



# the Architect

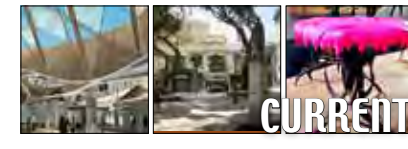
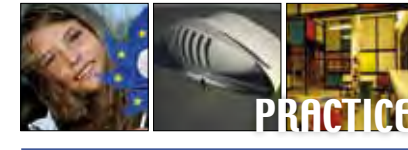
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KAMRA TAL - PERITI

NEWSPAPER POST

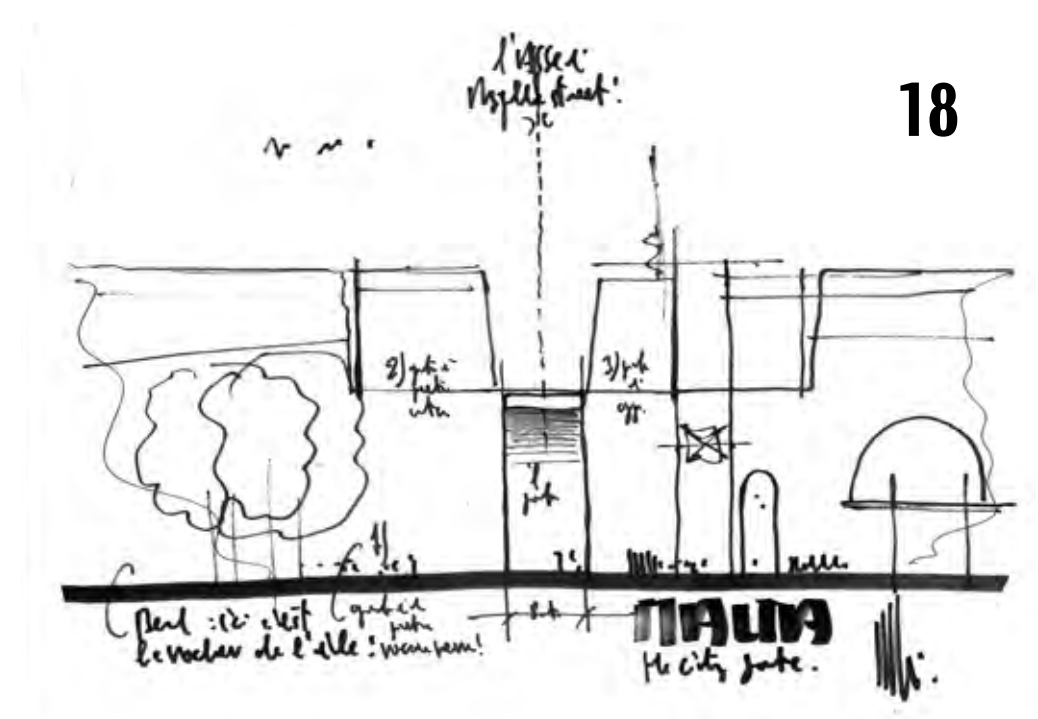
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***“Places talk, they have something to say. Every project is a new adventure, and understanding the place is important.”***

**Renzo Piano**  
*(see pg 18)*

In an issue of the "Lehen is-Sewwa" in 1949, Herbert Ganado had predicted that the Opera House would remain unbuild well into the twenty-first century. It seems like he was wrong ... or wasn't he? ... the schematic proposals revealed a few days ago do not contemplate the rebuilding of the Opera House ("that would be fake" – Renzo Piano), nor the creation of a new building on the site. On the contrary, the design considers the valorisation of the existing ruins, and the reintegration of parts of the building that are known to lie in various locations around Malta, including, one hopes, the government compound in Marsa<sup>1</sup>, the field in Santa Lucija, the two complete capitals in the grounds of MCAST, and numerous bits and pieces that have been fashioned into coffee tables and garden furniture in private residences (though the latter may undeniably be an impossible task).

An interesting piece of information I came across recently is that London Bridge, constructed in 1831, was deemed structurally unsound in 1962. It was subsequently disassembled, each piece numbered and sold off by auction for the princely sum of 2.5 million dollars to Robert McCulloch, who reassembled the Bridge in Arizona, USA (although apparently he was under the impression that he was buying Tower Bridge!). Who knows, maybe Government could consider auctioning off City Gate to part-fund the €80 million project that it seems quite certain will grace the entrance to our Capital City. If it finds someone mad enough to buy it, that is.

Without entering into the merits of the proposal, if this project has achieved anything, it has certainly been successful in bringing Architecture to the forefront of the national debate. Popular online blogs are inundated with comments from people of all walks of life, each putting in their penny's worth of opinion on the scheme. Whether these comments are valid and based on an understanding of the sensitivity of working in a site such as this, is another matter. Never before in Malta, to my knowledge, has an architectural project been raised to the status of a national event, taking up prime television time on a Saturday night. It was certainly the main topic of discussion one overheard in Republic Street in the week following the announcement of the project, with people standing in Freedom Square and deliberating on the proposals "on site." This will truly be a public project, both

in the nature of the constructions it includes, and also with respect to the active participation of the public throughout. It also augurs well for the beginning of a national debate on the quality of Architecture and the quality of our urban spaces. And this will hopefully catalyse a future where Architecture is valued as an art, and not simply as the task of construction, further highlighting the need for a National Policy for Architecture, which the Kamra tal-Periti has been promoting since 2004.

This issue of tA includes a brief overview of the proposals for the "Valletta Projects", as they are being referred to on the OPM website (go to [www.opm.gov.mt](http://www.opm.gov.mt) for an in depth account of the concepts and schematic designs). We hope to be able to delve further into the project in coming issues, and to keep abreast of developments in this regard, particularly with respect to issues such as traffic management and accessibility that still need to be further defined.

The commissioning of the project to a foreign architect is in itself an item for debate. The cross-fertilisation of ideas through travel has always been an important aspect of the advancement of society. From the Grand Tour in the 17th and 18th centuries, to Le Corbusier's travels in the Mediterranean, people have moved to experience different cultures, and to pass on the current thoughts, ideas and movements in art, literature, engineering and all sorts of fields. Architecture is no alien to this, and the development of the language of architecture is certainly due to such exchanges. This led the editorial team to speak to a number of Periti working off our shores. Martin Xuereb and Ray DeMicoli tell of their experiences in carrying out projects in various countries, while Joseph Galea, Kenneth Zammit and Sarah Anastasi recount about how they left the Islands for a period of time to work in Europe and Canada. All recount how these experiences have changed them, and have helped in the broadening of their approach to architecture and engineering at all levels.

**Simone Vella Lenicker**  
Editor

Reference:  
1 Letter to the Editor, Perit Edward Said; the Architect, Issue No. 47

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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 2009 consists of Vincent Cassar (President), David Felice (Past President), Simone Vella Lenicker (Honorary Secretary) and Council members Ruben Paul Borg, Jacques Borg Barthet, Keith Cole, Philip Grech, Anthony Fenech Vella, Danica Mifsud, and Damian Vella Lenicker.

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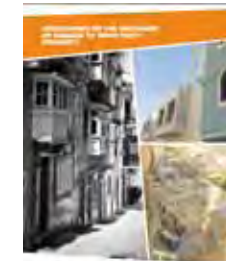
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COVER: Model of the proposal for the entrance to Valletta. Image courtesy of the Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications

**BUILDING REGULATIONS ACT**

A Consultation Meeting with Periti was held on the 01 June 2009, in order to discuss the recently published draft of the Building Regulations Act. A few periti attended together with Council members Vincent Cassar, Philip Grech, Anthony Fenech Vella and Simone Vella Lenicker. In addition, a number of periti sent in their comments by email. The meeting produced important feedback and highlighted some issues that require attention. KTP shall be forwarding its final comments to the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs (MRRA) accordingly.



**AVOIDANCE OF DAMAGE TO THIRD PARTY PROPERTY**

During the same Consultation Meeting of the 09 June 2009, the draft Regulations on the Avoidance of Damage to Third Party Property were also discussed. The meeting indicated that the proposals being made were unacceptable to the profession in terms of responsibility and liability. KTP shall also be seeking legal advice and shall be forwarding its final comments to the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs (MRRA) accordingly.

**MEETING FOR MEP CANDIDATES**

Unfortunately, the Go Today Seminar organised by MediaToday in conjunction with the Kamra tal-Periti, planned to be held on Wednesday 20th May at the Palazzo Capua, had to be cancelled due to poor response. This event was planned to provide an opportunity for all to discuss the importance of quality in the built environment, not only at a local level but also at a pan-European level. The Kamra believes that architects and politicians can and must work in tandem, in order to ensure the highest levels of quality of life for our people. The Architects' Council of Europe (ACE), of which the Kamra tal-Periti is an active member, has recently issued Policy Recommendations addressed to the Institutions of the European Union and the Member States. These Policy Recommendations were presented throughout Member States to the candidates for the recent MEP Elections for their endorsement and commitment (see page 8 for the full text). Perit Jacques Borg Barthet, Co-Chairperson of the Built Environment Standing Committee, participated in an edition of Reporter on the subject. This may be viewed online at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_IE0EqepRvo&feature=channel\\_page](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_IE0EqepRvo&feature=channel_page)



**EMCS REAL ESTATE FORUM 2009**

Perit Keith Cole represented the Kamra tal-Periti on the panel of the Real Estate Forum organised by EMCS that took place on the 8 May at Portomaso. The Forum was supported by the KTP.

**INTELLIGENT ENERGY EUROPE**

Council members Vincent Cassar, Ruben Paul Borg and Simone Vella Lenicker attended a round-table session

organised by Malta Enterprise on the Intelligent Energy Europe program. It was however agreed that KTP does not at the moment have the resources to deal with such funding programs.



**AIR-CONDITIONING AT A TIME OF CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY CONSERVATION**

This seminar, organised by Titan in collaboration with the Kamra tal-Periti and the Chamber of Engineers was held on the 17 June 2009. The presentations included an overview of entrusted projects and portfolio of Titan, a line-up of specialised applications by STULS Germany, an explanation of the effects of photovoltaic and renewable energy, and keynote speeches by the Chamber of Engineers and the Kamra tal-Periti, the latter delivered by Perit Philip Grech. This one-day seminar was followed by a reception held on the 19 June.

**PRODUCT SEMINAR: SIKA**



JCR Ltd, importers of SIKA products, organised an evening seminar on the 28 May 09, at the Professional Centre, Gzira. Mr. Riccardo Verga, from SIKA Italia S.p.a delivered a presentation on waterproofing materials for new and existing structures. The event was very well attended.

**MEETING WITH PRESIDENT GEORGE ABELA**

On the 5 June 2009, a delegation from the Malta Federation of Professional Bodies met President George Abela at the Palace in Valletta. One or two representatives of each of the Organised affiliated with the Federation were present. Perit Simone Vella Lenicker attended on behalf of the Kamra tal-Periti.

**COOLING WITHOUT AIRCONDITIONING**

This symposium took place at St James Cavalier, Valletta, on the 25 and 26 June 2009. The event presented a unique opportunity for architects, engineers, and members of the construction industry and the public sector, to gain added and significant insight into the latest innovation on passive alternatives to mechanical cooling. The symposium focussed on the recent developments and applications of passive and hybrid draught cooling in buildings around the world. Public, commercial and global research interest in the delivery of 'zero carbon' buildings has never been higher and the adverse energy and environmental impact of conventional air-conditioning has clearly been demonstrated. The event, organised by Architecture Project as part of a European Union funded project, was supported by the Kamra tal-Periti and the Chamber of Engineers.

**CONFERENCE ON DIGITAL ARCHITECTURE**

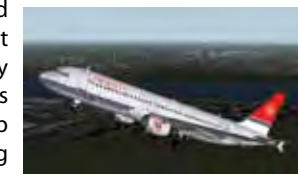
The 10th Conference on IT in Landscape Architecture 2009 was held at the Phoenicia Hotel in Malta between the 21 and 23 May. This conference was organised by the Anhalt University of Applied Sciences in collaboration with the



LE:NOTRE working group on Information Technology. This event was also supported by the Kamra tal-Periti.

