

In This Issue [1/2023]

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EDITORIAL

As it is inevitable, our journal typically hosts contributions that deal with topics and questions already explored in past issues, especially in themed issues. It is a sort of nurturing threads of inquiry through a set of themes that are relevant today in our design fields.

This is certainly the case of our first two contributions by our own Taraneh Meshkani, *TPJ* Senior Editor, with a “Cross-Examination of Water Bodies and Urban Informality,” and by Nadia Shah on how “the mass housing model can accommodate human agency.” The question of “the right to housing” was just explored in our Fall 2022 themed issue (*TPJ* 7, no. 2) and here both Meshkani and Shah advance the reflection on the theme with, respectively, particular views to informality and the historical framework of the research and efforts (some successes and many failures) put forth by the modern movement vis-à-vis the greatly changed conditions of our time.

The need for a participatory approach to planning and design, which includes the housing question but certainly not only, is reflected on a broader discussion and self-assessment, conducted by Sonia Curnier, Per-Johan Dahl, Lisa Diedrich, and Andrea Kahn, of the planning experience of the Urban Forum, a cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural initiative led by the University of Lund in Sweden in recent years.

Consistently with our journal’s *ethos*, also in this issue we promote a conversation between the research done in academia and in practice. For this latter one, we feature a study, by Thomas Auer, Ulrike Andres, Wolfgang Fiel, and led by the renowned Austrian firm of Delugan Meissl (DMAA), for an interesting proposal of an infrastructural system at the territorial scale to advance the sustainability agenda that any country should adopt and pursue. Straddling practice and academia, the research on moss as a building

material, presented by Valeria Marsaglia, Guido Brusa, and Ingrid Paoletti, reveals unexpected insights into the sustainability potential offered by an unlikely tectonic solution that is gaining a wider and wider range of practical applications, while promising to significantly impact the building industry.

Moving towards more theoretical investigations are the contributions by Javier Pérez-Herreras on a comparative case-study analysis between the works by Corbu and Sejima on the theme of residential habitat, by Cem Kayatekin, Ujal Gorchu and Mikhail Frantsuzov on the ever intriguing research by Peter Eisenman, and by Edna Langenthal and Hagit Leshem on the legacy of Aldo Rossi with a focus on the important theme of “nostalgia.” These theoretical studies may seem a bit removed by the pressing social and environmental issues mentioned above, but without theoretical reflections such as these we would lose our artistic and professional compass and miss the important conceptual underpinnings that can support our more practical endeavors. At any rate, at *TPJ*, we continue to believe that theory matters. Applicable and meaningful theory, that is.

We conclude the issue with two book reviews and a conference report. The first book review, by Ute Poerschke, is on Lynnette Widder’s important assessment on a critical, but not enough investigated, time and place for twentieth century architecture (the reconstruction for post-war democratic West Germany), when the ideals and the principles of the modern movement were put to the test and challenged for their renewal. The second book review, by Elizabeth Farrelly, is on Weston Wright’s important book on what kind of architecture and urbanism will be needed for our coastal settlements vis-à-vis the future of sea-level rising, which we explored already - see *TPJ* 2 (2017), no. 2 on “resilient edges.” My conference report offers a summary of the Davos Alliance kick-off meeting, held this past May 2023, at the 18th Venice Architecture Biennale. It was an important forum to have the international alliance between institutions and INGOs, sponsored by the Swiss Confederation, gain momentum for high-level theory and practice needed to advance, disseminate and implement an ever stronger *Baukultur*, that is a culture of high quality building for a more sustainable and beautiful human habitat.