

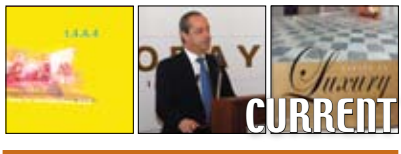
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contents

“Certainly, the Public Sector has a special responsibility to society, in terms of the quality of design of buildings which are built with public funds.”

Kamra tal-Periti

Jorn Utzon passed away at the end of November. This Danish architect was mostly renowned for his design of the Sydney Opera House, an iconic structure that is immediately identified with Australia by anyone seeing an image of the building or hearing it mentioned in a conversation. Architect Louis Kahn, in describing the building, had remarked: "The sun did not know how beautiful its light was until it was reflected off this building." Utzon died having never returned to Australia to see the completed opera house.

Ironically, two days after his passing away, the news that government had reappointed Renzo Piano to design the entrance to Valletta, including the site that once housed the Royal Opera House began spreading like wildfire across the various media. Over the following days, opinions on government's proposal were touted by various sections of Maltese society, with a variety of positions being taken both in regard to the choice of architect and with respect to the proposed uses to be housed on the Opera House Site, namely parliament and a cultural centre of some sort.

The Kamra tal-Periti also voiced its views on this matter of national importance. Quoting from "The Urban Challenge" in a press release issued on the 04 December, the Kamra stated that, "Certainly, the Public Sector has a special responsibility to society, in terms of the quality of design of buildings which are built with public funds. Government's unique position makes it an ideal champion for good design and all government projects should employ a best practice approach to design and construction, founded on a strong green procurement approach, to significantly improve development expectations and lead by example. In order to ensure that the public is provided with the best quality project possible, then it would be better if all government projects of scale and importance should be awarded on the basis of design competitions, backed by adequate funding and evaluated from the point of view of their contribution to the social and built environment, again promoting a commitment to good design."

The Kamra, however, acknowledged the fact that while in normal circumstances it would have insisted that the design for this project be the subject of an international competition, this was no normal situation, presenting Government with the opportunity to renew its commitment with Piano made twenty years

earlier. The Kamra also commended Government's decision to proceed with the project and invited it to also consider the status of the Guidelines for the Regeneration of Valletta drawn up by Piano himself in his previous commission.

Several other challenges lay ahead, in particular the urban issues for what are now an extended scope and site area and the intended use, presumably the subject of a Development Brief that is yet to be prepared. Furthermore, the need for structured public participation in the design process is evident. In "The Urban Challenge", the Kamra had already called for the establishment of a Design Review Commission, an internationally recognised practice, particularly within the European Union, providing a concerted effort at ensuring the highest design quality of public projects. The Kamra believes that this project presents an excellent opportunity to catalyse the setting up of this Commission.

The debate will certainly continue over the coming months, and the Kamra will continue to follow progress on this project. In the meantime it will also continue in its work to support the profession and its members to its best, given the resources available. A new Council will be elected during the Annual General Meeting that will take place the day after this editorial is written but a few days before the journal is published, so unfortunately I cannot comment on the composition of the incoming Council for 2009. On behalf of the current Council and the Kamra's members, I would like to take this opportunity to thank David Felice for his two years as President, for his dedication and vision, and his energy and determination in pushing forward the Kamra's agenda for the benefit of the profession. Thanks are also due to Alberto Miceli Farrugia whose term as Council member ends this year, in particular for his work on the publication of "The Urban Challenge", and to Frank Giordmaina Medici and Etienne Micallef Grimaud, who were co-opted for one year onto Council, for their contribution during this time. Keith Cole, Damian Vella Lenicker and Philip Grech also close their two-year terms this December, but have all decided to stand for election ... hopefully the next issue of tA will allow me to congratulate them on their re-election!!!

Simone Vella Lenicker
Editor



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KAMRA TAL-PERITI

To support members of the profession in achieving excellence in their practice of architecture and engineering in the interest of the community

The Council of the Kamra Tal-Periti for the year 2007 consists of David Felice (President), Vincent Cassar (Vice President), Simone Vella Lenicker (Honorary Secretary) and Council members Keith Cole, Philip Grech, Frank Giordmaina Medici, Anthony Fenech Vella, Etienne Micallef Grimaud, Alberto Miceli Farrugia, Danica Mifsud, and Damian Vella Lenicker.

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See page 14

MEETINGS WITH BANKS REGARDING VALUATIONS STANDARDS

A series of meetings were held with HSBC, BOV, APS and Banif, during which it was agreed to work on a common proposal for all banks to use when requesting property valuations. The KTP Council decided to review and update its current guidelines in this respect, as well as look into the possibility of membership of The European Group of Valuers Associations, TEGOVA.

MEETING WITH MINISTER GEORGE PULLICINO

The first meeting with Minister George Pullicino to discuss the KTP's plans for an Architecture Centre, the KTP regulations and other legislation as discussed during the Kamra's last Extraordinary General Meeting earlier this year, was held on the 03 October. The Professional Practice Standing Committee has prepared a draft summary of the changes being requested relating to the legislation and regulations in order to proceed with the liaison with the Ministry.

HSBC SPONSORSHIP

The Kamra has concluded a deal with HSBC who have been chosen to be the KTP's official partners for 2009. HSBC shall be supporting the Kamra financially and will be collaborating in the Architecture & Children Project as well as in the setting up of the Malta Architecture Awards.



UMAR ELECTIONS

Perit Tony Fenech Vella has been nominated for the post of Treasurer for the Union of Mediterranean Architects' (UMAR) elections to be held in January 09. Meanwhile Perit David Pace has ended his term as UMAR Secretary General.

However, the Secretariat shall retain its seat in Malta for the coming 3 years.

ADVERT FOR SECRETARY GENERAL

Over the past year, the Kamra has felt the need of support for its secretariat. Following a decision taken in Council, an advert for the employment of a secretary was published and a number of applications received. These applications are currently being reviewed and interviews will be held early next year.

DUPLEX PROPERTY FAIR

The Kamra tal-Periti shall be collaborating with Duplex in organising a property expo between the 27 February and

the 01 March 2009 at MFCC. The KTP will be setting up a stand and will have the possibility to organise and participate in discussions during the event. Further details on this will be announced shortly.



SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT

Perit Keith Cole attended a meeting in Brussels on the 26 November on behalf of the Council, regarding the setting up of single points of contact. Perit Cole also attended the Architects' Council of Europe Education Workgroup meeting held on the 28 November in Paris.

ACE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Architects' Council of Europe General Assembly was held between the 20 and 21 November 2008. Perit David Felice and Perit Vincent Cassar attended the meetings.



ECCE COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Perit Vincent Cassar was nominated for the elections of the European Council for Civil Engineers held last October and was one of 9 candidates for 6 posts. He was not elected. Perit Cassar was also present for the ECCE General Assembly held during the same weekend in Cyprus.

EVENTS

The last three months of the year were very active ones for the Kamra tal-Periti, with two Architecture Nights, Time for Architecture, a Business Breakfast on the topic of the reform of MEPA and a conference on Tall Buildings engaging various members of the Council. These events are reported further on in this publication.

AGM 2008

The Kamra's Annual General Meeting was held on the 12th of December. The event took place after the date of going to print and therefore a full report of the meeting will be published in the next issue of the Architect, in Spring 2009. Periti Alberto Miceli Farrugia, Frank Giordmaina Medici and Etienne Micallef Grimaud end their terms as Council members. Periti Keith Cole, Philip Grech and Damian Vella Lenicker also conclude their current terms in December, but stood for election during the AGM. Perit David Felice's term as President of the Kamra tal-Periti also comes to an end. He is succeeded by Perit Vincent Cassar.

WWW.KTPMALTA.COM

The Kamra's website is kept continuously updated with information on upcoming events, various news items reported in the press that relate to the profession or to the building



industry, as well as press releases and directives issued by the Kamra on a regular basis. Readers are invited to log into the site on regular basis in order to be kept informed on the different projects being undertaken by the Kamra.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Kamra tal-Periti is up for renewal at the end of 2008. Members are reminded to submit their membership fee to the Secretary by the end of January 2009. Membership forms may be downloaded from the Kamra's website, or by requesting a soft copy on info@ktpmalta.com

SEASON'S GREETINGS

On behalf of the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti, the Editorial Team extends its greetings for the coming festive season to its members, collaborators, and sponsors and their respective families.

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 Finance Standing Committee
Communications Standing Committee
 International Standing Committee
Education Standing Committee
 Events Standing Committee
Ethics Standing Committee
 Journal Editor
Web Site administrator
 General Secretary
KTP office

CHANGES AT THE FACULTY

The Faculty for the Built Environment has now found its place among the many Faculties at the University of Malta, and replaces what was known as the Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering. Prof Alex Torpiano, as Dean of the Faculty, has already proposed a number of changes for discussion at Faculty Board level, which are aimed at causing vast improvements in the educational years of the profession. The Board is made up by Prof Torpiano as Dean, and Head of the Department of Building and Civil Engineering; Prof Denis De Lucca as Head of the Department of Architecture and Urban Design; Perit Franco Montesin, elected member representing the Department of Building and Civil Engineering; Dr Vince Buhagiar, elected member representing the Department of Architecture and Urban Design; Mr. Pierre Bianchi and Mr. Matthew Cachia Zammit, student representatives; and Periti Danica Mifsud and Keith Cole, members appointed by the Minister for Education.

LOS ANGELES AIA AWARDS 2008

Three projects received top honours for built architecture in the annual design awards of the Los Angeles chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). The Water + Life Museums and Campus in Hemet, California, by Lehrer + Gangi Design + Build was one of the selected projects. This project has also received the LEED Platinum certification. The AIA/LA jury commented: "To get LEED Platinum is a remarkable accomplishment in itself, and then in a very handsome building of this scale in this location is quite a feat. This



is a 100-year building." Also awarded was the Art Center College of Design's South Campus in Pasadena, by Daly Genik who renovated a postwar aircraft facility into the college's South Campus, which opened in 2004. The NOAA Satellite Operations Facility in Suitland, Maryland, by Morphosis also received a top award. In this case the jury commented that "the building integrates science and mythology in the architectural expression, giving a sense that there is important work about the planet going on here."

Source: *ArchitectureWeek*

UIA & UMAR

Earlier this year, Gaëtan Siew, Union of Mediterranean Architects (UIA) President and, Patrice Genet, President of the Union of Mediterranean Architects (UMAR) signed a cooperation agreement for the elaboration of a common programme of activities. The programme will develop joint actions in the areas of architectural culture (heritage, urban renewal and renovation) and sustainable development (environment, energy saving, new energy sources). Both organisations will intensify information exchanges. They will hold a bilateral annual meeting to organise joint actions, particularly through their respective working bodies. Each organisation will invite a representative of the other to participate in one of its annual meetings.

BARBARA CAPPOCHIN 2009 PRIZE

The aim of the Barbara Cappochin Prize is to heighten awareness and associate the various actors in the architectural world, namely town planners, constructors and clients, with the promotion of quality planning and construction in natural and urban environments. Organised by the Barbara Cappochin Foundation, this international prize is approved by the International Union of Architects (UIA) and the National Council of Italian Architects, Planners, Landscape architects and Conservationists (CNAPPC). The prize is open to architects worldwide or multidisciplinary teams led by architects. Works can belong to any of the following categories: Public or private residences; Commercial, administrative or



mixed use buildings; Public facilities (educational, cultural, sports, leisure or health care); Landscape architecture. Further information on the prize and registration details can be found on www.barbaracappochinfoundation.net.

ECCE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The 48th General Assembly of the European Council of Civil Engineers (ECCE) was held at Larnaca, Cyprus between the 17-18 October, 2008. At that meeting ECCE elected its new Executive Board for 2009-2010. The composition of the new Executive Board will be as follows: Vassilis Economopoulos (Greece) as President; Richard Coackley (United Kingdom) as Immediate Past President; Gorazd Humar (Slovenia) as Vice President / President Elect; Helena Soimakallio (Finland) as Honorary Treasurer; and Fernando Branco (Portugal), Murt Coleman (Ireland) and Jiří Plička (Czech Republic) as Executive Board Members. Malta also sported a candidate in these elections, following Perit Vincent Cassar's nomination by the Kamra tal-Periti, the Institution of Civil Engineers (UK) and Engineers Ireland. The theme of the meeting was "Water Demand and Supply: Water Scarcity, Water Reuse, Grey Water, Water Desalination, Water Charging" and Perit Vincent Cassar delivered a presentation on the water demand and supply in Malta.