**10% DISCOUNT ON AIRMALTA FLIGHTS FOR KTP MEMBERS**

Last September, the KTP entered into a corporate agreement for a year with Airmalta who have offered Council a number of flights at reduced rates to be used to bring over International speakers to attend conferences and for members of KTP to attend various seminars and conferences in European countries. The Kamra is pleased to inform periti that Airmalta have kindly agreed to extend this agreement to paid-up members by offering them a 10% discount on flights, which will apply on published pricing for travel on Air Malta scheduled services. Travel validity is between June 2009 and December 2009. KTP Members can book online, by logging into the Airmalta booking engine with a pre defined user name and password to avail themselves of the discounts. Electronic tickets will be directed back to the passenger via email. Discount does not apply on promotional 'N' class fares. KTP members can make use of this offer by logging on to the KTP website ([www.ktpmalta.com](http://www.ktpmalta.com)) and following the link to the Airmalta login page.



**HSBC BANKING PACKAGE FOR KTP MEMBERS**

Last May, HSBC signed an agreement with the KTP whereby they have agreed to become our Corporate Partners for 12 months. As part of this agreement, HSBC have also included a list of benefits for our paid-up members. These benefits include attractive rates on home loans and maxicredit loans, personal loans and overdrafts, benefits offered from HSBC Global Asset Management (Malta) Ltd and benefits offered from HSBC Stockbrokers (Malta) Limited. Periti may avail themselves of these benefits by obtaining a letter from the KTP which confirms membership. For further information, please do not hesitate to contact KTP or one of the HSBC branches.



## MIES VAN DER ROHE AWARD

In May, the European Commission and the Fundació Mies van der Rohe announced the Norwegian National Opera & Ballet,



Norwegian National Opera & Ballet. Image by Jens Passoth

Oslo, Norway as the winner of the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture – Mies van der Rohe Award 2009. This landmark building by Snøhetta, who also designed the new Library of Alexandria (2002), is the largest cultural centre built in Norway in 700 years. Its sloping stone roof, made up of 36,000 fitted pieces, rises up from the fjord allowing members of the public, residents and opera goers alike, to walk over the building, developing a rela-



Gymnasium 46° 09' N 16° 50' E. Image by Robert Leo

tionship with the public structure. Integral to the 1,000-room interior, which is largely lined with crafted woodwork (using the traditions of Norwegian boat builders), are a number of art commissions interwoven into the structural fabric, including a cloakroom, a collaboration with their 2007 Serpentine Pavilion collaborator Olafur Eliasson.

The Jury also awarded the Emerging Architect Special Mention to STUDIO UP/Lea Pelivan and Toma Plejić for Gymnasium 46° 09' N / 16° 50' E, Koprivnica, Croatia.

The mixed-use programme for this project includes a sports hall as well as a high school. The spatial and visual overlapping of the facilities was the basis of the design concept and the spacious interior street organises and connects all the programmatic elements. A system of shutters above the sports hall and the ducts through the cantilevered classrooms of the top floor ensure a constant flow of cool air during the summer months while the double polycarbonate skin creates a 'green house effect' in winter. The building transforms the suburban periphery of Koprivnica by creating a landmark and an emblematic place for the young people of the town. The finalists were selected from 340 projects proposed by the Architects' Council of Europe member associations,

## THE RUBBLE CLUB

A support group has been set up to help architects through the "trauma" of seeing one of their creations demolished in their own lifetime. The Rubble Club aims to draw attention to the number of buildings it believes are being torn down unnecessarily. Among the first architects to sign up were Reich and Hall, the designers of the canopy over the Forth Road Bridge toll booths, which was torn down less than a year later when the tolls were scrapped. John Glenday, secretary of the Club, says



Yorkgate Centre in Belfast, 1998-2000 (John Muir)

that "People often don't notice architecture until it is gone, and they wake up one morning to find a big hole where there was once a building. But at the end of the day demolition is usually the least environmentally friendly option. When you consider the energy that has been expended putting something up, it is usually well worth the time thinking about whether it is sensible bringing it down."

To satisfy the club's rules of entry, the building's architect must be alive and not party to its destruction, and the building must be built with the intention of permanence, meaning exhibitions, shops and interiors are not eligible. Finally, the building must be deliberately destroyed or radically altered, and so cannot simply burn down, for example. Although the Rubble Club's early members are focused in Scotland and the north of England, the Club hopes that the concept of preserving lost buildings in digital form online would soon be taken up worldwide. Visit [www.therubbleclub.com](http://www.therubbleclub.com) for further information.

## WORLD ARCHITECTURE COMMUNITY AWARDS

The winners of the Fourth Cycle of the World Architecture Community Awards were recently announced. Among the 20 winning entries is the Valletta Cruise Passenger Terminal by Architecture Project. The project takes its inspiration from the harmonious scaling down of volumes that was created during the 17th and 18th centuries, years that saw the transformation of Valletta from a Renaissance military town into a centre of trade and commerce.

The scheme grew out of the movement requirements and flows of the site. The new buildings, that are conceived simply as stone envelopes that house and generate these flows, are built in such a way as to blend, in terms of materials, colour and textures, with the newly restored historic buildings and the bastions serving as a backdrop.

The main concourse is similarly paved in order to create the effect of a vast stone carpet at the foot of the stores, rising up to roof level of the terminal and integrating the buildings, sculptural games of mass and fluidity, with the landscape. Ramps and steps are carved out of the limestone mass and develop into buildings and urban spaces. The intervention thus allows the main historic buildings to be read in isolation and independently of the new buildings from strategic points of view while the interaction of the new architecture with the old adds a new and fascinating dimension to the area. The new architecture also articulates the transition between the rigid angularity of the bastions and the stream-



Image by David Pisani

line forms of the equally giant-scale liners. Full details on the winning projects, together with the nominations for the next cycle of awards can be found on [www.worldarchitecture.org](http://www.worldarchitecture.org)

## PRITZKER PRIZE 2009

65 year old Peter Zumthor of Switzerland has been chosen as the 2009 Laureate of the Pritzker Architecture Prize. The formal ceremony for what has come to be known throughout the world as architecture's highest honour was held on May 29 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Although most of his work is in Switzerland, Zumthor has designed projects in Germany, Austria, The Netherlands, England, Spain, Norway, Finland and the United States. His most famous work is in Vals, Switzerland — the Thermal Baths, which has been referred to by the press as "his masterpiece."



Brother Klaus Field Chapel, Wachendorf, Germany, 2007. Photo by Walter Mair

Most recently critics have praised his Field Chapel to Saint Nikolaus von der Flüe near Cologne, Germany. The jury singled out not only those buildings, but also the Kolumba Museum in Cologne, calling the latter "a startling contemporary work, but also one that is completely at ease with its many layers of history."

In announcing the jury's choice, Thomas J. Pritzker, chairman of The Hyatt Foundation, quoted from the jury citation, "Peter Zumthor is a master architect admired by his colleagues around the world for work that is focused, uncompromising and exceptionally determined." And he added, "All of Peter Zumthor's buildings have a strong, timeless presence. He has a rare talent of combining clear and rigorous thought with a truly poetic dimension, resulting in works that never cease to inspire."

In Zumthor's own words as expressed in his book, *Thinking Architecture*, "I believe that architecture today needs to reflect on the tasks and possibilities which are inherently its own. Architecture is not a vehicle or a symbol for things that do not belong to its essence. In a society that celebrates the inessential, architecture can put up a resistance, counteract the waste of forms and meanings, and speak its own language. I believe that the language of architecture is not a question of a specific style. Every building is built for a specific use in a specific place and for a specific society. My buildings try to answer the questions that emerge from these simple facts as precisely and critically as they can."

## EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

Recently, Minister for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Dolores Cristina inaugurated the process leading to the choice of a city, town or region in the Maltese Islands as the European Capital of Culture for 2018. Since its start, this initiative has taken prominence on the European Agenda, and



Banner from the Vilnius Capital of Culture website

has led to the acknowledgement of the role of culture in all sectors of society, including the economic, educational and social aspects.

In 1985, the European City of Culture programme was launched following the initiative of then Greek minister for culture Melina Mercouri. Since then, one or two European cities have been awarded the title of European capital of culture each year (known as European City of Culture until 1999 and European Capital of Culture ever since). The aim of the programme is to 'showcase the richness, variety and similarities of European cultures and help European citizens to gain a better understanding of one another'.

Perit David Felice has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Committee set up to prepare for this exciting event. Applications will close in 2013, after which a panel made up of six local judges and seven from other European countries will pick Malta's cultural capital, which title it will be sharing with the chosen region in The Netherlands. Vilnius in Lithuania and Linz in Austria hold the title jointly for 2009.

## EUROPEAN HERITAGE GRAND PRIZE

Against the majestic backdrop of the Teatro Antico in Taormina, Sicily, the European Union and Europa Nostra announced the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/ Europa Nostra Award Grand Prize winners.

Seven grand prize winners were chosen from the previously selected 28 winners for demonstrating outstanding heritage achievements across



Europe. Having shown remarkable efforts in their various categories, the seven projects were singled-out from the original 138 awards entries that spanned 24 European countries. The Awards were as follows:

**Category 1, Conservation:** The Kesälahti Church Bell Tower, Kesälahti, Finland; Mátra Museum, Gyöngyös, Hungary; Chiesa di Santi Faustino e Giovita, Fasano di Gardone Riviera, Italy; and High Level Bridge, Newcastle, Gateshead, United Kingdom.

**Category 2, Research:** The Noah's Ark Project

**Category 3, Dedicated Service:** Dr Glenn Murray, Segovia, Spain.

**Category 4, Education, Training and Awareness-Raising:** Sustainable Aegean Programme, Athens, Greece

Europa Nostra, which represents over 250 heritage NGOs active in 45 countries across Europe, is dedicated to putting heritage and its benefits in the mainstream of public consciousness and is committed to making heritage a priority for public policies both at European and national levels. Its specific objectives are to promote, at a European level, high standards of quality in the fields of heritage conservation, architecture, urban and rural planning and to advocate a balanced and sustainable development of urban and rural, built and natural environment. The Europa Nostra website address is [www.europanostra.org](http://www.europanostra.org).

## ECOSHELL

2x2 is the name of the Maltese group that proposed the project which placed third in an international competition of ideas for young architects. The competition was called House and/or House Spaces Towards the 22nd Century. The project was presented during a conference that was held on the 22-24 May 2009 in Antalya, Turkey, which conference dealt with the same subject - the Future of Housing.



The team of four, Anna Gallo, Clyde Abela, Dirk Psaila, and Sarah Calleja, analysed the simplest element that could adapt itself, without modifications given different climate conditions - the human skin, the envelope that protects us, a skin which reacts to the different thermal conditions



and enables the future house to be placed in different climates; hence the name ECOSHELL, a container which houses life. A container that protects, breathes, controls, and adapts as it reacts to internal and external stimuli, guaranteeing a constant comfort level - a regulating organism.

This protective envelope wraps around a curvilinear form which was abstracted from the shape of the human ribcage, the container that houses the most important organs of the human body. Similarly this form/structure protects the core of our residential spaces. The skin had to achieve five main goals: sustainability, comfort, technology, flexibility, and prefabrication. The skin is composed of a double layer system: an external thermo-protective layer, and an internal thermo-regulating receptive layer. These skins work on the basis of automated intelligent sensors which control the internal spaces with regards to ventilation, temperature, and light. Automated vents allow the removal of excess heat by the chimney effect which is referred to as passive cooling. Slits both laterally, and along the main curvature are automatically controlled so as to give the right amount of natural day light whilst avoiding excessive heat and glare. The plan is arranged in such a way that the living area has the largest glazed area. This double-skin also acts as an insulation layer.

Through its rapport with the Turkish Chamber, the Kamra tal-Periti was able to assist the team by alleviating part of their travel expenses.



# Policy Statements 2009

Following the orientation debate that took place during the last General Assembly meeting of the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) last November, the Executive Board prepared a set of Policy Recommendations that were adopted by the Assembly in Helsinki earlier this year. These recommendations were forwarded to all member organisations for dissemination.

The Kamra tal-Periti worked towards the organisation of a Business Breakfast, to which it invited all the local candidates for the MEP elections. Unfortunately the response was poor, and the event had to be cancelled. The Kamra will however be following up with the elected MEPs in order to put the messages below across and, with the backing of the ACE, directly contribute with its knowledge, expertise and experience in order to assist the EU Institutions, Member States and all relevant decision-makers in the elaboration and implementation of the recommendations set out in this document.

