recent months from the Kamra tal-Periti, MEPA and others. Aspects of architecture, other than the economic dimension, are increasingly coming to the fore. This augurs well for architecture and the architecture profession in Malta in the coming years.”

Dear Minister
The foundling myths of architecture

The relentless progress of architectural technology and practice throughout the centuries has proved to be an irresistible force, responsible for the replacement of the fundamental values of architecture, and its primary objectives. Formal and technical controls have, as a result, formed the essence of the new architecture. The profession, sometimes unaware of having relegated the true nature of Architectural profession to its place, concentrates its attention on the pragmatic success of pragmatic building.

In his preface to Essai sur l’Architecture (1753), Man- antoine Laugier moved away from the notion of a theory reduced to an ars fabricandi. In so doing, he distanced himself from the rational architectural principles con- ceived by Vitruvius and adopted by his modern followers. He reinforced the idea that the architect’s role was that of an artist whose objec- tive was to set up guides and rules of architecture by providing a theory of architecture grounded in a philosophical discourse that studied the diachronic between science, nature, art and society. Laugier’s treatise was a timely reminder that there can be no moving forward without an evaluation of Architecture as a bearer of symbols. In the view of the continued erosion of the deeper meanings of Architecture, the necessity to pause from the consuming, energy-demanding world of today, to reflect in the pursuit of a true and authentic roots of Architecture must, from time to time, be reinvoked. Architectural practice is essentially a creative activity and Archi- tecture cannot exist without an understanding of the found- ing myths of architecture, those that relate the origins of man and his relationship with his environment.

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Due to changes in the style and density of occupied buildings, coastal developments, and tourism and infrastructure developments over the past 40 years, the potential impacts of future tsunamis are likely to be greater than those of the past. Emergency planners will be interested in determining measures that can be taken to reduce impact. Sedimentology and rock fall can impose changes on the eastern coastal zone. Fixed objects such as docks, piers, and other structures, can be damaged or destroyed. Minor objects may be directly impacted, with the possibility of injury to persons. Damage to these objects can cause injury to persons, damage to buildings or block evacuation routes. These include old cars, refrigerators, containers. Damage managers must make sure that access routes to the beach are not blocked. Trucks, road telecommunications lines to be rerouted, and any temporary mobile flood doors of emergency shelters.

Environmental data: population density during the night, day, summer and winter. Tsunamis will cause high variations between seasons, with the brushing recent in mid-winter and most people keeping inside. The number of people per build is also of importance. Schools are densely populated in winter and the density will be reduced in the summer.

Economic land use data: business (shops, restaurants, hotels), residential, sanitation (toilets, hospital, power station, marine works). This data is used for insurance companies, as premium levels may be set for buildings, considering contents loss and business interruption loss.

Population evacuation: no cover, high vulnerability; scrub cover, medium vulnerability; town, low vulnerability; industrialised coastal town, no vulnerability and no environmental impact.

Vulnerability: Damage managers have detailed information on which buildings, infrastructural works and groups of people are particularly vulnerable to tsunami impacts. When such data is available, cost effective mitigation measures may be developed and used to be a tool for local planning and to determine post-tsunami emergency disaster response.

ANTICIPATED MALTESE TSUNAMI DISASTER HAZARDS

In “Gaunt Avanti e Miedica” Agnus de Sales recounts how the sea at Xlendi rolled out to about one mile and swept back a little later. “Iron-giant impulses a memento” – reports that 15 tsunami in 1830. This description tallies with a destructive tsunami (XII).

Another tsunami-like event was recorded in December 1834 in the Adriatic Sea. A great earthquake occurred in a large area of the Mediterranean basin, which in turn generated a wave that was observed in Sicily and in Malta. Substantial damage and considerable drowning on the eastern Sicilian coast. Fixed objects such as docks, piers, and other structures, can be damaged or destroyed. Minor objects may be directly impacted, with the possibility of injury to persons. Damage to these objects can cause injury to persons, damage to buildings or block evacuation routes. These include old cars, refrigerators, containers. Damage managers must make sure that access routes to the beach are not blocked. Trucks, road telecommunications lines to be rerouted, and any temporary mobile flood doors of emergency shelters.

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