RISK ASSESSMENT

"Napo" is an original idea in response to the need for high quality information products to break down national boundaries and address the diverse cultures, languages and practical needs of people at work. The role of Napo and his friends is to provide an appetiser to Occupational Health and Safety through their engaging characters, amusing story lines, humour and light-hearted approach. "Safety with a smile" is Napo's contribution to safer, healthier and better workplaces. Napo's new film about Risk Assessment explains the difference between hazard and risk, how these can be eliminated or reduced, and seeks to create a better understanding of the meaning of

'Risk' through a series of practical situations. The film can be downloaded for viewing from <http://osha.europa.eu/en/campaigns/hw2008/napo>.



VELUX AWARDS 2008

Launched for the third time, through the collaboration of the International Union of Architects (UIA) and the European Association for Architectural Education (EAAE), this biennial award is open to students of architecture worldwide, on the theme: "the light of tomorrow". 686 projects from 46 countries were submitted to the international jury which met in Turin, and which awarded three prizes and eight mentions to students and their tutors, for a total value of €30,000. In evaluating the projects, the jurors focused on projects that celebrated the privilege of being a student, with naivety, curiosity, and the willingness to take a risk. The jury made its choice according to the following criteria:





innovation, technology, poetry, architecture and the way we want to live, and the use of light. Concerned by issues linked to the environment, the three prize winning projects contribute, on different scales, their personal interpretation of daylight. The first prize was awarded to Reilly O'Neil Hogan (USA) for a project entitled "Embodied Ephemerality: Light-Form Architecture". His idea was to transform users' daily routine in a specific subway station in Manhattan, by introducing and projecting daylight in the underground spaces to simulate the light of the outside world. The second prize went to two students at Tsinghua University in Beijing, Ruan Hao and Xiong Xing, for their project: "Interface Repairing Light Festival" in New York, a celebration of sunlight in the city. The third prize was won by Dean MacGregor, of Lusitania University in Portugal for his project entitled "Light has a body" that makes ingenious use of the refraction of light in water. All the entries can be viewed at www.velux.com/A ... no entries were submitted from Malta.

AUSTRALIAN ARCHITECTURE AWARDS 2008

The new creative arts building at Brisbane Girls Grammar School in Brisbane, Queensland, combines two contrasting halves into a dynamic whole. Public spaces and circulation are housed in the eastern wing of the Cherrell Hirst Creative Learning Centre, with its columns radiating in a distinctive K shape. The horizontally layered western wing contains flexible teaching spaces for art, music, drama, and tech-

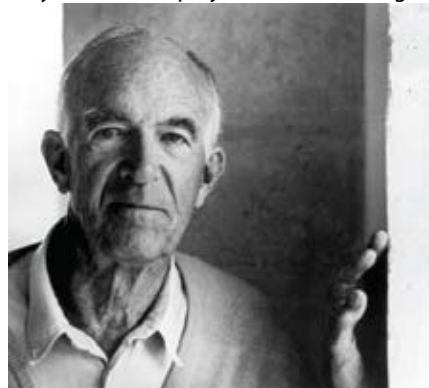
nology. The two wings meet at a central atrium intended to foster social interaction and informal learning. The Hirst Centre received one of the 2008 national architecture awards from the Australian Institute of Architects. Other projects receiving top-level awards include the Beijing Water Cube, a house inspired by the Klein bot-



tle, and a rail car workshop revamped for the performing arts. A dog shelter kennel claimed the highest award for sustainable design, but across the categories, all top-tier honorees demonstrated degrees of sustainability.

JØRN UTZON

Jørn Utzon, died earlier this month at age 90. The Danish architect, famous for the Sydney Opera House project, trained in Copenhagen, where his first building of note was his own home (1952). Four years later he won the international competition to build the Opera House, and worked for years on the project before arriving in



Australia in 1963, with the project being finally completed in 1973. In 2003 he was awarded architecture's outstanding honour, the Pritzker Prize.

NEW WARRANTS

Congratulations to Herman Calleja, Lorraine Cassar, Angeliqe Cremona, Bernard Formosa, Graziella Galea and Jonathan Schembri who were recently awarded the warrant to practice as Periti. On behalf of the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti and its members, the Editorial Team congratulates them and wishes them the very best in their careers.

ROYAL GOLD MEDAL 2009

Álvaro Siza has been announced as the RIBA's (Royal Institute of British Architects) 2009 Royal Gold Medallist. The medal will be presented at the Royal Gold Medal and Fellowships Dinner in February 2009 at a black-tie ceremony in the RIBA's Florence Hall. The official citation reads: "Álvaro Siza is simply a profoundly complete architect who defies categorisation. The forging of a masterful and seemingly inevitable architecture out of the possibilities of a site is one of the supreme characteristics of Álvaro Siza's architecture. He manipulates his readings of place into sculptural forms that are never predictable or ordinary, yet are never allowed to dominate over use or typological intelligibility. In Siza's buildings, perhaps like no others, it is the relationships between the elements of the architecture that is given primacy rather than the shape or texture of the elements themselves. This is an architecture in which an economy of expressive means is combined with an abundance of spatial revelation. Álvaro Siza is, and always has been, a committed teacher and educator. He has enabled many younger architects to gain commissions through the work he was initially offered and this selflessness is one of many examples of his commitment to the greater architectural project, rather than to personal success. Unusually for an architect of such international standing, Siza has deliberately kept his studio small to ensure his attention to every project. He is generous with his appreciation of



other architects. For the inspiring and instructive body of work he has produced over 40 years, and for his immense contribution to architecture through dialogue and teaching, the RIBA, on behalf of H. M. the Queen, is honoured to present the 2009 Royal Gold Medal for Architecture to Álvaro Joaquim Melo Siza Vieira. We wish him many more years of fulfilment of his unique vision of the possibilities of building."

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RIBA STIRLING PRIZE

The RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Stirling Prize is given for the RIBA Building of the Year. It is run in association with The Architects' Journal and is presented to the architects of the building which has been the most significant for the evolution of architecture in the past year. The prize is named after the great British architect Sir James Stirling (1926-1992). The project known as "Accordia" has won this year's edition of the Prize after six buildings were shortlisted from the winners of the 2008 RIBA National Awards and European Awards. It consists of high density housing at its very best on a brownfield site in Cambridge, demonstrating that volume house-builders can deliver high quality architecture. The archi-



tects, Feilden Clegg Bradley, Maccreanor Lavington and Alison Brooks Architects, managed to achieve a project consisting of traditional houses but with a twist. Much of the construction was fabricated off site to increase speed of construction, reduce waste, and to improve site safety and environmental performance.

PERIT CARMEL BUSUTTIL

Perit Busuttill passed away suddenly on the 10 December. On behalf of the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti and its members, the Editorial Team extends its condolences to his family and friends.

BINDING OF 'THE ARCHITECT'

"the Architect" has reached an agreement with an established binder and is pleased to announce that so that those wishing to bind their past issues can now do so. Volume 1 will include issues 29-35, while Volume II will include issues 36-43. The bound volumes come in black leatherette with an embossed gold title block. The fee is €15 for each volume, payable to the Kamra tal-Periti. Your copies of these past issues for binding are to be forwarded to the Editor during normal office hours.

For further details contact thearchitect@ktpmalta.com

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

With the government's vision for the former Royal Opera House now facing reality and that MEPA has officially scheduled the ruins of the Royal Opera House, I strongly appeal to the authorities to take a next prudent step. Inside a government compound, just off a main road in Marsa, lie a number of masonry elements belonging to the ruined theatre building. Over a score of fragmented engaged Corinthian capitals and sections of column shafts can be counted. Works would simply involve their careful documentation and transportation to Valletta, placing them on the bases of the columns at the site, in a manner not unlike what can be seen in classi-



cal ruins abroad.

The same should be done with the two complete capitals in the grounds of the MCAST school in Corradino. With the planned redevelopment of the complex in the offing these elements should be reinstated to their rightful location. One hears countless stories of people having helped themselves to the masonry and sculpture 'stored' in a field in Santa Lucija. Today what remains are discarded mutilated stones whilst the rest have been carted away or cut off larger stones and fashioned into coffee tables or quaint garden furniture.

I also urge the authorities to take back to Valletta or safely store away what is salvageable of the St. Lucija remains. Any design for the reconstruction of the opera house site MUST inexcusably preserve all that remains of the present ruins as well as include these architectural and sculptural elements. If a faithful replica is opted for, they would be very important for architects and masons to ensure precision in designing new elements. These remains could also be integrated in the reconstruction through a careful anastylosis exercise. If the new edifice is to attain a contemporary design then it ought to

respectfully incorporate what remains of the fabric, be it in the new fabric of the structure itself or simply displayed inside.

The whereabouts of other 'deposits' of sculpted stonework belonging to the former Royal Opera House should be identified and the masonry retrieved. Who knows perhaps in the process monuments reputed to have been carefully numbered and dismantled in the past such as King's Gate, St. Elmo Lighthouse and Fleur-de-Lys Gate might accidentally show up!

Yours truly,
Perit Edward Said

Letters from our readers to be considered for publication are most welcome. Letters for inclusion in Issue 48 are to reach tA by the 10th February 2009. Please write to: The Editor, "the Architect", Kamra tal-Periti, The Professional Centre, Sliema Road, Gzira GZR 1633, or send an email to thearchitect@ktpmalta.com. All contributions will be acknowledged.

the Architect

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the Architect

The official journal of the Kamra tal-Periti

Don't let your agenda block your view

by Perit David Felice, outgoing President



David Felice

Earlier this year, the House of Lords in the UK held a debate on architecture for the first time in four years. The debate was intended to “call to attention the case for encouraging high-quality architecture in the UK and for ensuring that design quality is taken into account by local planning authorities.” It included the likes of Richard Rogers who delivered his views on architecture and the planning system.

Architects should be placed at the heart of all government decision-making when it comes to the built environment; that was the message given by Richard Rogers during the debate. “These design champions should have the clout to influence design quality on central objectives when it comes to the built environment,” said Rogers.

He also warned of the “imperfect” planning system, adding that, as the first planes were, let’s say, trying to take off from Terminal 5, he was a ‘much younger man’ when he began designing the Heathrow extension. “It was 19 years ago when my firm started designing Terminal 5. We have to change the planning system to step up development,” he said. Rogers called for CABE, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, to be strengthened, adding that local design-review panels should be created throughout the nation. The number of delivery bodies also needs to be reduced, he said, and design competitions should be ‘mandatory’ when public money is used.

In evaluating Quality in Architecture and Urban design, CABE states that “The appearance of our built environment is important, but good design is about much more than how things look. It is about uplifting communities and transforming how people feel and behave. It is also about using resources more effectively and imaginatively. In short good design improves the quality of life for everyone.”

Also early in the year, Worldarchitecture.com (WAN) had reported that the French President was seeking advice from what was

being called a “dream team” to develop a new vision for Paris. The article reported that, in a surprise move, the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy summoned 15 of the world’s top architects to lunch at the Élysée Palace to discuss his visions for the French capital. The meeting was timed to coincide with the opening of the new City of Architecture Museum in the Palace of Chaillot. Until then, Sarkozy had not been known for his interest in architecture.

French architect Dominique Perrault met the president and talked to WAN about Sarkozy’s vision for Paris. He described the meetings to have been more of a process, consisting first of a meeting with the president’s advisors, and a discussion on globalisation, on the suburbs of Paris, on the need of a policy to control the development of Paris. President Sarkozy then delivered a strong speech that demonstrated a deep commitment towards quality in architecture. Perrault commented that the President was being both audacious and new. His impression of Sarkozy was that he wanted to develop a more popular, rather than major, range of social, economic and environmental projects that would focus on qualitative aspects. The hope was that this would cause an open discussion on the future of urban forms in the city, and the introduction of measures that would increase the quality of the environment and leave a real improvement to the quality of life of its citizens.

Of course, architects need to deserve this privileged relationship with the politicians. Unless each of these two disciplines is considered worthy of deserving the other...