## ACE Policy Statements Addressed to Candidates to the European Elections

### ENSURE PROCUREMENT IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT IS QUALITY-BASED

- Ensure that the procedures used for the procurement of buildings and all structures that constitute the built environment, in particular for those projects that receive public funding, are conceived and implemented in such a way that they permit the selection of the best quality proposals having regard to sustainability, architectural quality and life cycle costing. Public purchasers must be alerted to the fact that in relation to the built environment the most economically advantageous tender that includes quality criteria must always be preferred. Furthermore adopt relevant

measures, including an early revision of the Public Procurement Directives, to ensure that the market for architectural services remains open in a level-playing field, especially for innovative and emerging talent and for alternative systems of delivery that are quality based.

- There is a tendency in certain Member States to generalise the recourse to Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) whereby this shows a (mis)use of the principles of such PPPs by wrongly extending this method to the procurement of buildings. There is enough evidence of the perverse, negative effects that result from an excessive use of design & build approaches that do not guarantee the independence of the architect to preserve the general interest to ensure a coherent quality based outcome.

- More generally it is necessary to adopt more positive attitudes towards the regulatory environment of the architectural profession and conditions of architectural practice, in the public interest, taking due account of the specific nature of architectural services and of their fundamental impact on the health and welfare of society as a whole while not transgressing the fundamental principles of the EU.

### CREATE ADEQUATE CONDITIONS FOR ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIVING IN EUROPE

- Adopting integrated and holistic approaches that take more than economic and technical aspects into account so as to include social and cultural considerations is the only option for the European Union to allow it to achieve all and any political objectives and targets it has set out that affect the quality and sustainability of the built environment. It is only by doing so that it may be able to answer the expectations of society and of future generations for a better quality of life.

- There is an urgent need to elaborate and build upon the policies and other relevant political conclusions and declara-

tions, relating to architecture and the built environment, that have been adopted over recent years at EU level such that their recommendations become truly integrated into all EU policies and legislation and, furthermore, see to their effective transposition in the Member States.

- New approaches and methodologies must be developed to describe and assess the quality of the built environment, in all its dimensions, so that new criteria and tools are made available to procurement and local authorities for use when they are judging the quality and sustainability of projects and taking decisions about the management, development or re-development of the human habitat.

- The European Commission, Member States and Local Authorities, through the adoption and implementation of coherent and well-thought out architectural policies, must ensure that decision-makers at all levels and the public at large are aware of the positive benefits that architecture can bring to their daily lives so that they will strive to enhance the overall quality and sustainability of the built environment.

- There is a need to put actions behind the words of the European Economic Recovery Plan by giving to the construction sector, and thus to the architectural profession for its specific skills in synthetic and holistic problem solving, the necessary resources for it to achieve its Strategic Research Agenda, especially in relation to the energy efficiency of buildings, thus allowing the emergence of the necessary innovations that are needed for the achievement of the targets of the EU, having regard, in particular, to the existing building stock and, more generally, architectural heritage.

### DEVELOP A CONVERGING APPROACH TO ENSURE ADEQUATE LEVEL OF QUALIFICATIONS OF PERSONS WHO PROVIDE ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES

- It is essential to ensure that those who provide architectural services

have acquired the necessary skills and experience commensurate with a task that has a profound effect on society and, at the same time, guarantees a high level of quality of the service and of protection of the end-user. Deriving from there the Professional Qualifications Directive must be revised as soon as possible to change the required minimum duration of studies for architects from four to five years (or the equivalent on a part-time basis) supplemented by a period of two years qualifying professional practice experience.

- The topic is also relevant in relation to the globalisation of trade, in particular at a time when there is an acceleration of the process for the negotiations of mutual recognition of architectural qualifications and, beyond, of architectural service agreements, in the context of existing and ongoing trade negotiations between the EU and third countries or regions so as to open up, in a truly reciprocal and equivalent manner, new markets for the architects of Europe and the world, now and for future generations.

### REVIEW INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AT ALL LEVELS TO DELIVER MORE EFFICIENCY

- Ensure that the structures of the European Commission, the European parliament and other relevant bodies are able to respond to the challenges presented by the objective of achieving true sustainable development by streamlining the manner in which the built environment and all related issues are managed and coordinated within the services of the Commission so that a more integrated and holistic approach can be applied in policy and legislative developments in this field. In particular the ACE calls for the continued existence of the parliamentary Intergroup Urban.Logement.

Despite the dreaded exam period that took over the Faculty the past few months, it has been a very busy period for both SACES and the Faculty as a whole. We started off with the Easter workshop as the last official event of the previous SACES committee, followed by the SACES election, and an exhibition.

The Easter workshop was first held last year as a supplementary event to the primary workshop in October. Last year brought about proposals as to how the Faculty building could be improved to accommodate changing needs, and resulted in a series



Joanna Vella's installation

were completed successfully, while another two will be continued in summer since one weekend was not enough time to complete the job.

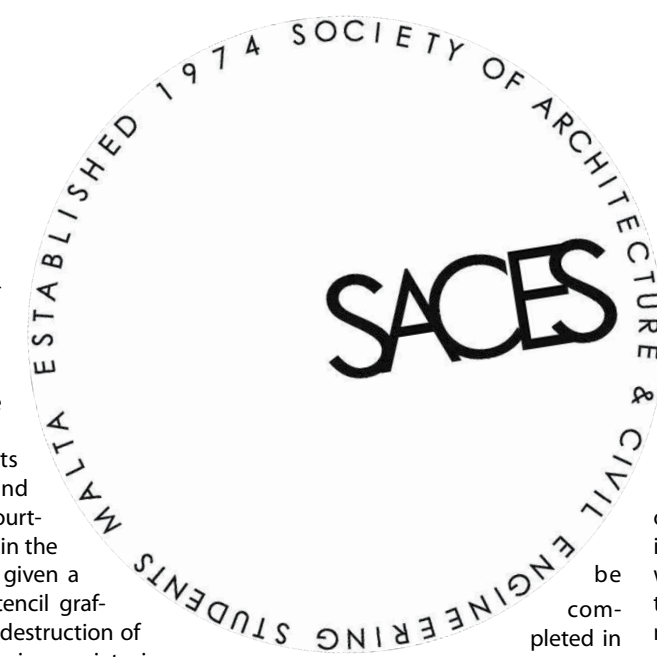
The completed projects include an upgrade and improved access to the courtyard and to a vacant space in the studio. The courtyard was given a breath of fresh air by a stencil graffiti mural representing the destruction of creativity by the overpowering society in

which we live. A swing was also installed, which is currently being used by the braver members of the student body. The vacant studio space was turned into a group work and tutorial space mainly through the use of colours and the reworking of furniture, in a bid to save on expenses and resources.

The construction of a green wall on the facade was particularly ambitious and was given a good head start, but will

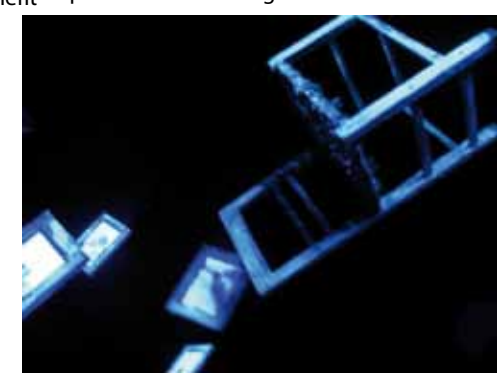


The new tutorial space



tion have always avidly participated in SACES events, and we are very pleased to welcome them!

An event organised by the fourth year students was the last to be held at the Faculty this academic year. An exhibition, curated by artist Ruth Bianco and called Art by Architects, displayed a series of installations which included static exhibits, video installations and installations which challenged our notion of space and the functionality of certain architectural elements. The event was enjoyed by the large crowd that attended, much to the satisfaction of all those involved. After all the work that went into the exhibition, it would be wonderful to have the project become an annual event both because of the learning process that it brings about as well as the



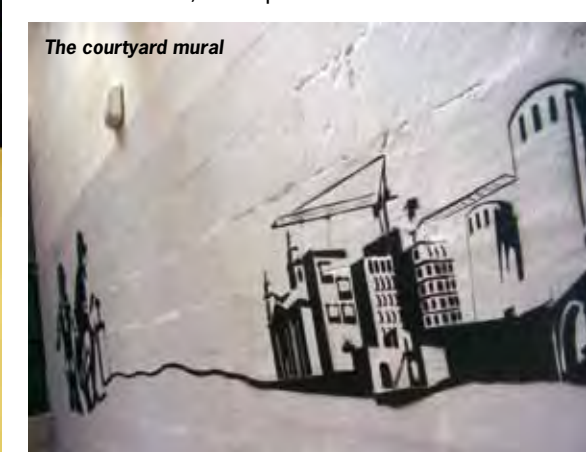
A small portion of Keith Sciberras' moving 'memories' installation

when more plants and an irrigation system will be installed. A set of wall murals painted in the foyer caused a bit of a stir due to their content, but it was ultimately decided that continuing the murals would best benefit the space.

Soon after the workshop, elections got under way and the new SACES board was appointed. Three new members were elected while six other members retained their place on the board. The new president is Matthew Cachia Zammit, who has been on the board since his first year and has shown unparalleled dedication to SACES throughout. He will be accompanied by vice-president Pierre Bianchi while Nicky Psaila Savona is the new Secretary General and James Muscat has retained his post as Public Relations Officer. Lara Mifsud is the new treasurer and Sebastian Tanti Burlo is international officer. The three enthusiastic new members are Francesca Scicluna, Celine Schranz and David Camilleri, who prior to their elec-

joy that the installations have bestowed upon all those who have been seeing them over the past few weeks.

And so another year comes to a close. While this year scored high on the events front,



The courtyard mural

we hope that next year will bring about even more reason to love the time spent in the course. SACES hopes to initiate a series of educational talks and debates, increase the profile of the workshops and encourage events outside of the SACES domain, and following the fourth years' great show of initiative, there is no reason that this should not happen. In the meantime, we would like to wish everybody a wonderful summer!

# Working with Arthur Erickson

BY JOSEPH GALEA

On the afternoon of 20 May 2009, the man who Philip Johnson once called "...by far the greatest architect in Canada, and maybe the greatest on the continent"<sup>1</sup> passed away in Vancouver, British Columbia.

My first job when I moved to Canada in 1985 was with Arthur Erickson Architects (AEA) in Toronto. AEA at the time was busy with the Islamic University of Madinah. My experience in Saudi Arabia, where I had been for the previous seven years, was the key that got me the job. I had heard about Arthur Erickson, but knew little about him. I therefore set about learning about my new boss and his work.

Arthur Charles Erickson was born in Vancouver in 1924. In his youth he had artistic leanings and had intended to be a painter.<sup>2</sup> However, he decided to embark on a diplomatic career since "Diplomacy allows you to have painting as a hobby."<sup>3</sup> Then a chance incident changed his plans forever. In a copy of Fortune magazine Arthur saw the first published photographs of Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West in the Arizona desert. The pictures captivated him and he decided that "If you can do as imaginative and creative a thing as that in Architecture, I want to be an Architect."<sup>4</sup>

Erickson attended McGill University in Montreal. On his way back to school for his final year he visited Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin East in Wisconsin. Wright invited Arthur to spend the year there. When he got to McGill to pack his things and head back to Wisconsin, the director of the school, John Bland, told him that he was the candidate for the following year's travelling scholarship – an annual award to the best graduating student. So Arthur stayed on at McGill and on graduation travelled, for almost three years, through the Middle East, Europe and Scandinavia. During his travels he discovered a new appreciation for the history of architectural development and indigenous architecture.

Back in Vancouver, Erickson collaborated with Geoffrey Massey, son of the actor Raymond Massey, in designing houses for their friends. In 1963, he and Massey won the competition for the design of Simon Fraser University. The Erickson/Massey partnership lasted for eight years. In 1972



Arthur Erickson

Erickson founded Arthur Erickson Architects with offices first in Vancouver and eventually in Toronto and Los Angeles.

