

EDITORIAL

As we said in our last editorial, the ISVS e-journal is now very well consolidated as a monthly publication, with a good number of high quality papers being received almost every other day. Some papers of course need a fair amount of revisions and refinements but thank to all the authors, and the reviewers, we have been able to bring them up to the standards expected. One thing being noticed however, is the lack of a good understanding about how to write a good literature review, and how to write in short meaningful sentences. Writing obviously is a skill that is hard to be mastered but, with perseverance and efforts, it can be acquired. What is really needed is an attitude: to learn, to practice and excel. I thank the authors who do not complain about the very questioning review comments, and the demands being made to achieve near perfection, in writing styles, composure, grammar and presentation of the arguments.

In this issue, the papers numerously examine the built-environmental issues in India, Indonesia, Iraq, and Thailand. Interestingly, ISVS e-journal is consolidating across Asia, from East to the West, and new papers are being received from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia too. There, vernacular exist in abundance and issues of architecture have just begun to be researched seriously. Needless to say, ISVS e-journal is an apt platform for the exchange of research findings with the wider academic community.

Issues are numerous and range from the vernacular as well as the issues of sustainability and cities. In terms of the vernacular settlements, papers in this issue have focused on the examination of issues as follows. First, Andi Hildayanti, & Wasilah Sahabuddin examine the tectonics of the vernacular: The design techniques of the Tongkonan House, in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The study concludes that the technique and the material combination method create a rigid construction character and interconnection between each construction elements. Piles positioned with similar length and size creates a pattern character with horizontal and vertical lines and the grid, presents harmony and a well-ordered impression. In contrast, Dede Pramayoza & Fresti Yuliza come to us from theatre. Examining a village spatial planning strategy for the Pasa Harau Festival in West Sumatra, Indonesia, they bring in a new idea about the performance of drama; from Dramaturgy to Curation. The study shows that curating the performance space has become an essential tool for organizing shared spaces within the Nagari Harau, which resembles dramaturgy. This contrasts with and differs from the concept of compiling festival agendas as a plot of experience for the participants.

Seyedehsamaneh Fatemi & Sarena Abdullah talks about an entirely different issue: the expressions in Art. They examine the emergence of social issues in contemporary Iranian art and show that social and political conditions and technological progress are important factors in the emergence of social issues in contemporary Iranian art. Furthermore, in a society where direct criticism is not possible, art has become a means to critique issues indirectly. Sugiyanto, Tjetjep Rohendi Rohidi, Eko Haryanto, Syakir, Agus Cahyono, Nadia Sigi Prameswari look at a new idea: the socio-cultural capital. They examine the role of the socio-cultural capital of Mulyoharjo craftsmen in the preservation of Jepara carving arts in Indonesia and argue that the existence of socio-cultural capital can provide harmony, opportunity, and continuity in the carving industry in Indonesia.

Sidhi Wiguna Teh, L. M. F. Purwanto, & Ignatius Bambang Sugiharto present a very controversial idea. Examining the dialectics of the Akashic Field and Qi related to the conceptions of space in vernacular architecture, Vastu Shastra and Fēng Shuǐ, they argue that that architecture, vastu shastra and fēng shuǐ can work together with contemporary architectural theories to produce meaningful and wholesome architecture. Food for thought indeed. Heba Abbas Hameed & Arshad Alanizi on the contrary look at the issues of architecture from a time point of view. Examining the impact of the reflections of time trilogy on architectural thought, they show how classicism, modernist and post-modernist architecture are embedded in the past, the present and the future while all times (past, present and future) are present in the independent architecture.

Nabaa Deyaa Al-Deen Salman, & Samah A. Abraham look at a more everyday issue. Their concerns are about the homes for the elderly which they argue should possess the qualities of friendliness. Examining the age-friendliness of residential complexes in Erbil specifically the Gunjan

city in Iraq, they point out that for a residential complex to be age-friendly, it should satisfy certain socio-spatial design criteria at two levels: urban design, and interior design of the residential units. In their evaluation of the Gunjan city, the results are average; some aspects can certainly be improved.

Rama Hardiansyah, Wijayanti, Siti Rukayah, & Lia Rosmala Schiffer take us to Indonesia, specifically to Semarang. They look at the rejuvenation and revitalization of the old city of Semarang in Indonesia, which is flooded and chaotic, and argue that revitalizing the Semarang old town area should be seen not only as a world cultural heritage recognized by the UNESCO but also as a mechanism to revive the activities and restructure the old city. The paper argues that institutional strengthening and marketing must be increased, so that it can elevate the image of the Kota Lama area of Semarang. This revitalization could greatly promote an increase in the economic activities, they say.

Hamsa Abd Al-Rahman, & Mohammed Qasim Abdul Ghafoor are interested in placemaking, but not in the real world. Instead, they look at employing virtual reality for place-making: mimicking the real world in the virtual world. It seems that there is a lot of scope in this new and bewildering practice of living in the digital world. In contrast, Allu Revathi Devi, Vijayalaxmi J. & Ramesh Srikonda take us to the beauty of the real world. They examine the diversity of street trees: density, composition and shade in the urban residential areas of Visakhapatnam, in India. They point out that as the neighborhood character keeps changing with re-densification, there are frequent replacements of trees resulting in younger trees accounting for a higher share as against the old trees. The recent plantation drives also replace them with the fast growing trees, in keeping with the modern trends of fast life styles. It seems that we cannot wait for the trees to grow. Interestingly, Sourav Zaman & Nafia Nawreen Ahmed look at what happens under those trees. They examine the impact of street vendors on social sustainability of public places in the case of Khulna city in Bangladesh. As they argue, that the performance of street vendors ameliorate the overall social sustainability criteria of those areas by bringing people together and add new dimensions to the streets while extending the boundaries of the public places. They contribute not only to the informal economy but also improve the larger picture by enhancing social sustainability of the public areas. Trees are of course part of the landscape and Dwita Hadi Rahmi, & Shabrina Tamimi take this idea to look at the villages in Borobudur in Indonesia as cultural landscapes. Examining the traditional domestic architecture in the rural cultural landscape of Borobudur, in Indonesia, they point out that traditional Javanese architecture still continues in terms of the functions and the shapes of the houses, including the shape of the roof. Nevertheless, the emergence of new buildings is a threat to the declining quality of the village atmosphere and threaten the sustainability of the Borobudur *saujana*.

Thongtep Sirisoda, Rawinan Loymek focus on one house type in Thailand. They examine the ways in which reflecting spatial identity and values through local architecture happens by looking closely at the Thai-Yuan House in the Saraburi Province, in Thailand. This brings us to the values that are invested in landscapes, architecture, buildings and houses. Ahmed Hashim Hameed Al-eqaby, and Tabark Hussain Ali elaborate on this idea of values. They look at how sustainability of values in heritage buildings can be evaluated. He offers us a framework, a theoretical basis and real evaluations, bringing insights from Iraq.

Overall, this issue of the ISVS e-journal—as it always is—has been a collection of very meaningful studies into the vernacular settlements as well as the human settlements in general bringing out insights hitherto not available. A new trend however has to be observed. That is the popularity of the journal in territories such as Iraq and now Thailand, in addition to Indonesia and India. We are most encouraged by their contributions; indeed, we are also thankful to our usual authors contributing.

Dr. Ranjith Dayaratne

Editor-in-Chief

Asian School of Architecture, Melbourne, Australia.