Architects need to earn their clout through the development and persistent growth of their profession and their contribution to the community and its environment – but it is political decisions which will help to ensure that there is zero tolerance for poor architecture, and it is only by rewarding quality that we can encourage its development.

In a speech to the European parliament, Prince Charles praised the European Union’s ambitious plans to cut carbon dioxide emissions and to boost the use of renewable energy sources. “Surely this is just the moment in history for which the European Union was created? Can the moment not be captured before it slips lifeless from our grasp?” the Prince asked. “The crux of the problem is that the Doomsday clock of climate change is ticking ever faster towards midnight. We’re

simply not reacting quickly enough.”

Since the publication of the Architects’ Council of Europe’s (ACE) Policy Book, Architecture and Quality of Life, in 2004, the issues of energy resources and energy efficiency have risen to centre stage in the political agenda of the EU and there is widespread recognition that much can and should be done in the construction sector on this topic. However, the potential that the sector offers in order to meet Kyoto and post-Kyoto commitments is still insufficiently appreciated in public policies despite a certain emergence of this realisation in some EU countries. This goes to underpin the need to identify and develop appropriate methodologies to measure the overall impact of buildings on the environment.

The perit is at the heart of the building process but also at the centre of issues like sustainability, energy efficiency, landscape and urban design. The role is much wider than obtaining permission to build for his clients...all of you out there. But he too is to blame for the sense of dissatisfaction of the current situation; he should not however be carrying that blame on his own. Consider this excerpt from Architecture and Quality of Life: “The construction activities of society are one of the reliable indicators of change. The built environment records the mood of society more than any other form of cultural expression. Society’s economic and social efficiency is made legible through the way it treats its public spaces and through the nature and extent of its construction activities. A fully functional, quality and well-managed built environment has a motivating effect on society; it sustains its identity and propels it to excellence in all undertakings.”

This year the Kamra approved sweeping changes to its regulatory framework, because it wants to seek excellence in the service it provides to the environment, the community, and the profession. It is still awaiting Government to implement this sweeping reform that could bring rapid and dramatic positive change to the workings of the profession.

The Position Paper, The Urban Challenge, published by the Kamra last November tried to identify the issue, that we are confronted with, namely the failure of the free market and indeed that of the regulatory framework within which we operate. The construction market has sought profit and economic well-being in the narrow sense, and has ignored

the external cost it imposes on society - the dust, congestion, loss of amenity, loss of natural resources. This sector has performed disproportionately well because it did not need to face its full cost of operation. This is market failure and few will dispute that here there is a need to nudge it into a better course of action through education, guidance, regulation and attempts at self regulation.

Yet along with market failure we live the reality of regulatory failure too. Governance (at all levels) that could be questioned in terms of timeliness, consistency, enforcement, predictability. We do need governance in the sector, but what we need above all is good governance, at all levels, from self-regulation through to education and regulation. The question is, why are we talking about this now, again? Have we not already been here before, in the 60’s, the 70’s, the 80’s? Has MEPA not tried throughout the 90’s till now? The answer I could hazard is that there has never been a time like the present for action aimed at quality to be successful. In our current state of relative economic well-being, the public demand for quality of life, including through the built environment, has increased. Yet ironically, at this same time, the actual endowment, free urban, rural and coastal, space, clean air, water, sea, biodiversity, built heritage, is increasingly under threat. Never like now have we come to realise that there is no such thing as someone else’s back yard in Malta. All of Malta is our own back yard!

The challenges raised by our built environment can be overcome through a commitment to the development of a vision to work for better quality places that bring dignity, pride and real delight to their users. The definition of a National Policy for Architecture, championed by Government, is a critical step in this regard, presenting a clear national commitment to quality in architecture and the built environment and raising the profile of the architectural debate so as to form more informed and discerning consumers. The role of the media in forming public opinion is critical to raise the overall awareness of good design and to the pursuit of a healthy urban debate. The Kamra tal-Periti is working to promote the establishment of a National Centre for the Built Environment which would support research, education, heritage promotion, advisory and design review services to assist in the delivery of places that respect society’s needs for an architecture and an urban and rural environment that truly meet our aspirations.



Manifesto for European Cities



"Architecture cannot save the world but it can be a good example" Alvar Aalto

During its last meeting in October in Bordeaux, France, the European Forum for Architectural Policies (EFAP) adopted a "Manifesto for European Cities." The meeting aimed to initiate a dynamic process, exploring the role and place of architecture in the broader issue of sustainable development, but beyond the mere technological aspects. The main goal was to raise a critical point of view on this issue, to analyse the social, cultural and economic dimensions of sustainable development, to explore the possibilities of the post-production state we are in and of more freedom for architectural creation. The manifesto tries to go beyond the formal governmental discourses. It aims at fostering the idea that the European city is a common culture. Malta was represented during the Forum meeting by Perit Vincent Cassar who attended on behalf of the Kamra tal-Periti, and by Perit Ray Farrugia, Director General Works, on behalf of the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs. The latter was also elected onto the EFAP Steering Committee for 2009/10. The text of the manifesto follows.

“The European city is a place of social, economic, cultural and political exchange par excellence. It has cultural values shared by all countries and the large majority of European citizens. The European city is both the symbol and melting pot of European identity and culture. In European cities, social mix is an essential condition to guarantee the wealth and the perpetuity of these exchanges. To this end, each of our cities should offer to all our fellow citizens a decent, quality environment adapted to their resources, to their way of life and their

needs.

European cities are the pride of their inhabitants and, if this is not the case, they should become so. The citizen should be both actor and beneficiary; in this way cities will increase their competitiveness and sustainability, whilst remaining an essential component of our cultural wealth. Yet this collective history, which knew how to create patrimony and economic wealth, is threatened today and it is up to us to allow it to continue. The financial crisis that the world experiences today influences and will continue to influence construction policies. This is additional proof that the market alone should not regulate the development of built environment.

Europe needs quality architecture and architectural policies to protect the wealth and the quality of life in today's and tomorrow's cities. Even if the European city constitutes a model whose values are recognized by all, each city is unique and is defined by its built environment, its public spaces, the volume and the layout of its streets and architecture. The quality of public buildings not only contributes to the beauty of cities, it is a structuring element. By making available to European politicians and officials their advice, their knowhow and their enthusiasm, architects, public bodies, professionals and individuals responsible for architecture all call for architectural culture to be present and active within all the debates concerning the development and cohesion of our European territories. They hope the European institutions responsible for the future of cities will seek from now on their advice.

CHALLENGES

Life develops in urban zones throughout Europe but is subject to intense pressures.

- Climatic change makes living conditions less pleasant and this phenomenon is more pronounced in the city.
- Many European cities are threatened by the danger of flooding due to the rise in the sea

level or, on the contrary, by drought and the lack of water.

- Pollution and damage to the environment are constant threats to the quality of life in urban zones.
- In general, the urban population increases yet our cities dilute as they sprawl out.
- On the contrary, with the depopulation of



certain urban areas, the European city model disappears.

- The migratory flow towards cities strengthens culture, business and the quality of exchanges but they also create strong social tensions.
- City infrastructures age and no longer correspond to the demand whether for transport or services.

PROPOSALS

Architecture is the mediator of urban tensions. Let us rebuild cities to reconcile rather than divide whilst in the long-term they respond to the aspirations of our time and those of future generations: united, innovative and beautiful cities.

MORE SOLIDARITY WITHIN CITIES

In order to limit the over supply of vehicles and time consuming journeys, the development of neighbourhoods that integrate all the functions necessary for balance in a good life should be encouraged. The European city of tomorrow should be accessible to all and offer employment, housing, leisure and

community facilities within walking distance. Employment, shops, services and housing should be interconnected by appropriate public transport systems and easy circulation providing satisfactory access between the city and its suburbs. By making the city accessible, public transport encourages direct interaction and confers to the inhabitants a democratic right to the city. Land control remains the indispensable condition in order to achieve these objectives.

Cities more respectful of the environment and future generations

In order to limit urban sprawl and to protect natural resources, let us prefer the compact city that groups services, employment, shops and housing.

Let us support innovation in use of materials, resource management, architectural and urban design, and encourage creativity.

Let us protect the existing natural spaces between urbanized zones.

Let us protect and also improve the quality of public and interstitial spaces.

Let us encourage housing types more coherent with sustainable development in every aspect to satisfy our fellow citizens' desire for new ways of life.

Let us develop the urban ecology by encouraging renewable sources of materials, water, energy and food production.

Let us privilege the conservation of social links and rehabilitation operations of neighbourhoods and existing buildings that form the essential part of sustainable development rather than their systematic destruction, in line with the Leipzig Charter.

MORE BEAUTIFUL AND CONVIVIAL CITIES

Architects and their partners should promote an architecture, urbanism and economic planning that combine audacity with the art of everyday living. ”

The challenge will of course be for the member countries to implement the ideals set out in this manifesto. Further information on EFAP can be found on www.efap-fepa.eu.

SACES Workshop 2008 – CITY in collaboration with Valletta Rehabilitation Project (VRP)



The SACES workshop is an annual event organised as a means of bringing students from the Faculty for the Built Environment (formerly the Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering) together to work on different group projects in line with the theme of that particular workshop. Groups of students are assigned chartered architects to help them brainstorm and come up with their own innovative and original ideas, as well as guide them through the construction process.

This year, we had over a hundred students taking part in the workshop and the help of close to twenty architects who delved into and got deeply involved in their group projects. The October workshop itself is held over a weekend, and is usually set in a location of particular historic importance or heritage. Previous sites of workshops have included Fort Manoel, Caraffa Stores at Birgu, Manoel Island Hospital and the Valletta Waterfront. This year, we chose L'Ospizio in Floriana to be our home for the three days allocated for the construction of



the students' projects. L'Ospizio plays home to the Institute of Masons, as well as Din L-Art Helwa and the Restoration Unit, so it was seen to be ideal to help the students get inspired with regards to this year's theme; CITY.

Referring to our capital city, the title itself was meant to strike a note with the students: is the home of our Parliament, our Law Courts etc, really a Capital City?! The brief given to the students was simple; question Valletta and its characteristics, see what highlights and what is neglected from its urban fabric. Create works that don't

give an answer but that make the layman question what is around him in Valletta. Evoke public dialogue for open suggestions and fresh ideas from the people who use the city every day.

The VRP as one of our main sponsors, were kind enough to give us as much information as we needed to help the students come up with their concepts, including old photos of the city and historical notes that aren't so well known. A pair of groups was assigned a particular location within the city; City Gate, The Old Theatre, Republic Street, Freedom Square and the Law Courts, with which to contextually relate their designs. It was intended that they shall be exhibited for a one week period following the closing of the workshop, which coincided with the opening of the exhibition that was held Monday morning. The opening of the exhibition was attended by the Prime Minister, the Hon. Lawrence Gonzi, and was held in Merchants' Street.

The results were fantastic, with a myriad of different designs and approaches in each project. From silhouettes of people dancing around the streets to a giant FOR SALE sign, the projects served their purpose, to capture the imagination of the passer-by and make him question what he sees. The workshop was a great success, as was the annual Archoholics party held on Friday evening.

The SACES committee would like to thank all who made this possible; our sponsors for their belief in what we do, the police for helping usher the opening of the exhibition, the Hon. George Pullicino for the words he delivered at the opening of the workshop and the Prime Minister,



for his time and interest shown towards the students' work. Last but by no means least, the SACES committee would like to thank the students and all who took part in this workshop, for their time, commitment and determination that made the weekend another great event in SACES history. Thank you!

Marc Spiteri
SACES PRO



Julian Trevelyan (1910-1988) and his depictions of the Maltese landscape

by Dr Conrad Thake

Julian Trevelyan's depictions of the landscape of the Maltese islands during the second half of the 20th century are unique. Trevelyan was born near Dorking in 1910, the only surviving child of the classical scholar and poet Robert Claverley Trevelyan and his Dutch wife Elizabeth van der Hoven. In 1928, aged eighteen, Trevelyan went to Trinity College, Cambridge to read English literature. Here he crossed paths with distinguished personalities such as Jacob Bronowski, Kathleen Raine and Humphrey Jennings. Jennings was instrumental in introducing him to French paintings and the Surrealist ideas.