From the 1975 book, "The Architecture of Arthur Erickson,"<sup>5</sup> it became immediately obvious to me that Arthur was very different from many other big-name architects. There was no discernible 'style' that he followed. However, what was common to all his projects was a sense of fitness of purpose, a sensitive use of materials and an incredible contextual relevance. Erickson's greatest ability was an intimate understanding of a site and how best to place a building on it. He says that "The 'dialogue' between a building and

its setting – rural or urban – become for me the source of meaning in architecture. Site provides the context and motivation of my buildings."<sup>6</sup> This is eminently evidenced in the series of Canadian West coast houses, most of them built on heavy wooded, steeply sloped sites.

The same 'dialogue' between building and setting is still evident in Erickson's major projects in urban areas, such as the Robson Square project (1978-1983) in downtown Vancouver. The glazed space frame roof covering over an acre, with reflecting pools on office roofs and waterfalls flowing over the sides, hundreds of trees, and the famous 'stramps' (stairs/ramps) immediately made the project a Vancouver landmark.

The first time I entered the Toronto office on Bloor Street West it struck me that, even by architects' offices' standards the place seemed chaotic. Every square centimetre was covered with drawings, sketches and polystyrene working models in various stages of assembly, or rather disassembly. Interspersed with these were material samples: fabrics, tiles, to full size window sections. The place had 'creativity' written all over it.

At the time the office was busy with several major projects. The Kings Landing Luxury Condominiums on Queens Quay in Toronto were nearing completion; the design for the University of Madinah was in full swing; the Etisalat (the Emirates Telecommunications Agency) HQs for Dubai and Abu Dhabi were coming on line; the Canadian Chancery in

Washington DC was also on the boards. Later we competed for the Al-Ain University in Abu Dhabi.

Staff was organised into project teams, each team taking the project from schematic design to construction documents stage, taking on specialists when and as required. If a deadline was looming on one project, staff from different project teams pitched in to meet the deadline. Thus, although I was assigned to the University of Madinah as Project Coordinator, at one point I was tasked with the review of the stone cladding shop drawings for the Canadian Chancery. Reviewing shop drawings is a time sensitive activity and generally not one of the more enjoyable activities in architecture, but essential to ensure that the built project conforms to the original design.

The University of Madinah project covered an area of 300 acres and had to cater for all the academic and living needs of a resident population of around 17,000.<sup>7</sup> The massive project was a joint venture between Erickson's office in Toronto (architectural design,) F.E. Basil Inc. in Athens (civil engineering,) and Dar Al-Riyadh from their London office (building engineering.) Coordinating the drawings, before the days of electronic drawings and e-mail was a major challenge. Drawings had to be marked up, cut up, faxed, reassembled at the other end, discussed during hours-long international phone calls and the process repeated over and over. Periodically, coordination meetings were held in Toronto,



Markham Civic Centre



PHOTO © ARTHUR ERICKSON 2007



Robson Square, Provincial Law Courts

Athens or London.

It was several days before I first met Arthur. He spent his time between the three offices, interspersed with trips overseas, either to meet clients or just to continue to experience and learn about different cultures, because, as he says "... one can never see enough to begin to understand sufficiently..."<sup>8</sup> It was said that since 1965 he had never stayed in a place long enough to use a tank of gas in his rented car.<sup>9</sup> In the years that I worked with him I never remember him being in the Toronto office for more than two, maybe three, days at a time. Staff learnt about Arthur's next visit only a few days before the date. Then study models were brushed up and sketches and drawings prepared for the forthcoming discussions. Those who were at the more advanced stages of their projects were more apprehensive. Arthur was a perfectionist and was known to delay or change design decisions that could mean a rework of weeks of drawing, a process that Keith Loffler, the Director of the Toronto office at the time, referred to as "creative procrastination."<sup>10</sup>

Arthur would spend time with each of the design teams. He was a soft spoken man, trim and fit with a full head of silver grey hair. He was not a humble man and it was clear that he was used to getting his way in

all design matters. However, he was a good listener and accepted suggestions from any team member when he believed that these fitted into his overall concept. Discussions invariably were around study models, not just of the building itself but often of the whole site. These models were chopped up, reassembled, cut-up and reassembled again and again during a meeting until they met Arthur's satisfaction. Details were defined but not worked out during the meetings. He was happy to leave the detail resolution to his staff. Arthur hardly ever accepted the suggestion that something was not technically possible, and generally it was budgetary considerations that prevented something from being achieved rather than the creativity of the design team.

After two or three long days he would be off again, continuing his development of elements of projects, sketching his ideas on 8½" x 11" pads, while travelling on planes and faxing them back to the office he just left on his arrival at the next.

In 1986 Arthur Erickson Architects (Toronto) was one of three firms shortlisted to participate in the competition for the Markham Municipal Centre. I was assigned to the design team for the competition. The other two companies were Moriyama and Teshima Architects and Barton Myers Associates; two



firms with a strong design background and a long list of important projects to their credit.

Markham at the time was a rapidly developing town of around 105,000 (around 287,000 today) to the North East of Toronto. The 11.5 hectare site for the project was at the junction between two major highways. The slightly sloping, treeless site already contained the recently built Markham Theatre and Unionville High School which had to be addressed by the new building.

The project brief called for a building of just over 12,000sqm 'that would symbolise the town.' Besides the usual municipal departments with public access, the building had to include a public lobby, winter garden, an executive wing, council chamber, committee rooms, chapel, library and archives, a daycare centre as well as fitness facilities for the staff. External facilities were to include a reflecting pool / skating rink. The project budget was \$14.4 million for the building and an additional \$5.2 million for site development and landscaping.

After an initial site visit, the first sketch that Arthur faxed to the office from wherever he was at the time, showed a linear building with multiple entrances, with the long axis bent at the East end to connect to a second block at right angles. The sketch indicated

modification of the site to create berms or mounds along the South perimeter. These mounds allow only interesting glimpses of the building from the road, while from the building they hide the busy highway. A large 'artificial' lake extended from the building to the proposed mounds at the Southern end of the site; this was the 'reflecting pool' required in the brief taken to its limit. This very basic line drawing was the concept from which the team started to work. It is uncanny how very little the final building changed from that initial sketch.

The municipal offices wing was conceived as a 'shopping mall' for municipal services, hence the multiple entrances providing easy access from the parking area to different departments. The building was low, being only two floors high on the North side, stepping down one floor to the 'lake' on the South following the lie of the land. The South façade was completely glazed. Large skylights along the length of the building further flooded the office areas with natural light. A lakefront walkway, defined by a line of free standing columns carrying a planter, ran along the whole length of this wing.

The second block rose to three storeys on the North side and comprised the executive wing. This block is distinguished by the round 200-seat Council Chamber crowned by a terrace accessed from the Mayor's office above. Below the Chamber is the glass enclosed cafeteria with views across the water between columns, springing from the lake. The main lobby with a 'winter garden' stepping down to the lake links the two blocks. The lobby roof is a sloping glazed space-truss, which connects to the fully glazed wall on the South. At the lower level, an external connection leads to the copper clad chapel standing freely in the lake.

The chapel was designed to be round, but cost considerations made its external form faceted, much to the chagrin of Arthur and the design team. Arthur also wanted the copper cladding of the chapel and of the Council Chamber roof to be the mellow green colour of aged copper, just like that he used on the Bank of Canada Headquarters in Ottawa. There, a Japanese team had spent six months dipping copper into vats of different acids to achieve the colour Arthur wanted.<sup>11</sup> In Markham the budget did not allow for Japanese craftsmen so one will have to wait until time ages the copper naturally.

Our submission for the competition comprised the minimum three boards – site plan, concept development, and plans and elevations. We produced a basic, white foam core model and commissioned a professional renderer to produce two required per-

PHOTOS © ARTHUR ERICKSON ARCHITECTS



Islamic University of Madinah

spectives. The external view was acceptable, but the second, showing the main lobby and winter garden was disappointing. Without the time to have another professional rendering done, we dug up a simple but effective study perspective sketch prepared some time earlier, cleaned it up, mounted it onto a board and submitted on time.

We were very satisfied with our concept and design but when we visited the exhibition of the three competing projects our submission appeared to be the poor relation compared to the slick presentations and detailed models of the others. Our hopes of success dimmed somewhat.

However, the jury, which comprised Tom Januszewski, planning director for Markham, Ron Moran, regional councillor, Larry Richards, director of the School of Architecture, University of Waterloo and architects Jim Strassman and Ron Thom, declared the Erickson scheme the winner. In



Canadian Architect cover with a personal dedication to the author

their report the jury said that they felt that "the winning scheme had many outstanding qualities, but was particularly impressed with its imaginative site planning strategy, superb landscape composition, and sensitive incorporation of existing buildings ... (they) admired the sequences of views created for the passer-by and members of council and staff in their daily work. The scheme's symbolic image was also considered the most appropriate for the Town of Markham."<sup>12</sup> The competition entries were featured in The Canadian Architect of January 1987.

For the next year I was the design manager for the project. One interesting challenge that



Canadian Chancery building

developed concerned the lake: the porous sandy soil would not retain water at the surface. However, the lake was a critical part of the concept. After much soul-searching we decided to line it with an impermeable membrane. Costs dictated that depth be limited to under a metre. This in turn caused concern about the possibility of algae growth. Eventually, we overcame this by arranging to slightly chlorinate the water. Chlorination killed Arthur's vision of a 'natural' lake complete with fish, reeds, and wild growing vegetation. Arthur was not amused. On the day we had the official sod-turning ceremony for the project he still asked me whether anything had transpired to regain the 'naturalness' of the lake. When I again explained the geotechnical engineers' conclusions and the need for lining and chlorination, he replied that 'we cannot always accept what the engineers say.' Although with sufficient time and money a solution to make the lake conform to Arthur's vision would have been found, we had neither. Arthur, reluctantly, had to accept the situation.

We incorporated several novel technologies in the building. Instead of the usual forced air a/c, we used a water based system using slim radiant panels, of Scandinavian design, integrated with the ceiling. Motorised sunshades of special fabric cut off glare from the south facing glass wall and winter garden roof, while preserving views out. A large ice-storage system in the basement produced ice during off-peak periods and the subsequent stored 'coolness' used to condition the building when required. The building later won an award from Ontario Hydro for its innovative energy systems, long before 'Green Architecture' and 'Sustainable Buildings' became bywords of the profession. The building was originally intended to be clad in an off-white reconstituted stone. However, the colour was later changed to a light pink buff giving the building a warmer feel.

#### EPILOGUE

The Markham building was ready to go to construction at a time when unfortunately Arthur and Arthur Erickson Architects were going through serious financial difficulties.

Like many design-focused architects Arthur had little interest in business matters and never paid much attention to the finances of his operations. Regrettably this caught up with him and the firm became untenable. I therefore moved on to another firm in Toronto. The Town of Markham passed responsibility for the contract administration phase to Richard Stevens, a Senior Architect with AEA at the time, who, when AEA Toronto closed down, opened up his own practice that is still going strong to this day.



Erickson with the author

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# Working abroad

While working practices in Malta are certainly changing, both as a result of an increased demand for high-quality projects as well as an improving legislative framework, experiencing work in other countries is always an eye-opening experience, often giving insight into other approaches that can be adapted to the local scenario.

Kenneth Zammit and Sarah Anastasi are two young architects who have ventured off our shores to experience working in Europe. Both have gained immensely, professionally and in terms of their outlook, through this exposure. **ta** caught up with them to find out more about their experiences and to delve into the differences in working practices between different countries.

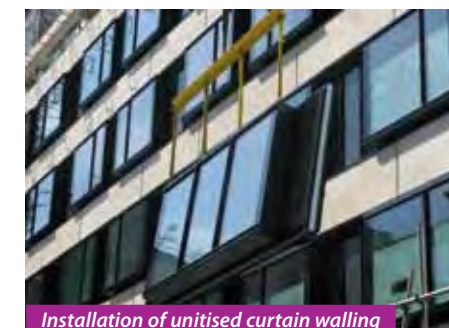
I still remember my first day at work in the UK quite clearly. Three years back and fresh out of University once again, I was eager to get my teeth into a new challenge. Little did I know then, that one of the biggest challenges I faced was understanding my role in a vast and largely fragmented industry.