After Cambridge, Trevelyan moved to Paris to practice art and enrolled in Stanley Hayter's engraving school, Atelier Dix-Sept, where he first learnt techniques of etchings and would later on work alongside such distinguished artists as Max Ernst, Oskar Kokoshka, Joam Miro and Picasso. Throughout most of the 1930s he wholeheartedly embraced Surrealism, until 1938 when driven by his strong pacifist beliefs as a reaction against the atrocities perpetrated during the Spanish civil war, he resigned from the English Surrealist group. In the early 1950s, following the end of the Second World War he returned to Hayter's workshops to update his etching techniques. Subsequently he would teach art and etching at the Chelsea School of Art and between 1955-63, was appointed as Tutor of Engraving at the Royal College of Art where he influenced a new generation of printmakers including the young David Hockney.

Following the breakdown of his first marriage, he married Mary Fedden a distinguished artist in her own right. The two traveled extensively together, always sketching the places they visited which were then turned into paintings and prints on their return home. Between 1958 and the 1970s, they visited the Maltese islands regularly, most of the time residing in a farmhouse in Gozo that belonged to Graham Binns, then presiding over the local broadcasting system. Trevelyan



From left: *Valletta*, etching and aquatint, 1970; *Stone Cutting*, etching and aquatint, 1970; *Skyline of traditional Maltese village*, 1958; *Maltese Goat Herder*, oil on canvas, 1963.



Gozo Citadel, watercolour on paper, 1958



Valletta Harbour, oil on canvas, 1958

produced several art works recording the landscape of the Maltese islands which were expressed in a wide range of mediums ranging from basic watercolour on paper, to oil on canvas, and etchings and aquatints printed off zinc and copper plates. Most of

the watercolours and oil paintings depict the skylines of the traditional Maltese and Gozitan villages, dominated by the dense cubic massing of the houses huddled around the church dome which rose high above the rest. He managed to capture the distinctive



Gozo Street Scene, oil on canvas, 1964

“Malta and Gozo remained essential inspirational fonts for much of his artistic career post the initial visits of the 1950s. Not least the ochre-stone cubic townscapes and the sun-drenched landscapes helped towards regaining many of his former abilities and skills after his illness.”
Richard England

sense of place and time, or genius locus expressed in a diverse palette of warm and bright colours that imbues the image with its quintessential Mediterranean spirit.

In 1958, following his first visit to Malta, Trevelyan produced the first suite of etchings and aquatints, a set of six etchings depicting various aspects of the Maltese environment. The first two prints in vertical format were entitled “Boy with Goat”, depicting a goat herder amidst a rural setting and “Carnival” which was inspired by the local festa with the blazing fireworks in the background. The other four etchings were all related to aspects of local architecture and the landscape, namely “Gozo” featuring the Cittadella, “Neolithic Temples”, “Quarries” and “Valletta”. The set was produced in an edition of fifty with five artists’ proofs.

Unfortunately, in 1963 Trevelyan contracted an unidentified viral infection of the brain which permanently affected his speech and obliged him to give up teaching. The rehabilitation process was a tortuous and lengthy one. However, he soon resumed his passion for traveling and together with Mary they continued with their regular visits to Gozo.

In 1970, Trevelyan produced a second Malta Suite which was commissioned by the Malta Industries Limited. Printed in an edition of fifty with ten artists’ proofs, this set depicted the following subjects: “Bonzo Bar”, “Calypso”, “Fisherman”, “Singing Nuns”, “Stone Cutting” and “Valletta”.

Trevelyan’s artistic works are marked by a distinguished creative streak of inventiveness where he manages to abstract the primordial essence of the Mediterranean landscape. In retrospect, almost four decades have gone by since the release of his second Malta suite and we are marking the 50th year anniversary of his first suite... and one sadly cannot fail to comment how our landscape has lost its naïve innocence and how over the last decades our environment has been willfully prostituted in the name of economic progress and modernity. Trevelyan’s artistic works expressed in his own inimitable style retain an almost childlike vision which seeks



Maltese village landscape, oil on canvas, 1958

to unravel the truly genuine and authentic whilst at the same time discarding the superfluous and modern contaminations. To view a Trevelyan landscape of Malta or Gozo is like re-visiting a familiar friend from our recent past. As architect Richard England commented “Malta and Gozo remained essential inspirational fonts for much of his artistic career post the initial visits of the 1950s. Not least the ochre-stone cubic townscapes and the sun-drenched landscapes helped towards regaining many of his former abilities and skills after his illness.”

Trevelyan was elected an Academician of the Royal Academy of Arts in 1987. He died on 12 July 1988, aged 78 at his beloved residence and studio at Durham Wharf, Hammersmith, London.

Note:

The main reference for this article is the entry on Julian Trevelyan written by Prof. Richard England in Encounters with Malta, (edited by Petra Bianchi and Rev. Peter Serracino Inglott), Encounters Books, 2000, pages 335-337.

Interpreting landscapes

Shanty towns as a quick fix solution to future urban development in Malta

The surge of urbanisation in the last 20 years in Malta can be seen as an answer to "what is the good life?" The scramble for material wealth has brought about a very sorry state of affairs in urban architecture. Architecture? Perhaps there is a distinction between a building and architecture. Architecture should be a more rational answer to building solutions. In other words, there is too much building in Malta and too little architecture.

The challenge in the last 20 years has been the rise of capitalism in Malta. I believe that the challenge in the future will be our response to poverty and immigration. Statistics show that today, over 70 million people a year migrate to cities in search of "the good life." To be sure, immigration is coming our way. So what will our cities be like in the future? How will we respond to squatters and shanty towns in Malta? Such as Sultan Bali in Istanbul and Hosinia in Nairobi? How will we react to whole communities living outside legal cities where there is security of tenure and access to politics? And will there be laws protecting squatters in Malta? Are there such laws today? Given that statistics are right, and given the fact that there are 1 billion squatters in the world today, my

hope for the future in Malta is that we will be prepared to engage when these changes come about.

I have been painting the Maltese landscape for a number of years and am very much in love with the terraced fields that are scattered around the countryside.

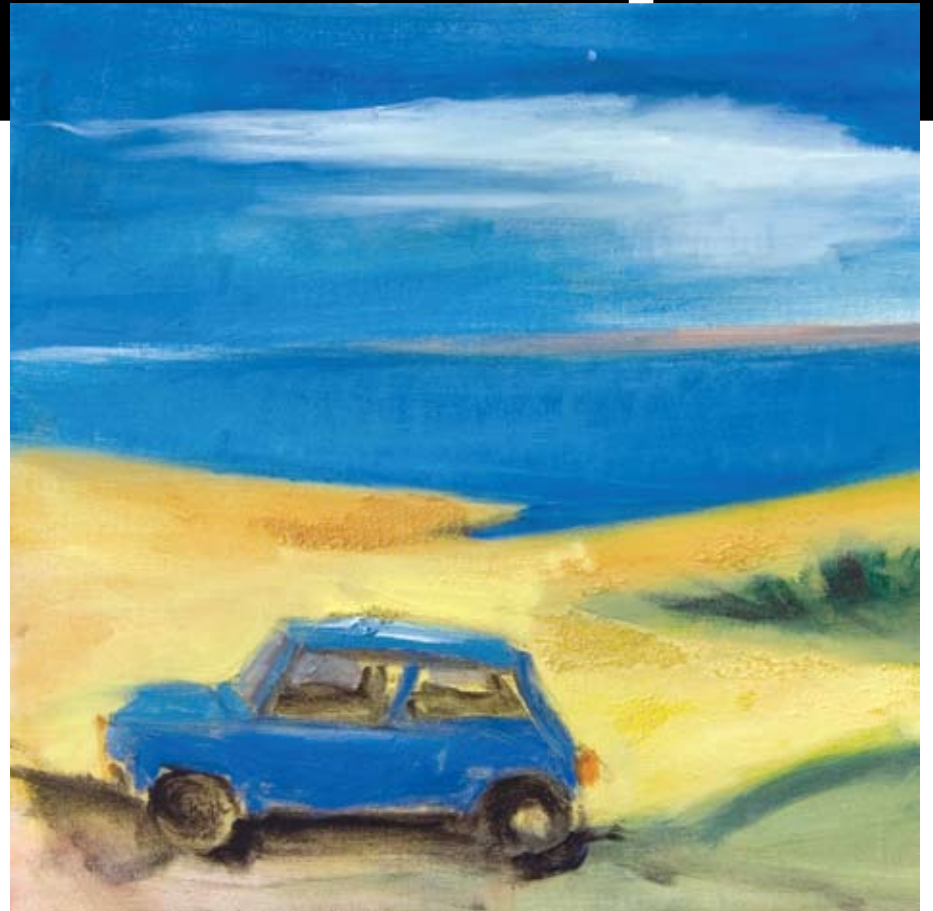
Some of these are clearly ancient. What is disturbing is that several terraced fields are in a state of neglect; a notable example is Xlendi in Gozo. Landscape is an integral element of the common heritage of humankind. Its role in the development of Malta's cultural identity has been critical.

Inspiring as places like Fawwara, Xlendi Cliffs and the Xagħra Valley may be to a painter, one cannot help but

notice that over a period of ten years, most places of outstanding beauty have been literally taken over by hunters' and trappers' installations. Places like these should be protected for all the population to enjoy. Not only do these installations make these places inaccessible to the public, but their presence is a polluting factor. Because of Malta's small size, there is a greater need to protect places like Xlendi, Burmarrad Valley, Manikata, Fawwara and all the terraced fields and "giren" around the island.



The Cumberland Hotel, Valletta - Oil on linen



Cirkewwa - Oil on canvas

Another change that is regrettably not for the better is that our ancient landscape is constantly under pressure from urban expansion and over-development. Its protection and management should be an obligation for everyone.

Madeleine Gera

Madeleine Gera grew up and was educated in Malta and (west) Germany. She has a Bachelor Degree in Philosophy. Madeleine was awarded a long term bursary to study Art in Italy and recently returned there to study portrait painting. Her work can be found in private collections in Italy, Malta, Germany, the United States, Sweden and Belgium. She opened Atelier Madeleine Gera in Valletta in 2006, where she paints and teaches.



The President's Palace, Valletta - Oil on canvas



Merchants Street, Valletta - Oil sketch on canvas



Grand Harbour - Oil on linen

"The Urban Challenge", the Kamra's position document on the built environment, addressed the complex and sometimes conflicting demands placed on our land, some of which have dramatically altered our landscape. "the Architect" spoke to two artists, **Laurent Muller** and **Madeleine Gera**, both of whom have been intrigued by the Maltese landscape and have drawn inspiration from its many facets. We asked them what inspires them most, what changes they have seen in recent years, how they see the urban landscape changing over the next 20 years and what their hopes are in this regard. Madeleine here shares with us a number of oil paintings expressing her view of the Maltese landscape, while Laurent is currently working on the relationship between art and photography as a medium to interpret the landscape.



The Religion - 2008

From impression to vision

On my arrival in Malta in 2004 the contrast from Manhattan, New York, to Valletta was amazing. The light of honey and gold on the bastions was the strongest impression that struck me first. By establishing my art studio in Valletta, I understood that Ex Uno Lapide could not be more à propos than for this European capital that has yet to develop its contemporary splendour. A large series of Yellow Bastions emerged from this vision and led the way to many researches based on Maltese Cultural Heritage as I went on discovering my new country and its mysteries.

From tradition to innovation

With the notion of Man facing his own creations and disasters, Architecture is one of the core themes in contemporary paintings all over the world. I am not referring to pretty watercolours or romantic 19th century tradition here, but more to a global consciousness amongst artists and their expression of this vision balanced between hope, reality and gloomy pessimism. We know that both visions and actions are needed simultaneously, with the strongest environmental conscience possible. For these reasons no architecture should be developed in a spirit of waste,



Babel - 2008



The last romance - 2008



Human - 2008

egotistic design and damaging to natural eco-systems. This return shall, however, be a hard achievement, one that will require embracing deep down a reality that only few want to see. Large bay windows onto a nice view without including solar panels? Loss of natural air circulation through illogical openings and plans? Erection of large towers that block natural sea breezes from reaching inland? Can we really afford to continue to operate in this manner for the direct notion of short-term profit? If this practice goes on, architects and developers could be considered to be cruel mammals or egotistic souls, in the same way as Artists could damage the future of Art by not fighting for their new ways of seeing, being, creating!

Laurent Muller



Are we really OK - 2008



Non-sense 1 - 2008

Laurent Muller was born in 1975 in France. He qualified in Applied Arts in Marseille in 1992 and as a Designer from the French National School of Design (ENSCI-Les Ateliers), Paris, in 1998. He worked in Paris and New York before establishing his art-design studio in Malta in 2004, and is currently working on the relationship art-design-photography.

Urbanism as an Afterthought

By David Pisani

On a recent visit to the museum of Dubai, I came across an old map dating from the early 18th century that bore an uncanny resemblance to another map I had seen some years back in Malta's National Library; a map of the Grand Harbour area and the small fortification then known as Castrum Maris. It seems an unimaginable coincidence that Dubai and Valletta (and the Grand Harbour) had similar roots as small fortified harbour towns, given that they would eventually become cities to which any kind of comparison is virtually impossible. However this tale of two cities is a discourse on the dynamics of urbanism which might be enriched by an analysis of two very different case studies that started life as similar habitats; two fortified settlements that would have qualified for town twinning had it existed in the 18th century.

Valletta's case is easily stated since it was drawn up by Laparelli as a simple grid within a fortified enceinte. It fully qualifies as a planned city, and any urban considerations were taken care of on the drawing board. Valletta's urban structure has endured the test of time although it is now faced with new challenges that may wreak more havoc than the wars and battles it was designed to withstand. Economically, Valletta experienced its fair share of prosperity thanks to its strategic harbour and the trade routes it serviced. The past few decades have been a time of decline and



neglect, and it is debatable whether the current regeneration drive is truly sustainable or even beneficial for a historical city such as Valletta.

Dubai's destiny was to be very different. The common excuse for this is that Dubai found oil and the rest is history; however a closer look at Dubai's recent history and some official figures point to a different reality. Oil and gas exploitation in Dubai amounts to only 6% of GDP, with the two main industries supporting the economy being

tourism and the ports. This again bears an almost uncomfortable resemblance to Malta's recent economic structure.

Dubai is what it is today due to cultural, economic and geopolitical realities that were not present in Malta (despite these admittedly overstretched comparisons) and are almost unique even on a global level. The building of Dubai is more akin to that of Los Angeles, described by the historian Kevin Starr in *Material Dreams* as a city "...conjured out of the desert as

a willed act of imagination." The question now remains whether Dubai's frantic explosion of architectural activity will endure the test of time or whether it will result in an urban fiasco.

Construction of the "new" Dubai started in the 1960's with most of the investment being wisely spent on infrastructure. The Jebel Ali Port (now the world's largest man-made harbour) and Sheikh Zayed Road, 14 lanes of tarmac cutting through the desert as far as Abu Dhabi, where amongst the first projects. By 1980 only a few administrative buildings had been built along Sheikh Zayed Road, and Dubai Airport was little more than a strip in the desert. Oil prices were low and tourism in the region was almost negligible, but trade with the other Gulf States, India and the Far East was thriving. The current construction boom started around 1990 and in less than 20 years Dubai became the youngest city on earth (in terms of average building age). During this time little thought has been given to the urban spaces which were being defined by high rise towers built almost arbitrarily on vaguely traced plots. Pedestrianisation and public transport were until recently virtually non-existent.

Urbanism in its classical form was of little or no interest to the Emiratis who opted instead for a micro-urbanism self contained within the walls of the building itself. This concept is neither new





nor unique, but seemed to work well for a country where the outside space is perceived as climatically hostile and uncomfortable. Meeting places, traditionally piazzas and parks, were shifted indoors within vast atria inside the building structure, protected from the sun's rays and the desert sand and blessed with air conditioning. This Outside-In building type probably reached its highest expression in Ski-Dubai, a ski resort built indoors and fully functional even with outside temperatures of 50° Celsius. Designed by F+A Architects and completed in December 2005 at a cost of \$275 million Ski Dubai represents the kind of technology driven architecture that is attracting the world's major architects to the region. As Burj Dubai (the world's tallest building) nears completion and the foundations are being laid for Zaha Hadid's Opus Building, Dubai is currently one of the best testing grounds for new technology and building materials. David Fisher's Dynamic tower, with independ-

ently rotating floors and built-in wind turbines is an ecological breakthrough as a high-rise building that is energy self-sufficient.

Nonetheless technology by itself, however advanced or sophisticated, cannot solve the problems created by the "left-over" empty spaces in between these self-contained buildings. These negative-spaces, or urbanism as an afterthought, are an integral part of the cosmopolitan fabric of Dubai and for its inhabitants represent an awkward and ambiguous environment. Ultimately all cities exist as a reflection of the people who inhabit them, an acculturation process that is fundamental to all built environments. With Dubai's population composed mainly of transitory expatriates it is unlikely that this process will take root any time soon. It is possible however that Dubai may become the first city to exist as a commodity rather than a habitat, a product intended to be desired, bought and sold, a new kind of object-architecture obsessed with its own existence.



David Pisani was born in Malta in 1965 and took up photography at a very early age, experimenting with a rudimentary camera and a makeshift darkroom the seemingly endless possibilities of the photographic image. He continued to develop and refine his photographic skills as a self-taught practitioner drawing inspiration from classical masters of art and photography. He was particularly influenced by the work of Ansel Adams and Eugène Atget, the former for his technical virtuosity and the latter for his emotional and spiritual rendering of the streets and buildings of Paris, a city which in later years would become a pivotal place in Pisani's career.

FUTURE CITY

Earlier this year, David Pisani was commissioned to create a photographic essay on the architecture and urbanism of Dubai, a city that is literally rising from the desert at a rate never experienced in history. His work may resemble a casual walk through the city, his point of view the same as any passer-by. However this deceptive informality is in truth a complex study on what he describes as Urbanism as an Afterthought, or the unplanned city. The photographs question the viability of Dubai only as much as they are fascinated by the high rise buildings, daring and sometime eccentric designs and the interaction between the built environment and the inhabitant. Dwarfed by skyscrapers the camera has no choice but to frame a series of segments, each a snippet of a building or street sign. Individually each image imparts a sense of fleeting time, a picture caught on the wing, almost as an accident, but the collection as a whole speaks of a greater reality that is the frantic construction of a cosmopolitan city without historical, geographical or economic obstacles. Future City is being exhibited at the Intercontinental Hotel in Malta. The Exhibition features the corporate collection of Emirates Airlines who are the patrons of this project. The Exhibition is curated by So Galerie.



The Urban Challenge: small = tall?



As part of its campaign for a better quality built environment, and further to its call for a more sustainable approach to the built (and natural) environment, the Kamra tal-Periti (KTP) organised a debate regarding the demand and impact of tall buildings in Malta. This event was held on the 21 November 2008 at the Le Meridien Hotel, Balluta.

Malta currently has a draft tall building policy (based on the application of a Floor Area Ratio mechanism), which is currently open to public consultation before final approval by Parliament. Recent years have seen a growing interest in tall building development on the islands and the construction of a number of tall building projects, as well as the submission of several planning permission applications for towers, some reaching up to heights of over 30 stories. There is still, however, little knowledge of the specific urban planning, urban design, construction and environmental aspects of tall buildings, giving rise to growing concerns as to the suitability of eventual developments for Malta's urban situation. The conference brought together eight international speakers, namely Lora Nicolaou, from DEG, UK; Faridah Shafii, Director of the Centre for Sustainable Construction and Tall Buildings of Malaysia; Franco Mola, from the Politecnico di Milano; Guido Montanari and Riccardo Bedrone, from the Politecnico di Torino; Chris McCarthy, from Battle McCarthy of the UK; and Michael Mclean and Brian Smith from the firm Davis



London skyline

Langdon of the UK. Periti Alberto Miceli Farrugia and Jacques Borg Barthet also addressed the conference on behalf of the KTP, while Joe Scalpello delivered a presentation outlining the process currently underway at the Malta Environment and Planning Authority (MEPA) in this regard. Vanessa McDonald from di-ve acted as moderator throughout the day.

The aim of the conference was not to provide any answers to whether Malta should or should not adopt a tall building policy, but rather to open up an informed discussion that takes into account the local situation, while at the same time looking towards experiences of other countries or regions that are similar in scale and in urban fabric to Malta. This article cannot delve in detail into the various topics delved into by the speakers, however some highlights of the comments made throughout the day may provide food for thought for those who have these issues at heart.

- Very often the decision to opt for a tall building is driven by a desire to create a landmark, an architectural statement that lends an element of branding to the locality within which such edifice is located. Other times, it is a result of a need for housing an increasing population. However, if one had to look at the predicted growth in population across Europe, this is expected to remain pretty constant until the end of the century. Thus one must evaluate the need for going high as opposed to the better utilisation of the existing building stock. Going tall may therefore be a lazy way out.

- The debate on tall buildings is often dominated by public sentiment, and the expectation of negative effects of such construc-



Commonwealth Promenade Apartments, Chicago - Mies van der Rohe

tions on the surrounding neighbourhood. This may however be driven more by a fear of change and by perceived threats. It is therefore important that, should Malta decide to adopt a tall buildings policy, this is accompanied by a widespread educational campaign as well as by adequate public participation and consultation.

- Tall buildings in Europe have a very different ethos to their counterparts in the United States and Asia, mainly as a result of the historical landscapes within which they are situated, and the relationship they have with the surrounding public realm. One comment made during the debate was that most tall buildings abroad are designed primarily as iconic structures, not necessarily serving any other purpose. To this, Guido Montanari stated, "But Malta is already an icon – it does not need more icons to compete with it."

- The discussion then focused on the fact that although many tall buildings in the world are in fact icons, they are somewhat anonymous, detached from the context within which they are located. Thus a building in New York could easily sit in Dubai without causing any disruption of the urban landscape due to the common architectural language adopted in the design of such buildings, and the possible monotonousness of outcomes across the world.



Portomaso Tower, Malta

- Going tall brings with it a number of new challenges, particularly in the structural field and in terms of sustainability issues. Due attention must also be given to the economies of the building, with an aim towards achieving a balance between cost, sustainability and added value. Another important factor is the need for adequate infrastructure supporting such development, without which the project will surely have more of a negative than a positive impact.

While this debate was certainly not exhaustive, and definitely merits more in depth studies and consideration, it achieved the main aim of outlining the various implications and considerations that must be kept in mind should Malta go down the road of adopting a tall buildings policy. As stated in The Urban Challenge, "forward strategic planning is essential if tall buildings are to be included in future redevelopment programmes. The strategy needs to be based on sound urban and planning objectives intended to assist in the improvement of the built environment, in the regeneration of sub-standard quarters, and in adding value to the country's social and economic offering. A policy document for the development of tall buildings that only seeks to endorse

existing and forthcoming planning commitments is as undesirable as it is misconceived."

This event was sponsored by Doka Italia S.p.A. and Panta Contracting Limited, with the collaboration of MEPA and BOV. The conference was also supported by a trade exhibition in which Halmann Vella, Citadel Insurance, Flock Image, Mediterranean Technical Services Ltd, Doka Italia S.p.A, Panta Marketing and Services Ltd, iSYS - Integrated Business systems, Avantech, Mekanika and Alberta participated.

MODERNIST MALTA

THE LEGACY OF THE MODERN MOVEMENT IN MALTESE 20C ARCHITECTURE

In the last decades, the architectural heritage of the Modern Movement has been more at risk than during any other period. By the end of the 1980s, many modern masterpieces around Europe and beyond had already been demolished or altered. This was mainly due to the fact that most Modernist buildings (collected in the public's psyche with the bulk of the more utilitarian urban development) were not considered to be elements of heritage. It is also perhaps correct to assume that their original functions had changed substantially and that their technological innovations did not always endure long-term stresses.

The International Style in Malta was short lived, with only a few excellent Modernist examples having been created. These works have not escaped the trend, many having been remodelled beyond recognition or demolished as a result of the fast changing circumstances accompanying the nation's rapid development. Bearing in mind those few remaining Modernist structures still intact it is considered important that more emphasis is placed on the promotion of their architectural and historical worth. This will hopefully promote a more sensitive intervention on these highly significant buildings should the need arise.