Kenneth Zammit

I started working in the relatively new Façade Engineering discipline after completing a course in the specialisation. After a few weeks learning the ropes, one of the projects I was assigned was the BBC West One project, the new headquarters and recording studios for the corporation in central London. By then, the project was already at Stage D... which I later came to know as "design development", immediately following completion of the basic concept stage. In contrast to my less regulated working experience in Malta, I found the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) stages to be an excellent project organisation tool to inform clients when decisions and changes can be made, as well as guiding the various designers on what level of detail to produce at each point in time.

It took some time to get to grips with the complex project where the architect, as lead designer, was responsible for co-ordinating the work of ten different consultants, from structural engineering and M&E to acoustics and cleaning & maintenance. The number of people involved was somewhat overwhelming and often seemed excessive, however substantial expertise is required in such complex projects with demanding clients.



Installation of unutilised curtain walling

In this context, a combined background in Architecture and Civil Engineering was useful and much appreciated, particularly by the architects, since façade engineering

requires an appreciation of both aesthetics and number crunching. One of the consequences of the RIBA stages and numerous consultants to co-ordinate is the requirement of detailed documentation to capture the vast amount of work carried out and ensure co-ordination for the next phase.

The façade and cladding industry is particularly off-site productive based with a substantial amount of specialist sub-contractor final design. This also holds for portions of main structure design, where for example, concrete reinforcement detailing and steelwork connection design



The BBC Broadcasting House redevelopment, London

is carried out by sub-contractors. When non-standard situations are encountered, a substantial amount of research and co-operation with international façade manufacturers is required at an early stage. On the BBC West One project, several new project specific façade systems had to be developed, requiring six full scale structural and weather-tightness tests. Such tests are quite commonplace in high-end façade projects since they drastically reduce the risk of prohibitively expensive failures after the building is commissioned.

After material selection, testing and factory inspections in different parts of Europe, the façade installation is now well underway. While carrying out regular site visits, project completion comes in sight and new projects kick off. These are now pushed to increasingly remote destinations, as one way of dealing with the UK recession in construction, while I bid farewell in envy to a project colleague who has opted for a rather more exotic alternative...of touring the world as the global economy recovers!

Kenneth Zammit

After graduating in architecture in Malta, and working in some Maltese offices my 'career' really kicked off once I started work in The Netherlands after graduating with a Masters in Urbanism, and it continued to advance when I moved to the UK. It was during my time in The Netherlands that I first came to understand what urban



Sarah Anastasi

design really is - not just architecture on a larger scale and also not just planning. In The Netherlands there is a clear structure and understanding of how it influences the built environment and how it interacts with other disciplines whether architecture, ecology, planning, transportation, and others.

This is not only understood by professionals but also by society at large who also expect certain qualities from the places they live in. There, urban design is interesting, creative and flexible, not only on the drawing board but also when it comes to site visits. Forget the comfort of your car and its back seat as your mobile office. Site visits in



Regeneration proposals for a River Side Development in Kidderminster, UK

Holland often mean three hours on a bike, camera round your neck, map in one hand and the other desperately trying to maintain control. Joking apart, extreme importance and priority is given to urban design and its role in influencing the public environment as part of the design and development process. Having experienced this it is here that my 'career' took a turn and I started to focus

on urban design, which to me means designing at whichever scale but always thinking about the existing context, the quality of the place which will be created and most importantly how people will use it and the impact this will have on society. Working abroad has definitely influenced my approach to design, as working in The Netherlands and the UK could

not be more different. It gives me the opportunity to compare two very different working and socio-cultural environments, where you really have to stop and think about what you are doing and why, as it is all so diverse. And as a bonus...working in the UK has probably,

and hopefully, developed my diplomatic side. However, I would say that the 'foreign influence' has mostly changed the way in which I think about my career. I would like to think it lies somewhere

between the Dutch philosophy of "Working to Live Vs Living to Work" - like clocking off at 3pm just because the sun is shining - and the British eagerness to join the rat race and make your way to the top as quickly as possible even if it means living at the office. To me it is about constantly developing and improving my skills while contributing to something worthwhile with a sense of satisfaction but retaining an interest in activities outside work. The reason being that the more I experience and the more varied the people I meet, the more I realise how much there is to see and learn.

I believe that being good at urban design is not just having a degree or the work experience but also about life experience, having a broad understanding of the world, cities and places we live in and understanding the way people use them. The 'foreign influence' for me is therefore being open to this and this is one of the most beneficial things about living and working abroad.

Sarah Anastasi

# Leaving a Mark

by Dr Conrad Thake

**Martin Xuereb is widely recognised as one of Malta's most respected and established local architects. His projects range from residential villas and apartments, to commercial buildings and major hotel projects. During his career he has had the opportunity to be involved in architectural projects varying from hotels to mosques to office blocks in countries as diverse as the Bahamas, Croatia, Czech Republic, Libya and Saudi Arabia. However, for this issue of *the Architect* we have focused on some of his more recent overseas projects.**

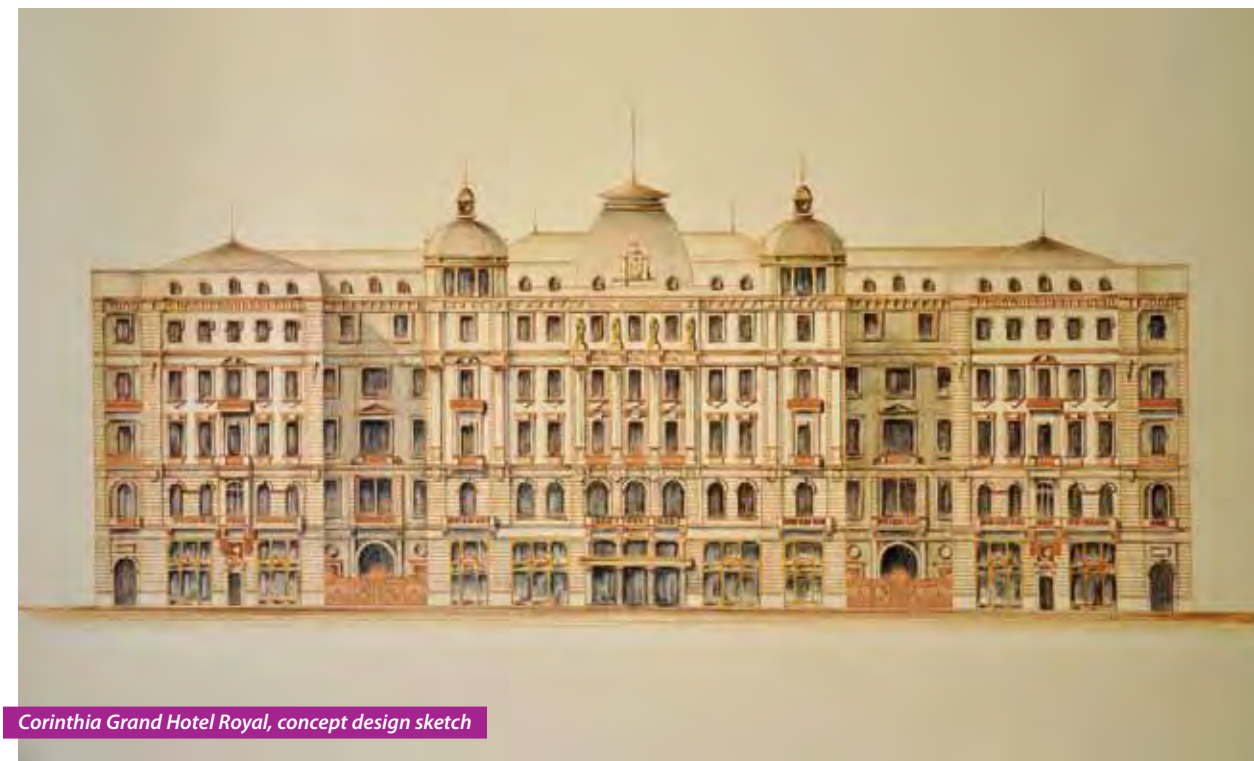
One of his most prestigious projects was the Corinthia Bab Africa hotel built in the heart of the central business district of Tripoli, Libya. The luxury hotel has over 265 rooms and 34 suites and comprises a wellness centre and a conference centre with a capacity of 500 persons. Completed in 2003, the hotel has received various design accolades. It was awarded the International *Metra Sistema d'Autore* award for the most outstanding façade design. It has also been featured in prestigious international design journals such as *Wallpaper*. Perit Xuereb was the lead architect from the initial concept

stages all the way to the final commissioning of the hotel. His architectural office was responsible for the preparation and coordination of all the architectural design, structural and mechanical/electrical design tender documents and specifications. In 2001, Perit Xuereb was entrusted with another high profile project - the Corinthia Grand Hotel Royal in Budapest, Hungary. This project was basically a total overhaul and remodeling of an older building. His conceptual designs for the project were accepted by the client at the initial competitive tendering stage. He was retained as

the clients' architectural consultant on key design matters including the external colour and lighting scheme. The hotel's location within the fashionable Elizabeth Boulevard in Budapest's historic urban core was a major factor in it being acquired by its new owners, the Corinthia Group. Its facilities as a luxury five star hotel are similar to the other international brand Corinthia hotels with over 383 rooms, 31 suites, a grand ballroom and a conference centre facility. In this case, the major design challenge was that of revamping a rather bland façade into a sophisticated hotel façade that seems to recall the grand and ornate Parisian palatial buildings of the late-nineteenth century recalling the Belle Époque period.

Another project was that of a small skiing resort boutique hotel in Bansko, Bulgaria. In 2006, he was entrusted by a local developer to prepare conceptual designs for an economy boutique-hotel that could accommodate some 138 rooms and a fitness centre. The design was inspired by the local vernacular and in particular, the pronounced pitched roofs of the local chalets. Unfortunately, the project was not realised.

A major project in the pipeline is another hotel for the Corinthia group, this time in



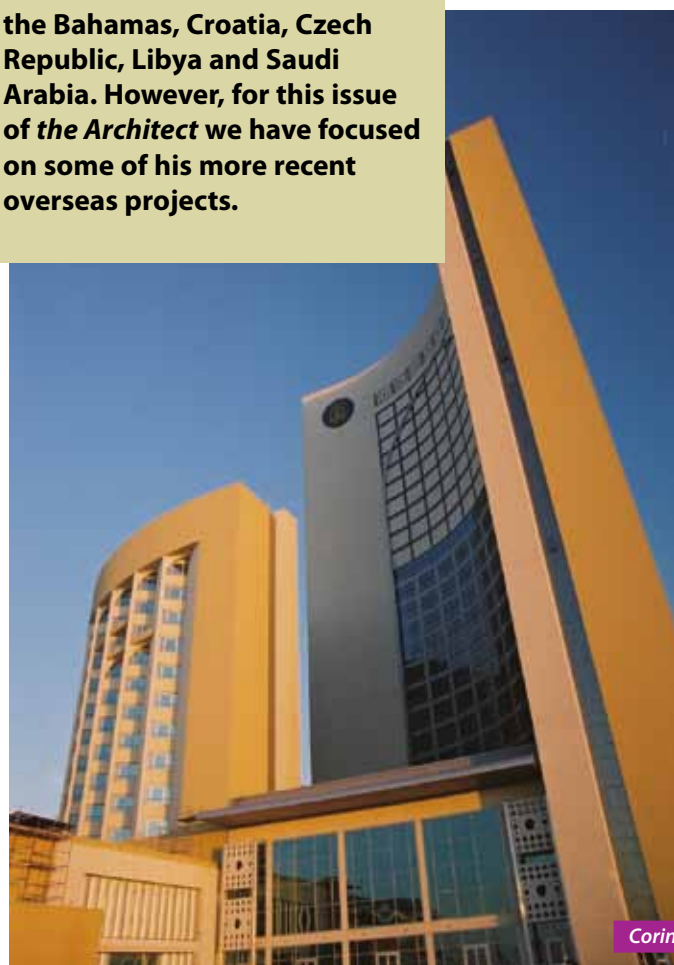
Corinthia Grand Hotel Royal, concept design sketch



Corinthia Grand Hotel Royal before remodelling project

**'THE PROSPECT OF WORKING ON LARGE PROJECTS OVERSEAS HAS ALWAYS GIVEN ME ADDED STIMULUS AS I AM GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEAVE MY "ARCHITECTURAL" MARK WITHIN ANOTHER COUNTRY.'**

**PERIT MARTIN XUEREB**



Corinthia Bab Africa Hotel, Tripoli, Libya



Corinthia Grand Hotel Royal, Budapest, Hungary - night time view



Corinthia Benghazi Hotel, Libya

Benghazi, Libya. This is a recent project as it was commissioned in 2008 and is currently in the preparatory tendering stage. Perit Xuereb has finalised the conceptual designs for a luxury hotel with all the usual facilities that one would expect to find in a five star hotel. After this brief synoptic overview, tA interviewed Perit Martin Xuereb about his own personal experience of working on overseas projects. He confessed that "large-scale architectural projects on a small island as is Malta are not always

readily available and any medium-to-large local architectural practice is compelled to seek work overseas. The prospect of working on an overseas project has always been a challenge in that it is an ideal opportunity to leave one's 'architectural' mark within that country." Perit Xuereb explained that upon being commissioned to prepare a conceptual design for a project, he would always first seek to personally visit and experience the site. Issues such as the topography of the terrain, the local weather conditions, the local building materials and construction systems used, and the way the natural light relates to the setting are all important aspects that one has to be sensitive to. A comprehensive understanding of these



Hotel Bansko, Bulgaria

elements is integral to the design process. Although all his overseas projects have been executed from his local office in Malta aided by frequent visits abroad, for practical and logistical purposes he has always teamed-up with an architect from the country where the project is based. The local architect is

able to navigate his/her way through the usually complex and bureaucratic planning permit process and that allows him to focus and concentrate more on the architectural design aspect of the project. The vast majority of Perit Xuereb's built overseas works relate to the hotel and tourist industry. He concludes the interview by expressing his gratitude and appreciation towards those Maltese companies working overseas, in particular the Corinthia Group, who have placed their trust in his talents and abilities and have given him the opportunity to realise his projects.