The Kamra tal-Periti together with Din I-Art Helwa and with the financial support of HalMann Vella, are organizing an exhibition on TWENTIETH CENTURY MODERNIST BUILDINGS IN MALTA to be held next January 2009. The exhibition will focus specifically on MODERNIST architecture which in Malta dates from 1930 up to 1970. The photographic display will include, amongst others, some of the country's most remarkable schools, including the Qala School (1960) by a young Joseph Huntingford, the earlier Msida

primary school (1955) by the well known Renato Laferla, as well as post war industrial and commercial buildings such as the Toyota Building, the later Mellieha Holiday Centre Hotel (the Danish Village by Hans Munk Hansen, 1975-9) and the Rediffusion House in G'Mangia (Carmelo Falzon, 1958), a building praised by its contemporaries though recently earmarked for redevelopment. Other notable works of architecture to be presented in the exhibition include the well known Manikata Church (Richard England, 1962-1974) as well as several individual residences.

The organizing committee for the event have appointed five professional photographers to illustrate between 35 and 40 properties that the KTP has included on its list of

committee will also launch a publication to accompany the exhibition. Partly funded through the assistance of the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts, Modernist Malta: The Legacy in Architecture will include a comprehensive selection of the photographers' work as well as two significant essays, a historical account of Modernist architecture in Malta by Perit Conrad Thake, a leading architectural historian, and a personal record of Modernist architecture as seen through the eyes of the architects themselves written by Petra Bianchi, director and council member of Din I-Art Helwa. The event and the publication will prove to be of interest not only to architects and engineers, but also to those interested in art and photography, as well as to lovers of Melitensia and Malta's



Rabat School, Gozo - Photo by Matthew Mirabelli

properties worthy of recognition as part of Malta's more recent architectural heritage. The photographs will seek to capture the meaning and the beauty of the Modernist movement.

At the opening reception, the organizing



Univeristy, Old Humanties - Photo by Patrick Fenech



Manikata Church, Photo by Alexandra Pace

cultural heritage.

This exhibition and its complementary publication aims to raise public awareness about the extent and wealth of Modernist architecture in Malta. It is the organisers' intention to communicate the qualities, originality and spirit of some of the better Modernist works through a photographic display of black and white prints, with models and drawings from the architect's own archives.

The printed catalogue will include additional information. It



Mellieha Holiday Centre - Photo by Sergio Muscat

will be without doubt a unique, timely and lasting documentary record of the efforts and achievements of the exponents of Modernism in architecture in Malta and Gozo.

Every project included in the exhibition embodies specific qualities of the Modernist movement, be it in the articulation of space, the massing of built form, or the wilful experimentation with new materials and structure. Together, the selected buildings are a testimony to the sense of architectural exploration emerging at a time when Malta was coming to terms with post war reconstruction and renewal, the subsequent acquisition of independence and a search for a new identity, purpose and role in the family of nations.

The Kamra tal-Periti and Din I-Art Helwa believe the event will help raise public awareness and appreciation that some of Malta's twentieth century architectural oeuvre is as deserving of recognition as its more renowned Baroque and Neo-Classical heritage and that it is as worthy of documentation, and in some cases preservation, as the numerous pre-war buildings which have been granted protection. By revealing the art in the structures, the exhibition creates a relationship between the realised projects and the viewer to reveal the aspirations of society as expressed in the works of the leading architects of the age.

Modernist Malta: The Legacy in Architecture will be able to be purchased from the KTP. All those interested in pre-booking their copies may contact the KTP secretariat, info@ktpmalta.com.

Breakfast with the Prime Minister...

About one hundred periti and representatives of various NGO's, Civil Society organisations and political parties filled the Palazzo Capua hall in Sliema on the 20 November in order to participate in a discussion with the Prime Minister on the much awaited reform process regarding the Malta Environment and Planning Authority.

Perit David Felice, President of the Kamra tal-Periti, opened the event by reiterating the Kamra's position that any reform process cannot be simply a cosmetic one, but must be an integrated vision that encompasses a wide range of aspects. Today's buildings are tomorrow's heritage, and the role of the perit in all of this is crucial and intrinsically linked with the reform of MEPA.

Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi began by stating that unlike previous reform processes, the one currently underway is not spurred by a need for MEPA to issue permits as quickly as possible, but rather by a desire for achieving quality in the built environment and sustainability in the construction industry. He stated that the reform process cannot be seen as a stand alone project, but one that is connected to various other processes including the reform to the rent laws and the revisions to the water and electricity prices.

The reform proposed for the Authority must acknowledge that there is much that is right within MEPA, and must lead to a change that is flexible enough to be open to future needs. Government's

proposal for the reform of the Authority will be based on four main pillars, namely consistency, transparency, efficiency and enforcement, all pointing towards achieving a more sustainable environment.

The most difficult principle is that of achieving consistency, since policies often require change in order to reflect changing needs, but this in turn creates conflict. In terms of transparency, the Prime Minister declared that MEPA is probably the

Authority that is most open in terms of availability of information. There is another side to transparency policies, however, and employees of the Authority must be accountable for their decisions,



from the lowest to the highest echelons.

Delays cost money. Developers are anxious to receive quick approvals to their applications.

However, many times, applications are a lost cause from the start, proposing projects that are blatantly in conflict with MEPA's policies. Here the Prime Minister invited periti to be careful what projects they submit for consideration, and to be courageous enough to refuse work when it is obvious that such permit will never be approved. One participant commented from the floor in this regard stating that MEPA's lack of consistency and unclear policies often do not allow the perit to adequately judge the likely outcome of an application. Finally, but certainly not least important, MEPA must be equipped with added resources in order to be able to carry out the much needed enforcement action, as well as the power to be able to remove illegal structures without having to pass through the tortuous procedures currently in place.

Although a number of those present were expecting Dr Gonzi to announce the reform of MEPA in full, there was a general air of satisfaction with Government's approach to the process. Dr Arnold Cassola of Alternattiva

Demokratika expressed satisfaction at hearing the holistic approach announced by the Prime Minister, and reiterated his party's conviction that issues of land use should be separate from planning matters. Roderick Galdes of the Malta Labour Party pointed out that direction should also be included as a guiding principle, referring to the Structure Plan in this regard. Dr Godwin Cassar, Director General MEPA, agreed that the role of the perit is vital, and the perit cannot act solely as the client's agent. He questioned the perit's responsibility in proposing projects that are not in accordance with planning conditions. There were various other comments from those present, including Vince Farrugia and Sandro Chetcuti on behalf of the General Retailers and Traders Union (GRTU), Astrid Vella on behalf of Flimkien għall-Ambjent Aħjar, Bjorn Bonello representing the Malta Chamber of Planners and Anglu Xuereb, as well as a number of periti.

The Prime Minister concluded the debate by acknowledging that this is no easy task, stating that politics should be kept separate from the discussion, and a common consensus reached. He thanked the Kamra for its comments and proposals with regard to the reform process and concluded with an appeal to periti to act ethically at all times, and to guide their clients in the right direction keeping the interests of society, the quality of life of Malta's citizens and the quality of the built environment at heart at all times.

This Business Breakfast was organised by Media Today as part of the Go Today Seminars, in collaboration with the Kamra tal-Periti.



ARCHITECTURE NIGHTS 2008

The third edition of Architecture Nights for 2008, organised by the Kamra tal-Periti, has come to an end last November. The series has this year featured the participation of world-renowned architects Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates from the UK, Agnes Couvelas from Greece, Mecanoo architecten from the Netherlands, this year's RIBA Gold Medal for Architecture, British architect Edward Cullinan, and award-winning Austrian firm Szyszkowitz-Kowalski. The organising committee would like to thank their sponsors HSBC and Steel Structures as well as the Dutch Embassy, the British High Commission and the Austrian Embassy.

29TH MARCH

KOHN PEDERSEN FOX ASSOCIATES (KPF)

The designs of KPF have been driven by the pursuit of design excellence. The firm designs buildings and spaces that, informed by the human scale, provide an uplifting backdrop for daily life. KPF's design ethos is based on the recognition that buildings have a responsibility not only to those who use them, not only to the city around them, but also to the environment at large

For KPF the ongoing environmental crisis calls not for the rejection of technological advances but for the promotion of appropriate technology, using new construction techniques and innovative building components in order to make buildings more useful and efficient.

19TH APRIL

AGNES COUVELAS

Agnes Couvelas' work is characterised by a sensitivity that is hard to find in contemporary architecture. Her architecture is mature and proper, very fitting to the context in which it is situated and responsive to environmental and climatic conditions. Her sensitivity is particularly evident in the judicious choice and use of materials (particularly in the use of local materials) and the careful and sensible control of detail. This makes her buildings harmonious with and respectful to the surrounding environment – a calm and gentle approach to architecture that is carried out without extra fuss but that can still provide strong architectural statements where required.

17TH MAY

MECANOO

Mecanoo bases its work methodology on analysis and intuition. For Francine Houben architecture should touch the senses. "It is never a purely intellectual, conceptual or visual game. Ultimately, what counts is the arrangement of form and emotion." With Mecanoo the sensory aspect is mainly determined by the lavish use of materials. Mecanoo excels in subtle combinations of the most diverse materials, including wood, concrete, copper, bamboo, brick, pebbles, zinc, stone, vegetation, glass and planes of saturated colour.

11TH OCTOBER

EDWARD CULLINAN

Edward Cullinan is without shadow of doubt one of the greatest contemporary living architects and truly one of the most respected architects of his generation. Edward Cullinan Architects (ECA) have been designing carefully composed, award winning, innovative buildings. The firm is committed to the idea that a successful

building is one that responds thoughtfully and gracefully to clients' needs and to its local context; and which is built on time and within cost. The protection of the environment is at the heart of the firm's approach to architectural design. ECA has always sought an architecture in which the environmental design forms a vital part of a holistic approach to building production.

15TH NOVEMBER

SZYSZKOWITZ-KOWALSKI

The work of Szyszkowitz-Kowalski combines a clear, readable geometry with a sculptural, at times expressionistic, playfulness that often borders on fantasy. Their works are also inventively integrated with their surroundings. In their own words "We pursue an architectural language that aims at existing or desired forms of life with a certain expressiveness. It includes a whole range of various social relations and urban space in particular. Most importantly, we believe that each architectural activity represents a kind of interpretation of correlations in life, thus generating new or essential significance."

T4A – CHILDRENS' WORKSHOP

The overall aim of this year's T4A children's workshop was to promote architectural awareness, predominantly 20th century architecture, and to make children aware of their immediate built environment. The morning workshop, organised in collaboration with the Ministry for Education and Culture, was held at St. James Cavalier on the 18 October and was led by Perit Michelle Micallef, Perit Melanie Galea and Perit Claire Abela and myself.

A brainstorming session was carried out during the first part of the morning. The 32 participating children were asked to distinguish between old and modern buildings. The aim of this exercise was for the children to become aware of the different architectural languages and patterns that were used throughout different periods, up to modern times.

During the second part of the workshop the children were divided into groups of five, and each given various images of modern architectural buildings or spaces. As a group, they had



to locate and draw the different geometric shapes found in each of the images, which ranged from residential buildings to entertainment centres and ecclesiastical buildings to office blocks. The children were made to understand the different elements that constitute modern architecture, and that essentially, architecture is made up of different shaped three dimensional blocks, put together symmetrically or asymmetrically, depending upon site and context.



During this stage of the workshop, each group was separately taken to the 'materials' table. Here, the children had the opportunity to actually 'touch and hold' the materials that constitute buildings. Materials such as glass, con-

crete, ceramic tiles and wood were on display for the children to have a hands on experience with these materials that constitute their immediate built environment.

In the final stage of the workshop, each group was given a particular building type; namely a school, a residential tower, an office block, a church and a museum. They were also supplied with three dimensional blocks, together with media that represented the materials they were exposed to before, such as glass and metal. Together, they built physical models, cladding them accordingly. Through this exercise, the children started to explore the exciting event of what happens when different shapes such as cubes, cylinders and spheres are put together to create something totally new and different. During this whole process, which saw the children getting involved from a conceptual stage to a finished product, they questioned issues relating to the stability of the



BY LUCIENNE ELLUL

structures, the relation between the different cladding materials, as well as the properties of each of these.