# At the Berth

Perit Ray DeMicoli shared his experience of working beyond our shores with Perit Annemarie Mayo for "the Architect"

It was 1976, and a mere six months after graduation. A young Ray DeMicoli, anxious to explore the world beyond our shores, was offered a scholarship in Rotterdam at the Baucentrum. Three days prior to his departure, he received a call from Architect Roger Degiorgio, inviting him to join DP international, an architecture firm in Paris. He was asked to assist in the making of production drawings for Saudi projects. Perhaps the choice between Rotterdam and the glistening pavements of Paris hardly proposed a dilemma...

While in Paris, Ray persisted in flexing his design muscles by working on competitions in his spare time. Despite being a relative newcomer to the scene, he collaborated with visiting Architectural Association tutors he had met at the University of Malta. It was this network that landed him spending evenings and weekends at the drawing bureau of Renzo Piano & Richard Rogers, who at the time were completing the Pompidou Centre. Thus, Ray bore witness to the coming together of a Parisian landmark, an experience he admits was as humbling as it was formative.

One remarkable lady reawakened Ray's interests in Malta and he returned to the

"I love the Mediterranean  
and its infinity of colors  
and shapes, not to mention  
weather + cuisine!"

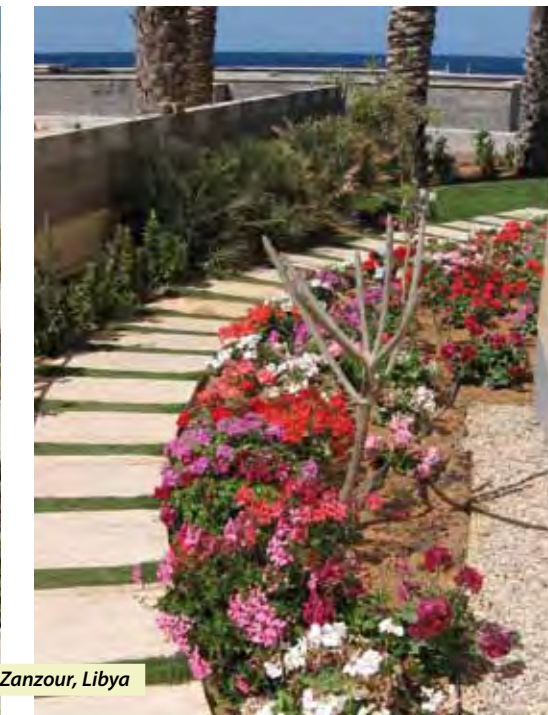


Typical Unit, Hotel extension, San Martin

Isles. Back home, he was anxious to keep the pace he had grown accustomed to during his time overseas. In 1985, he set up his own firm at 331 St Paul's Street, as well as an ad hoc training centre. The latter provided evening courses intended to bring local draftsmen up to speed with international standards. To Ray, Malta had become his berth, and the possibility of working on foreign projects never faltered. Ray's incessant wanderlust has caused him to stumble across international clients in the oddest of circumstances. A few years back, Ray had met a future client while windsurfing in the Philippines - the project, a five cinema complex in Iraq, was sadly brought to a halt in view of an impending war. He met the owner of a house in Frankfurt, which needed radical remodeling to accommodate a growing family, on a flight to the United States. Parties seem to be another good source of bumping into the architect-deficient. A project in the Caribbean was born out of a chance encounter at a party in Berlin. Post-Portomaso, DeMicoli and Associates, or DANDA, as it is affectionately known, participated in many an international competition. The winning design for a

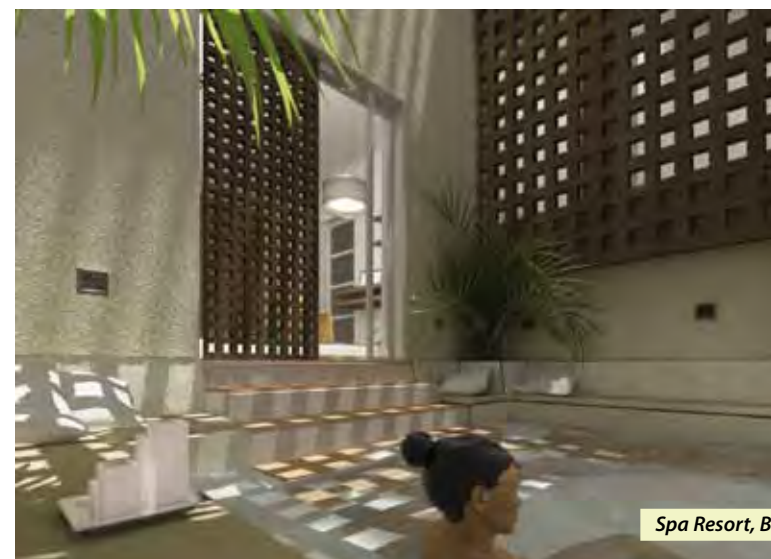


Palm City, Zanzour, Libya



Giardini Naxos Hotel, Sicily

Model for Hotel and Commercial Centre, Istanbul



Spa Resort, Bodrum, Turkey



Section through typical house, Spa Resort, Bodrum, Turkey

hotel at Giardini Naxos, Sicily, is unfortunately being kept on hold by the planning council. For a competition in Bodrum, Turkey, despite being faced with stiff competition namely 2 German, 2 French and 4 Turkish firms, DANDA's entry for a spa resort clinched the deal. And when international efforts do not end in fruition, Ray manages to translate efforts into improving the quality of his office's local product.

Ray's leaning towards projects with a marine context was exploited during his largest built foreign project to date, Palm City in Zanzour, Libya. Palm City boasts 1.3km of coastline. The project responded to a growing need for expatriate family accommodation in a country just about to take off. Ray compiled his brief after understanding the needs of expatriates following several interviews with employees of oil companies.

While the competition built low density army-style barracks, Ray endeavored to provide a home away from home in a village which provides all the necessary amenities as well as a welcome emphasis on soft landscaping. Having lived abroad for a considerable amount of time, he had learned to value the provision of spaces for interaction.

For a villa in limits of Avola in Sicily, Ray drew inspiration from thick ashlar walls of the surrounding fields. The project, which contrasts steel and glass with natural local materials, is currently under construction. Several other Sicilian farmhouses are also in the pipeline. And Margerita, Ray's sailing yacht, is always at the ready to escort him to a site visit.

The energy Ray exhibits through his work is set in motion by his sincere love for our clear blue waters. "I love the Mediterranean - this infinite wielding of cultures; not to mention the weather and cuisine!" Some of us feel the shores of Malta bind us to our safe harbours. To Ray, our unique environs provide a sea of opportunity.

# "We have a dream"

Only a few days ago, the schematic designs for the City Gate, new Parliament and the Opera House site were revealed to an enthusiastic audience that filled the 90m stretch between Melita Street and St John's Street of Republic Street. A street, in the words of Minister Austin Gatt, that is central to the history of Malta; a street, that is rich in architecture and that has set the stage for many an important event in Valletta's long and glorious annals; Valletta, the seat where the more important decisions that have moulded the face of Malta have taken place.

Any intervention on a City of Valletta's calibre and importance must be sensitive to the past and at the same time look to the future. Government's ambitions in this sense are focussed on healing the wound that has scourged the face of Valletta for over 60 years. "We have a dream", Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi stated during the inauguration ceremony, "a dream born twenty five years ago around a debate that has been going on for 60 years. It is now our responsibility to bring this debate to

a close, and to translate the dream into reality." He continued by stating that this project is all about civic pride, the creation of a national statement that speaks to the world about who we are as a people and our values.

With this as his brief, Renzo Piano and his colleagues at the Renzo Piano Building Workshop (RPBW) in Paris set about their work on the schematic designs for this much discussed and much awaited proposal. Piano's love and sensitivity for Valletta are evident in his description of the thought process behind the scheme. "I never draw anything before spending time in a place," Piano explains, and although he had already put forward proposals for the same site years ago, it was essential to come back, to experience the Valletta of today, to listen to what it has to tell, to hear the voices within. "Places talk, they have something to say. Every project is a new adventure, and understanding the place is important." Piano describes himself as having "become Maltese" in his quest to feel, understand and sensitise himself to what he calls "this miracle city in the middle of the Mediterranean."

## The Gate

The proposal for this part of the project is to restore the entry bridge to the original dimensions of Dingli's gate of 1633, thus



Presentation of the proposals by Renzo Piano to members of the KTP

enhancing the experience of crossing from one side to the other and at the same time allowing one to view the underlying ditch once again. Piano describes the current bridge as a "motorway to nowhere". The reduction to a width of 8m also plays on the axial nature of Republic Street, the spine of the City, thus leading visitors straight into the heart of Valletta.

The proposal aims at giving back to the bastion walls their original expression of

depth and strength by enhancing the feeling of narrowness, opening up the view along Republic Street. The removal of the current gate also results in the removal of the street above, which will be replaced by two large and gently sloped stepped ramps, reminiscent of the staircases that flanked the gate before the creation of Freedom Square. These walkways will allow pedestrians to experience the full height of the fortifications, which will now be made

more visible as a result of the demolition of the Gate.

The Ditch below will be replaced by a garden which is intended to host events and activities, rendering this currently derelict and, dare one say, ominous part of the Capital a haven for activity and vibrancy. Movement between the Ditch and the City above will be by means of a stairway and a panoramic elevator.

The architecture of the Gate itself speaks of quality and strength in stone, "the mother of this island, part of its DNA," Piano describes. Bare of superficial and conventional decorations, it is made of massive stone elements, monumentally shaped and flanked by high, framing blades of steel. Piano describes the Gate proposal as "simple and strong, steering away of any extravagance – it is the best tribute to genuine intention and authentic construction."

## The Opera House

The original intention of the project was to house the Parliament building within the Opera House site. However, as had already been stated by others in the past, this location is too small to host this function. It is also too small to fit in a modern opera house when considering the various requirements and running costs synonymous with such a building.

The Piano team also felt that after 60 years, the ruins themselves had reached the status of a monument, a witness of history and the dignity of collective memory. The valorisation of these ruins is central to the proposal to convert this space into a place for artistic performances, preserving the existing stone and reintegrating fragments of the original building that are known to lie strewn around the Islands.

A light skin will define the space, supported by a framework of steel masts and columns carrying removable walls, lighting systems, acoustic and sound equipment, giving the space its specific identity during the staging of performances. Even when not being used,

the space serves as a piazza with views towards the Auberge de Castille, the Churches of Santa Catarina and Our Lady of Victories, as well as St James Cavalier. With a capacity for an audience of 1,200 people, this "open air opera" will be rare in the Mediterranean, offering an alternative space in which to perform.