The final product consisted of different shaped coloured buildings that when put alongside one another, created the basis for a modern city where "live, work and play" could all be plugged in and explored. High towers, low buildings, courtyards, skylights and columns all formed part of the architectural language that the children chose in order to express their ideas on their immediate built environment.

Today's children are the future citizens and decision makers of tomorrow. Their ability to make diligent choices is based on the knowledge that they are provided with and attain as growing students. Therefore it is important that architectural awareness together with teamwork is promoted in order to help shape and improve the future quality of our built and natural environment.

“The Urban Challenge” receives two prestigious awards

Din I-Art Helwa recently announced a number of awards in various categories. The Kamra tal-Periti is honoured to have received not only the Prix d'Honneur for Built Heritage Journalism but also the overall best award of the Silver Medal Trophy for “The Urban Challenge: Our Quality of Life and the Built Environment” which was published in November 2007.



Villa Cagliares



Siggiewi church

These prizes are awarded annually to those journalists and publications that most raised awareness on the issues and status of the island's built and natural heritage.

In the words of the judges, “The Urban Challenge set out constructively, objectively, clearly and in an extremely knowledgeable and well-researched manner the magnitude of the challenges confronting Malta's built cultural heritage. In articles dealing soberly and comprehensively with quality in architectural design, heritage preservation and the re-focussing of Malta's construction development, (the authors) set out an outstanding vision of how Malta's built cultural heritage – which has been under such

sustained pressure for so long from seemingly unrestrained development – could be safeguarded by a clear national commitment to quality in architecture and the built environment.”

The publication of The Urban Challenge and the notions presented therein were widely reported in the local press. Various members

of the political class as well as members of civil society organisations had expressed their support for the ideals presented therein. “The Urban Challenge” was also presented to the Prime Minister as part of the Kamra's position with respect to the proposed reform of the Malta Environment and Planning Authority. In a press release published following the presentation of the awards, the Council of the Kamra tal-Periti thanked Din I-Art Helwa for this important acknowledgement of its work, and augured that this will help in keeping the considerations expressed in The Urban Challenge at the forefront of the public debate. The Council also thanked Perit Alberto Miceli Farrugia and Perit Jacques Borg Barthet, for their time and dedication in making this publication possible.

Other Awards

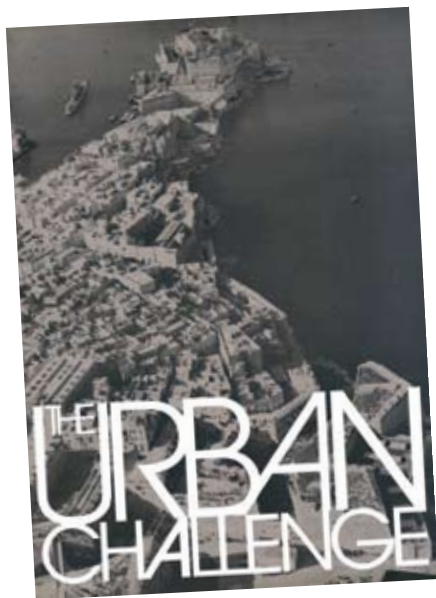
The Prix d'Honneur for Natural Heritage Journalism went to Alan Deidun for his commitment to campaigning journalism on the environment and specifically for his article in The Sunday Times entitled “Creatures of the Deep” which treated the plight of turtles in the Mediterranean. A Special Diploma went to Lino Bugeja for his worthy series of articles on Vittoriosa's Maritime Heritage.

In another category, Din I-Art Helwa also presented Awards for restoration projects. The Restoration Unit was presented with the Silver Medal Trophy and Prix d'Honneur for restoration and conservation with respect to the works carried out on a medieval church in Siggiewi which had remained abandoned, falling into disrepair, since the late 17th century when the congregation moved to the “new” parish church. Din I-Art Helwa felt

that “what was so striking about this building, and what attracted the judges' attention, was the notion of restoring a ruin which would then be showcased as a ruin itself.” By ensuring the survival of such an important medieval site, the Restoration Unit had made an outstanding and significant contribution to the conservation and enhancement of Malta's cultural heritage. Perit Norbert Gatt, who led the restoration job, said the project had been a great challenge for the unit. The team's goal had been to maintain the nature of the ruins while making the site adequate for visiting. When the old church had first opened its doors while works were underway, the entire village had thronged to the site to view the project.

The Prix d'Honneur for rehabilitation and re-use was awarded for the work carried out on Villa Cagliares in Żejtun, a 400-year-old Baroque country residence. This conservation project lifted the villa from its dreadful state of dilapidation from the days when it was used as a farm. Retaining the authenticity of the building was of paramount importance, so nothing was discarded to ensure the building was restored to its original state. While thanking Din I-Art Helwa for the Award on behalf of Architecture Project, Perit Joanna Spiteri Staines commended master masons Lawrence Buhagiar and George Borg, who were “a dying breed”, for their work and expertise which were essential to the realisation of the project.

A third project, The Our Lady of Lilies Band Club, Mqabba, received a special mention during the award ceremony for the restoration and renovation of the post-war classical façade of the building.



Catastrophic Events and the Urban Environment

BY PERIT RUBEN PAUL BORG

Introduction

The awareness of the effects of catastrophic events on the urban habitat has increased over the years, and the consequences of tsunamis, flooding, earthquake, fire, wind and other phenomena have served to increase this interest. However in spite of ongoing research, and technological advances in the assessment of catastrophic events, in the design of structures and risk management, the effect of catastrophe on the urban habitat remains an issue of concern.

In the assessment of catastrophic scenarios on the Urban Habitat it is necessary to consider the behaviour of structures located in urban habitats, which are particularly prone to exceptional and catastrophic events and develop tools for the prediction of the ultimate response of structures under extreme conditions, and to characterise the performance of structures under extreme loading. The consequences of catastrophic events, occurring in specific regions, need to be analysed with regards to life safety, economic losses due to direct damage, and the indirect losses as a result of the catastrophe. Design guidelines are required for the damage prevention, for assessment, and for the repair of constructions hit by extreme actions during catastrophic events.

Fire Resistance of Structures

The safe design of structures under fire conditions can be ensured through a number of design approaches, in general ranging from a simple element prescriptive approach, to a more advanced structural fire engineering approach. It is reported that by considering the actual fire and structural behaviour through advanced methods, possible weak links within the design can be identified and rectified, to allow for a safer, more robust and potentially more economical building construction.

The performance-based fire design is an accepted methodology in many European countries, for the verification of structural resistance in fire conditions. A realistic understanding of the behaviour of structures in fire can be achieved. The overall building safety can be verified using the performance-based fire safety design. In view of the more profound understanding of phenomena and more precise analysis of structures in fire, an equal to, or higher safety level can be obtained, than with prescriptive

fire methods. More economical designs with acceptable levels of safety can be achieved, resulting in the construction of more innovative structure, which were not possible with the restrictive simple prescriptive rules. This also leads to an improved understanding of the actual behaviour of the building during fire. A more robust building design results from the advanced design approach, allowing for the identification and strengthening of any weak links in the structure. The advanced structural fire design within a global fire strategy, allows for an increase in the safety levels offered.

Earthquake Resistance of Structures

Research on the seismic evaluation of buildings, and retrofit of structures is constantly progressing, and the performance of structures in major earthquakes leads to a better understanding of the seismic resistance of structures. The analysis of the effects of recent strong earthquake in the US and Japan (1989 Loma Prieta, 1994 Northridge, 1995 Kobe) indicated that while buildings which complied with codes did not collapse, the buildings suffered unexpected damage. The Performance-based seismic design (PBSD) allows for an evaluation of the performance of the building, given the potential seismic hazard, and the uncertainties in the assessment of the response of buildings. The PBSD is also intended to give a realistic prediction of the risk of life and economic loss that may occur as a result of earthquakes.

The performance-based design provides a systematic methodology for the assessment of the performance capabilities of a building, a system or component. The performance-based codes introduced the concept of performance in terms of discreetly defined performance levels.

Impact and Explosion Resistance of Structures

The effects of impact and explosion on structures are of significance, when considering accidental impact on structures such as the impact of mud slides, and accidental explosion due to gas. Furthermore the concern regarding the dangers posed to buildings and occupants from vehicle borne devices has increased in recent years, particularly following the 11th September 2001 events. It is reported that with regards

to impact and explosion, it is necessary to adequately assess robustness of the structures. The vulnerability to progressive collapse due to localised damage from blast and impact needs to be assessed. It is also important to quantify the actions related to extreme events. In this regard, experimental investigation and numerical testing provide important results for the assessment of extreme events. Protection systems, and design methodologies for the resistance of blast and impact need to be developed.

Risk Management

Engineering decision making, tends to be quite complex, mostly due to the significant potential consequences and substantial uncertainties. Risk and safety management is required at strategic, normative and operational levels, and needs to be based on a scientific methodology. The decision process concerns all aspects of the management and execution of infrastructure development. During the planning and execution of engineering facilities the management of risks should ideally be based on a holistic perspective, considering all possible events which may lead to and influence potential consequences. Risk assessment is important in establishing rational decisions, consistent with the preferences of society, with the broad objective of improving the quality of life.

The success of the general development in society, and competitiveness in engineering, depend on the efficiency of identified options for risk management, and also the communication of the basis for decision making to all the stakeholders. This is considered to require a unified framework for risk based decision making which needs to be general to accommodate special needs of different application areas, but specific enough to ensure a sufficient degree of consistency in modelling and in theoretical basis.

International Symposium: Malta 2008

The continued and ongoing development of research methods, analysis and design methodologies, assessment of catastrophic scenarios and risk management, form the basis of an improved performance of structures in the Urban Habitat, and lead to a better understanding of the effect of catastrophic events on the Urban Environment.

An International Symposium on the latest developments in the field of Urban Habitat Constructions under Catastrophic Events, was organised in Malta by an international scientific committee and was supported by the European Science Foundation and hosted by the Department of Building and Civil Engineering, Faculty for the Built Environment, of the University of Malta between the 23 October and 25 October 2008 at the Aula Magna in Valletta. The main themes of the Symposium included Fire resistance of Structures, Earthquake resistance, Impact and Explosion Resistance, Risk Assessment and Catastrophic events, and the Catastrophic scenarios of Volcanic eruptions. More than 100 international delegates, mainly Academics, Researchers and Engineers from 22 countries participated in the International Symposium, presenting the latest research in the field of urban habitat constructions under catastrophic events. A number of key-note lectures were delivered on specific important themes namely: The performance based approach in the seismic rehabilitation of buildings; The design of high rise buildings to survive terrorist attack; Catastrophic events and bridge and wind engineering, and advances in the evaluation of robustness of structures. The seismic risk of buildings in Malta was addressed in a paper with reference to the seismic hazard of the Maltese Islands, the vulnerability of buildings, and exposure with respect to potential loss in a seismic event. The seismic hazard assessment was also discussed in this regard. The publication "Urban Habitat Constructions Under Catastrophic Events" was published by the University of Malta, with the support of the European Science Foundation, and includes a significant collection of reviewed papers on the latest scientific research conducted on fire resistance, earthquake resistance, blast and explosion resistance, risk management and the effect of catastrophic events on the Urban habitat. Further information about the Symposium themes, and the publication, can be obtained by contacting this journal on thearchitect@ktpmalta.com.

Perit Ruben Paul Borg is a Structural Engineer and lectures at the University of Malta. He is a member of the KTP Built Environment Technical Committee.

Tragedy in San Anard

by Perit Edward Said

Not far from Fort San Leonardo (featured in Issue 45 of this journal) is a rather unique building complex. Dominated by a chapel, it resembles somewhat a convent yet in actual fact the structure is a former baronial residence. It appears that the chapel, dedicated to St. Leonard dates to at least 1656 when a Nardu Sammut constructed a chapel for his namesake(1). Architectural evidence suggests however that parts of the building might be earlier than this. By the early 20th century the house, chapel and surrounding grounds belonged to a Baroness Maria Cafici Casolani(2) and the complex became known as Id-Dar tal-Barunessa.