## Parliament

Upon entering Valletta, visitors first come across Freedom Square, more often than not used as a carpark, with the occasional hosting of various events in this location. Piano describes this as a "non-place", a place without identity and quality.

The proposal is to locate the Parliament building in Freedom Square, with an interactive Museum of Maltese History and Political Development located at the ground floor level, imparting locals and foreign visitors alike with an understanding of the history of the Maltese nation and its quest for independence and democracy.

The proposed new structure is composed of two massive volumes of stone, supported on stilts that recede from the façade, creating an impression of suspension in the air. The East block will house the chamber and the speaker's office while the West block will hold all the administrative offices for members of parliament. The blocks follow the axis of Republic Street, and are separated by another axis that follows the line of one of the flanks of St John's Cavalier, allowing views through it to the Cavalier itself.

A sunken garden will be located at the lower level of the Parliament building, which will be connected to the old Railway Tunnel in such a way as to make this historical structure accessible for public use while preserving its authenticity and legibility.



Model showing the proposal for City Gate

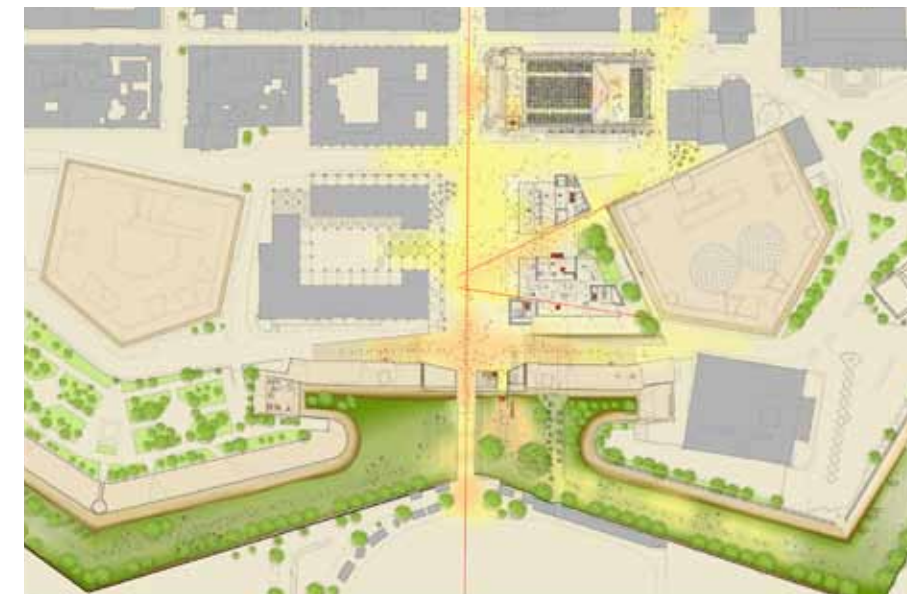
The new Parliament also has a strong environmental program, with the introduction of heat pumps that utilise the stable temperature of the mass of rock below the site, allowing enough energy to be recovered to heat and cool the building. Creating a "zero (CO2) emission" building is one of the driving forces behind the proposal.

## The targets ahead

The proposals for the whole of the entrance area to Valletta are currently on display at the Auberge de Provence (National Museum of Archaeology) in

that while it was uncomfortable to work without one, this project could catalyse the inception of a masterplan.

During the inauguration ceremony, Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi listed a series of important anniversaries that are literally at our doorstep. The year 2014 will mark the 50th anniversary of Malta's independence; 2015 will commemorate 450 years from the Great Siege; in 2016 we will be cel-



Site Plan

Valletta. The members of the Kamra tal-Periti had the unique opportunity, thanks to the Ministry for Infrastructure, Transport and Communications, to meet Renzo Piano and his team on the morning following the unveiling of the project – an encounter that was characterised by the simplicity of Piano's approach to the brief at hand, and the humility, respect and care with which he spoke of his proposed interventions on this most important, emotion-laden and historical corner of Valletta. Periti had the opportunity to discuss, question and criticise the proposals, thus expanding the debate and also contributing to the understanding of the scheme at hand. Asked about his thoughts on the absence of a masterplan for Valletta, Piano stated

celebrating the 450th year from the laying of the foundations of Valletta; in 2017, Malta will hold the Presidency of the European Union; and in 2019, the birth of Parliament as a result of the Sette Giugno events one hundred years earlier will be remembered. The projects, he stated, must be in place before these dates, setting the stage for the commemorative events planned to be held on each of these anniversaries.

Public comment on these proposals will surely dominate the coming weeks. It will continue to keep abreast of progress on the project, and the Editorial Team hopes to be able to dedicate more space in coming issues of the journal. Meanwhile, our readership is invited to send in comments and reactions on [thearchitect@ktpmalta.com](mailto:thearchitect@ktpmalta.com).

# ARCHITECTURE NIGHTS

In May, the fourth edition of Architecture Nights (AN) featured Hans Ibelings, architectural historian and editor / publisher of A10 new European architecture, a bimonthly pan-European magazine. AN has in the past months seen the participation of husband and wife team Franco Purini and Laura Thermes, who enthralled an audience with their presentation of works at the Malta Property Expo last February, and Eduardo Langagne Ortega, an architect with a doctorate in architecture by the University of Mexico, and 35 years of professional practice in architecture and urban planning all over Mexico, in the USA, Guatemala and Chile, whose lecture held last March, saw a packed hall of enthusiastic participants.

The May Architecture Night was an engaging one with a very interesting discussion after the lecture. The topic centred on "Reviewing European architecture" and was both about reviewing contemporary architecture, in the common sense of the word, as architectural critics usually do, and about developing a different view on European architecture and its history. This event was organised under the patronage of the Dutch Embassy in Malta. Special thanks go to event sponsors DIS and Joinwell, as well as the KTP's corporate partners HSBC and Airmalta.

The line-up for upcoming Architecture Nights, which will restart in September, is an exciting one, with some very important names...

## MIRALLES-TAGLIABUE-EMBT

Benedetta Tagliabue was born in Milan and graduated from the University of Venice in 1989. In 1991 she joined Enric Miralles' studio where she eventually became a partner. Her work with Miralles, whom she married, includes a number of high profile buildings and projects in Barcelona: Parque Diagonal Mar (1997-2002), Head Office Gas Natural (1999-2006) and the Market and quarter Santa Caterina (1996-2005), as well as projects across Europe, including the School of Music in Hamburg (1997-2000) and the City Hall in Utrecht (1996-2000). In



Benedetta Tagliabue



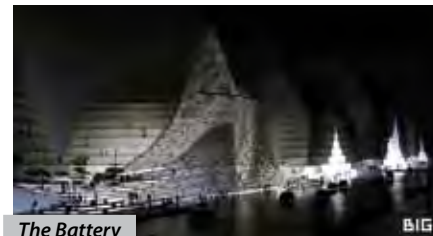
The Scottish Parliament building

1998, the partnership won the competition to design the new Scottish Parliament building and despite Miralles' premature death in 2000, Tagliabue took leadership of the team as joint Project Director and the Parliament was successfully completed in 2004, winning several awards. More recently, she won the competition for the new design of Hafencity Harbor in Hamburg, Germany, for a subway train station in Naples and for the Arcelor pavilion in Luxembourg among others.

Today under the direction of Benedetta Tagliabue the Miralles-Tagliabue-EMBT studio works with architectural projects, open spaces, urbanism, rehabilitation and exhibitions, trying to conserve the spirit of the Spanish and Italian artisan architectural studio tradition which aim is not specialization. Their architectural philosophy is dedicating special attention to context.

## B.I.G. - BJARKE INGELS GROUP

B.I.G. - Bjarke Ingels Group is an interdisciplinary group of architects, builders, designers and thinkers that operates in the fields of research, design, architecture and urbanism in Europe, the Middle East, USA and Asia. Traditionally the field of architecture is dominated by two opposites. On one side an avant-garde architecture characterised by eccentric egos detached from reality, and on the other side an industry of



The Battery

corporate professionals that make predictable boring boxes. Either arrogant utopians or petrified pragmatics.

Their belief is that there is a third way wedged in the fertile overlap between the two equally sterile fronts and they thus turn rigorous analysis of economical, environmental, or social concerns into the driving forces of design. By integrating inputs from specialists and experts outside the field of architecture in the design process they focus on the big picture to make sure that innovation is generated by specific knowledge rather than random experimentation.

BIG is currently designing and building 20 major developments (more than 300,000m<sup>2</sup> in Copenhagen alone) spanning the full spectrum of urban life incl. housing, hotel, office retail, parking leisure, culture, sports and religion. Recent projects include the Battery; a new 125,000m<sup>2</sup> urban neighbourhood integrating the first Mosque built in Denmark, The peoples' building in China, a 250,000m<sup>2</sup> tower in the shape of the Chinese character for "people" and the Clover Block, a 3km long perimeter block encircling the biggest public park in Copenhagen.

## STUDIO UP

Lea Pelivan and Toma Plejić graduated from the Faculty of Architecture in Zagreb in 2001. For the first two years they worked as a free lance architects in Zagreb and Split. At the end of 2003, Lea Pelivan and Toma Plejić established STUDIO UP; this Zagreb-based firm concerns itself with contemporary architecture and urban studies. Studio UP received the Grand Prix of the 2003



Studio UP

Zagreb Salon and represented Croatia at the 2004 Venice Biennale, 9th International



Gymnasium Fran Galovic

Exhibition of Architecture, and participated at the 'Mare Nostrum' exhibition and Power Lounge as part of the 2nd and 3rd International Rotterdam Biennale of Architecture. In 2008 they were part of the following exhibitions: 'Balkanology' in Basel, 'Peacebuilding' in Rome and 'New trajectories: Contemporary Architecture in Croatia and Slovenia' in Boston. In 2009 Studio UP was awarded with the Mies van der Rohe Award - Emerging Architect Special Mention.

## ALEXANDROS TOMBAZIS

Alexandros Tombazis was born in India in 1939. He graduated from the Architectural School of the National Technical University



New Basilica of Fatima

of Athens in 1962. Alexandros N. Tombazis and Associate Architects was founded in 1963 with services covering the design and supervision of works in many fields and a broad range of scales. The primary aim is to offer inspired building solutions according to clients' needs, with respect to nature and the environment. Their work has been acknowledged on many occasions both in Greece and abroad with prizes in numerous competitions. As well as projects in Greece, they have undertaken commissions in Cyprus, the United Arab Emirates, the Sultanate of Oman, Portugal, the Netherlands, Norway, Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine.

# St. Anne's Square:

## Phase 1 - mission accomplished. Phase 2?

by Perit Edward Said

Sliema's St. Anne's Square has finally been returned to the people. Seeing those structures come down was such a relief. Passing by again and again one could almost feel those poor stifled Ficus trees stretch out again almost Tolkienesquely! The storms of winter repeatedly tore down the barriers that concealed the renovation works that were being undertaken, just as if the forces of Nature now wanted to expose the site once and for all. Now that works are complete, one can look around and enjoy the theatre that is a piazza. The constant presence of pedestrians resting on the circular benches in the cool shade of the towering trees above, surrounded by water features, is enough to witness the total success of this project. Well done to all those concerned! In a town that is stigmatised with destruction, this regeneration is refreshingly hailed.

An additional bonus, perhaps more for those with an architectural eye, is the re-established prospect of the facades of the buildings that overlook the square. The Majestic Theatre facade, now part of a shopping complex is the piazza's undisputed centrepiece. It is also flanked however by edifices faced in quintessential Maltese architecture of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Tower Road elevations are probably earlier, adorned by typical timber balconies, one of them louvered above the bustling shops underneath. As always, the colour schemes of the apertures play such an important role in the streetscape, especially in a piazza.

Studying the MEPA Local Plan, I noticed that the urban conservation area catch-



Practically all the elevations overlooking St. Anne's Square are the original Victorian ones. MEPA ought to ensure the protection of these facades



ment of Sliema ends a long way away from St. Anne's Square, therefore there is absolutely no recognition of the architectural and urban significance of these buildings let alone their protection. One understands (as is now the case nearly everywhere in

Sliema) that many apartment blocks surround the area, and therefore these buildings are destined, sooner or later, to be similarly developed. However this would be an opportunity were facadism would be an acceptable compromise. I imagine that

the authorities insisted on the retention of the Majestic façade. They must therefore follow suit and do the same for the other elevations.

Piazza Sant'Anna should be considered as a highly significant symbolic and historical site in Sliema. Here are some of the reasons why:

- The piazza is situated bang in the middle of Sliema's central business district, or really and truly the town centre – the Ferries.

- St. Anne's is Sliema's only square in the true definition of the word. Annunciation Square and Dingli Circus are no more than widenings in roads and pavements, still commanded by vehicular traffic.

- It is dedicated to the mother of Our Lady, who is synonymous with Sliema's two oldest parishes. A niche on the corner of the square with Tigne's Seafront commemorates this (and was lovingly restored as part of the project).

- The replicated interpretation of the Diana fountain commemorates the arrival of running water to Sliema new town. It was originally designed by the illustrious Emanuele Luigi Galizia, himself one of Sliema's most prolific architects.

With so much of Sliema's identity systematically destroyed in the past decades, St. Anne's Square through the preservation of the charming facades that surround it, can stand as a kind of symbolic pocket of what Sliema was once like and how it has been brought into the 21st Century. MEPA please take note!

# Our Architects

Through "Our Architects", André Zammit has brought to light a genealogy of our profession which the contemporary perit is rarely aware of. Zammit has collated what started as a private interest in the long line of periti in his family - an ad hoc study which eventually developed and became the story of the Maltese perit.

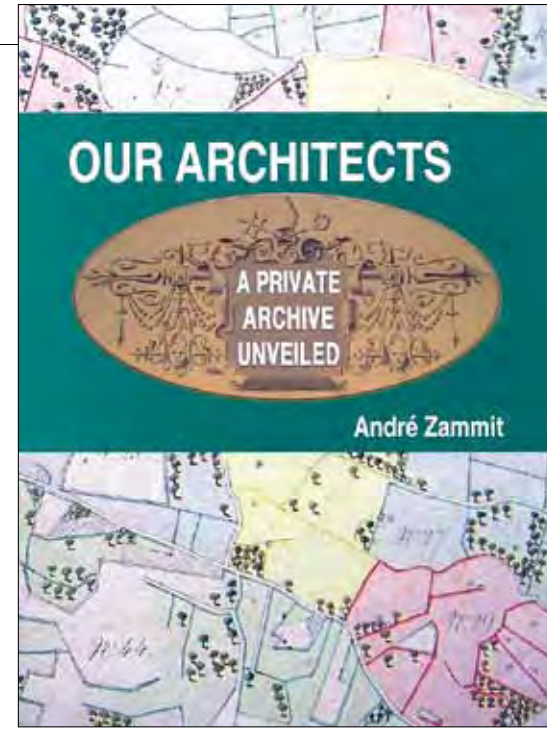
Though it is generally believed that notable Maltese architects in our history are few and far between, his account reaches as far back as the last decades of

the Order of St John's as well as explaining early Anglo Maltese clashes during the times of the British. One case in point is the controversy regarding the selection of Barry as architect for the Royal Opera site - this in spite of him never having set foot on the Islands. Stories are always grounded in a historical and social context, thus making for easy reading.

The preface to a chapter on Paternal Family Trees begins on this note: "It is not an easy matter to trace family trees and you

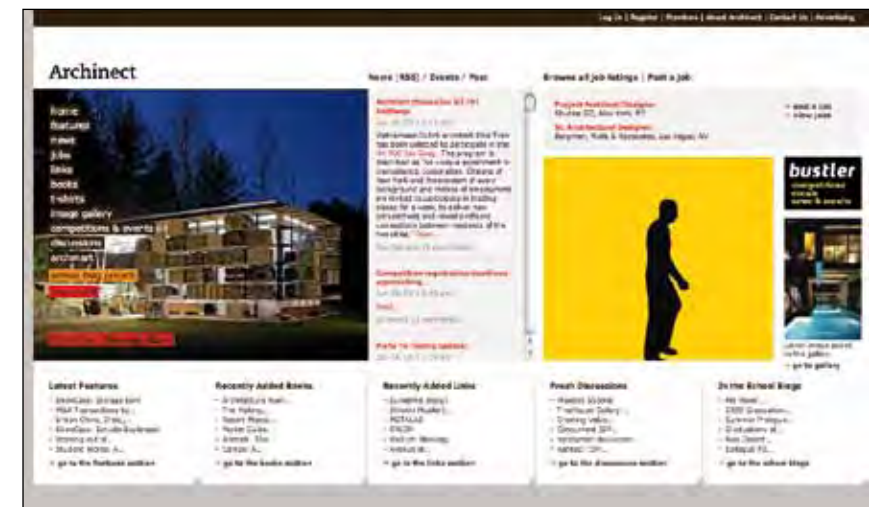
would not do it for fun." Other curiosities include a detailed record of all periti graduated between '61 and '92 as well as insight into the relationship that existed between lecturers and students.

Zammit's light tone of writing and remarkable aptitude for story telling makes this book a thoroughly enjoyable read. Boasting 200 illustrations, mostly from his private collection, timelines, genealogical charts and an index of over 2000 names, this book is a definite addition to any collection of Melitensia.



## BOOK

# www.archinect.com



The goal of Archinect is to make architecture more connected and open-minded, and bring together designers from around the world to introduce new ideas from all disciplines. Archinect was initially developed in 1997 by Paul Petrunia and has since become a top online destination for progressive-design oriented students, architects, educators, and fans. Archinect's member-based community system allows anyone to participate by registering and contributing. The site

includes a news section which is regularly updated with what is happening around the world in architecture. It also includes an image gallery which allows users to upload their own images for public use. The "Features" sections deals with a number of interesting topics, and includes a blog which allows users to comment on the various articles and enter into an online discussion. Archinect also includes a section dedicated to ongoing architecture competitions and events.

# COMPETITION

## Can you identify this villa built in Rabat in the late 19th century and name the architect responsible for its design?

The winner of this competition wins a copy of the book reviewed above: "Our Architects". 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](mailto:thearchitect@ktpmalta.com). The first correct entry drawn on the 21 August 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 building featured in last issue's competition was the Auberge d'Auvergne in Valletta. The winner is Mr Karl Micallef.



NOW TO 10 JULY 2009; V&A MUSEUM, LONDON, UK  
**EUROPE AND THE ENGLISH BAROQUE: ARCHITECTURE IN ENGLAND 1660-1715**



Some of Britain's best known and most-loved buildings can be described as English Baroque. But where exactly did its architects, such as Sir Christopher Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor and Sir John Vanbrugh, get their ideas? Discover how these and other architects took inspiration from European Baroque buildings through drawings from the RIBA Library collections and the recently acquired model of Easton Neston (above), exquisitely crafted to the designs of Hawksmoor in 1694. [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk) / [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com)

NOW TO 19 JULY 2009; V&A MUSEUM, LONDON, UK  
**BAROQUE 1620-1800: STYLE IN THE AGE OF MAGNIFICENCE**

The magnificence and splendour of Baroque, one of the most opulent styles of the 17th and 18th centuries, will be the subject of the V&A's spring exhibition. The exhibition will reflect the complexity and grandeur of the Baroque style, from the Rome of Borromini and Bernini to the magnificence of Louis XIV's Versailles and the lavishness of Baroque theatre and performance. On display will be religious paintings by Rubens and Tiepolo while silver furniture, portraits, sculpture, a regal bed and court tapestries will conjure up the rooms of a Baroque palace. The exhibition will be the first to examine all the elements of the Baroque style and will show how, as European power spread, Baroque style reached other parts of the world, captured in objects such as a gilded Mexican altarpiece. [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)

NOW TO 26 JULY 2009; THE LIGHTHOUSE, SCOTLAND  
**BETWEEN EARTH AND HEAVEN: THE ARCHITECTURE OF JOHN LAUTNER**

Over the course of a career spent largely in Los Angeles, John Lautner captured the essence of southern California in more than 150 distinctive structures. Trained by Frank Lloyd Wright, Lautner is best known for his private commissions such as the Elrod Residence in Palm Springs, featured in the James Bond movie *Diamonds are Forever*, and Los Angeles's iconic 'Chemosphere'. [www.thelighthouse.co.uk](http://www.thelighthouse.co.uk)



NOW TO 23 AUGUST 2009; THE NETHERLANDS  
**BRAZIL CONTEMPORARY – CONTEMPORARY ART, ARCHITECTURE, VISUAL CULTURE AND DESIGN**

Four Rotterdam museums, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, the Netherlands Architecture Institute, the Netherlands Photo Museum and Kunsthal Rotterdam, are bringing the rich culture of Brazil to the city on the Maas. This exposition presents every facet of Brazilian culture in four exhibitions, a publication, and a programme of activities. [www.nai.nl](http://www.nai.nl)



NOW TO 04 OCTOBER 2009; DESIGN MUSEUM, LONDON, UK  
**SUPER CONTEMPORARY**

Design Museum has joined forces with Beefeater 24 to celebrate the fearlessly progressive spirit of London's greatest creative minds, past and present. "London thinks, designs and makes like no other city; it creates and the world follows." A magnet for mavericks and freethinkers, London has nurtured a creative community that continues to rival all other design capitals. [www.designmuseum.org](http://www.designmuseum.org)



NOW TO 11 OCTOBER 2009; DESIGN MUSEUM, GENT, BELGIUM  
**YRJÖ KUKKAPURO**

Functionality is key in Kukkapuro's design philosophy, "Form follows function" is the motto he lives by. Time and again he takes up the challenge of creating functional, durable and comfortable furniture using as little materials as possible. The exhibition layout was created by Yrjö Kukkapuro and gives an overview of his work from the late 50s until today. Visitors will also have the opportunity to try out a number of his designs. <http://design.museum.gent.be>



NOW TO 18 OCTOBER 2009; THE BARBICAN, LONDON, UK  
**RADICAL NATURE—ART AND ARCHITECTURE FOR A CHANGING PLANET; 1969-2009**

The beauty and wonder of nature have provided inspiration for artists and architects for centuries. Since the 1960s, the increasingly evident degradation of the natural world and the effects of climate change have brought a new urgency to their responses. Radical Nature is the first exhibition to bring together key figures across different generations who have created utopian works and inspiring solutions for our ever-changing planet. [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk)



NOW TO 01 NOVEMBER 2009; DESIGN MUSEUM, LONDON, UK  
**REMEMBERING JAN KAPLICKÝ – ARCHITECT OF THE FUTURE**

Jan Kaplický, who died earlier this year, was the Czech architect responsible for some of the most remarkable buildings that Britain has ever seen. Lord's cricket ground holds the press box he built with his former partner, Amanda Levete – it was their first major project and won the Stirling Prize. Kaplický also designed the Selfridges department store in Birmingham, 2003 and yet even more remarkable are the buildings that Kaplický designed, which the world will never see – to say nothing of his stream of ideas for solar powered vehicles, electric cars, jewellery, bikinis and double-decker buses. [www.designmuseum.org](http://www.designmuseum.org)



NOW TO 01 NOVEMBER 2009; AUSTRIAN MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS, AUSTRIA  
**FURNITURE AS TROPHY**

An exhibition of furniture made from hunting "trophies" such as antlers, horns, etc. [www.mak.at](http://www.mak.at)



NOW TO 22 NOVEMBER 2009; V&A MUSEUM, LONDON, UK  
**A HIGHER AMBITION: OWEN JONES (1809-74)**

This display will trace Owen Jones's unique contributions to Victorian design reform; from his early studies of Islamic decoration at the Alhambra Palace, through to his designs for the 1851 Great Exhibition building, the publication of the Grammar of Ornament (one of the most important design sourcebooks of all time) and his influence in the founding of the South Kensington Museum. [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)



NOW TO JULY 2011; V&A MUSEUM, LONDON, UK  
**AESTHETICISM: BEAUTY IN ART AND DESIGN 1860-1900**

This will be the first international exhibition to explore the unconventional creativity of the British Aesthetic Movement (1860-1895). Featuring superb artworks from the traditional high art of painting, to fashionable trends in architecture, interior design, domestic furnishings, art photography and new modes of dress, this exhibition traces Aestheticism's evolution from the artistic concerns of a small circle of avant-garde artists and authors to a broad cultural phenomenon. [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk)