A number of aged residents in the area still remember her climbing into a mule-drawn calesse whilst being attended by her servants. Soon after the war, the house was abandoned however the Chapel still served the local hamlet of San Anard. In the 1970s a television series depicted the building from the outside, soon after it was ransacked by trophy hunters and vandals. Since then the house has been called Id-Dar tas-Soru after the series. Over the next decades, hundreds have appar-

ently laid claim to its ownership only for a nearby pig farmer to build a piggery on its grounds, abutting the house.

Id-Dar tal-Barunessa is a quintessentially Maltese country residence, not unlike a diminutive version of the Inquisitor's Palace in Girgenti or Palazzo Gomerino outside Rabat. The residence itself is however more akin to a country tower bearing testimony to the vulnerability of this part of Malta to corsair attacks in the past. The small apertures, loop-holes and machicolations are evidence of this. The chapel and house are separated by a courtyard which leads into the huge gardens below which are known to hold huge cisterns. These had further accesses to the grounds below leading down to the Xghajra coastline. On the other flank of the chapel is a charming Nymphaeum which once complemented the gardens. Closer observation of the ruins will reveal that numerous features were added right until the 20th Century.

It is just awful to witness more and more of the fabric being destroyed through neglect and vandalism. MEPA scheduled the complex as a Grade 2 listed building in 2006 however the destruction goes on.



Only recently, sections of the chapel barrel vault caved in and a substantial part of the Nymphaeum collapsed. To make matters worse the chapel parvis has recently become a rubbish dump. And now sadly, the area of virgin countryside just below the gardens of villa is Ta' Barkat, the site for the new sewage treatment plant. This will

permanently destroy the context of this unique baronial country residence.

(1) Ferris, Achille, *Le Chiese di Malta e Gozo*

(2) Hughes, Quentin & Conrad Thake, *Malta, The Baroque Island* (Malta 2003)

(3) Said, Edward – *Id-Dar tal-Barunessa*, unpublished paper (Malta 2004)

Living in Luxury

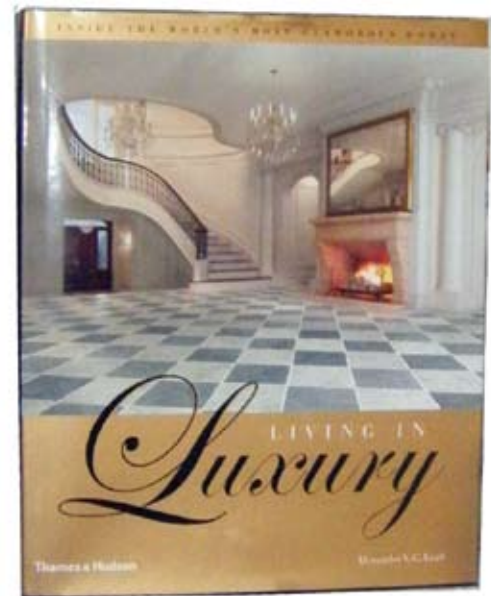
PUBLISHED BY THAMES & HUDSON (NOVEMBER 24, 2008)

If you had to happen to wander through any of the rooms splashed across the pages of this book, we pray you leave your common sensibilities at the door. Forget your kamra passaggia, one point eight metre yards and "cosy" kitchen-living-dining space... this real estate is all about how extraordinary ordinary living can be. You will take a sneak peak at the estates that double their patron's money in their sleep as well as those that have brought families to their ruin. And who better to introduce you to this book by Alexander V. G. Kraft than property

mogul Donald Trump? The listed 20 properties, mostly obedient servants to distinctly eccentric taste are surely not everyone's cup of masala tea. Think MTV Cribs. Supersized. To their owners, however, they are nothing short of the stuff of dreams. Featured homes include a masculine five storey penthouse in the city, a Neo-Palladian villa, an enchanting Moroccan oasis and a historic French chateau Provence hide-out. Donald Trump's 2.5 hectare Palm Beach home is also showcased as one of the most expensive properties in

the world.

What makes such a splurge worth its while? What are the mechanisms behind the creation of property hot spots such as the French Riviera or the shores of Miami. And when is big too big? Is the most wonderful exotic paradise worth forfeiting the ability to easily jet to the rest of the world? Kraft seems to have all the answers. "Living In Luxury - Inside the World's Most Glamorous Homes" is available in hardback, boasts a gold typeface as well as 150 illustrations, 140 of which are in colour.



www.deathbyarchitecture.com



Death by Architecture began its life in 1995 as the personal web page of Mario Cipresso, an undergraduate architecture student at the University of Illinois at Chicago. By 1997, it had become the preeminent site for architecture competition information on the internet. Joining with several other like-minded sites in Europe, Death By Architecture was a founding partner of the International Competition Network in 1998.

Easy to navigate, the site lists a number of design competitions, award schemes and grants of interest to any architectural firm, including also some that are aimed at students. An interactive calendar allows the browser to take note of upcoming deadlines for submission and registration in the listed competitions. The site also includes a section which lists a series of articles that are posted by the site administrators on a regular basis.

COMPETITION

Not all of Valletta was built according to the strict orthogonal plan designed by Francesco Laparelli. Can you identify this neighbourhood in Valletta from this pre-World War II photograph?



The winner of this competition wins a copy of the book reviewed above: "Living in Luxury – Inside the World's Most Glamorous Homes". This book is available from **Agenda Bookshop**, the sponsor of this competition and review page.

Send your entries to: The Editor, The Architect Competition, Kamra tal-Periti, The Professional Centre, Sliema Road, Gzira, or by email on

thearchitect@ktpmalta.com.

The first correct entry drawn on the 15 February 2009 will win. Only residents of the Maltese Islands are eligible to participate. Members of the Editorial Board and their families are not eligible to participate.

The farmhouse featured in last issue's competition was the residence of Victor Pasmore. The winner is Mr Ian Zammit.



Agendabookshop



NOW TO 04 JANUARY 2009; DESIGN MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

DESIGN CITIES

Design Cities tells the story of contemporary design through seven key cities at their creative height: London (1851), Vienna (1908), Dessau (1928), Paris (1936), Los Angeles (1949), Milan (1957), Tokyo (1987) and London (2008). The exhibition will feature a full range of objects from textiles and fashion to industrial pieces, furniture and prints. It will include design classics such as chairs by Charles and Ray Eames, as well as work by a spectrum of designers that together will evoke an impacting impression of their era. Key exhibits will include work by William Morris, Christopher Dresser, Adolf Loos, Marcel Breuer, Le Corbusier, Eileen Gray, Achille Castiglioni, Issey Miyake and Ron Arad. Design Cities has been organised by the Design Museum, London in association with Istanbul Modern and is curated by Design Museum Director Deyan Sudjic. www.designmuseum.org

NOW TO 11 JANUARY 2009; THE LIGHTHOUSE, GLASGOW, SCOTLAND

GARETH HOSKINS ARCHITECTS: THE LIGHTHOUSE ARCHITECTURE SERIES

This is the first in a five-year programme of architec-



tural monographs to celebrate Scottish architectural talent. Gareth Hoskins Architects have worked on a multitude of projects that range from, arts and culture, health, education, residential, to commercial and master-planning. The practice has designed Culloden Battlefield Visitors Centre, Partick Community Health Centre, Robin House Children's Hospice, Balloch, and The Bridge Arts Centre, Glasgow. www.thelighthouse.co.uk

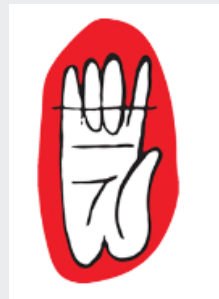
NOW TO 18 JANUARY 2009;
THE CRYPT, LIVERPOOL METROPOLITAN
CATHEDRAL, LIVERPOOL, UK

LE CORBUSIER: THE ART OF ARCHITECTURE

Explore the extraordinary career and enduring legacy of Le Corbusier (1887-1965), iconic architect, designer, writer and artist in the first major exhibition of his life and work seen in Britain for over 20 years.

www.architecture.com

(This exhibition will then travel to the Barbican Gallery in London and will be on display between the 19 February – 24 May 2009)



NOW TO 02 FEBRUARY 2009; ARCHITEKTURZENTRUM WIEN, AUSTRIA

THE MAKING OF ARCHITECTURE

Whereas in one Parisian architect's studio shots are fired at a clay block, in another orchids are raised. In Zurich an architect reclined in her bed with a wooden set-square, in Hong Kong thoughts are crystallised with pieces of Lego. This exhibition tells about the very different ways in which architects use their various tools, from the pencil to the computer. www.azw.at



NOW TO 29 MARCH 2009; V&A MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

THE OLYMPIC STADIUM PROJECT - LE CORBUSIER AND BAGHDAD

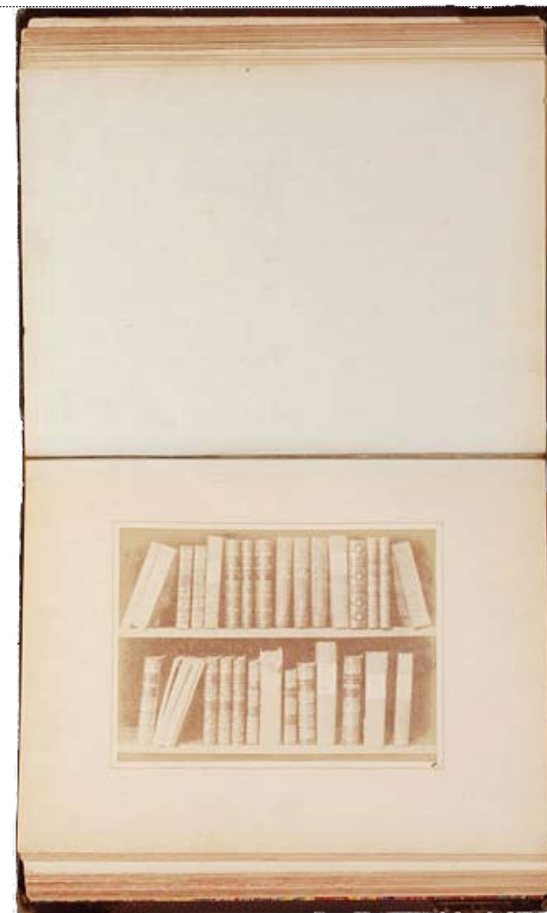
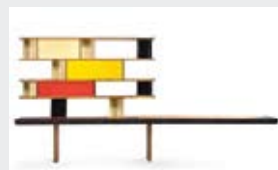
This display examines one of the last projects by Le Corbusier, begun in 1957, his fascinating design for a sports stadium in Baghdad. With specially commissioned models, it gives a sense of what this marvellous structure would have looked like had the project come to fruition. The stadium was planned around a set of innovative radially arranged ribs or "voiles", the designs for 20 of which also feature in the display. www.vam.ac.uk/collections



NOW TO 30 MARCH 2009; MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK, USA

ATELIERS JEAN PROUVÉ

With all the excitement surrounding today's digital manufacturing technologies, it is interesting to look at an earlier historical moment of workshop mass-production, as practiced by the great French architect and designer Jean Prouvé (1901-1984). This exhibition examines Prouvé's collaborations within his Ateliers Jean Prouvé from idea to finished product. www.moma.org



NOW TO 24 APRIL 2009; V&M MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

LIBRARIES OF LIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHIC BOOKS FROM THE V&A COLLECTION

Photographic books are almost as old as photography itself. Indeed, one of the inventors of photography, William Henry Fox Talbot, was also author of one of the very first books to include photographs, The Pencil of Nature (1844). The Museum has been collecting photographic books since 1852. The images below represent a small selection from the V&A's holdings. Many more may be seen and handled on request in both the National Art Library and the Prints and Drawings Study Room. www.vam.ac.uk

NOW TO 01 MARCH, 2009;

PINAKOTHEK DER MODERNE, MUNICH, GERMANY

MULTIPLE CITY: CITY CONCEPTS 1908-2008

The exhibition shows current urban developments worldwide as mirrored in central urban concepts of the past 100 years. Their juxtaposition and inter-relationship with leading historical and contemporary ideas illustrates and explains the complex and multi-layered developments of urban development. Original plans and models document historical city concepts, while current changes to urban spaces are presented in artistic-documentary works such as photographs and animated films. www.pinakothek.de

