

## Editorial

Amos Rapoport, one of the eminent scholars on the subject of vernacular architecture discusses the notion of 'vernacular intuitiveness' to point out the importance of understanding the ways the ordinary people think of, design, build, live, and maintain their environments. Four articles in this issue examine this concept through critical analysis of four different vernacular situations.

Garrett Fugate of the Boston University, USA, examines the under-studied topic of the conversion of ordinary secular buildings into religious places by ordinary devotees. He focuses on the buildings converted into Islamic mosques by the Muslim immigrant communities in the USA. He argues that these conversions demonstrate the vernacular intuitiveness of the ordinary Muslims not only of the essentials of their faith but also of the architecture of an Islamic place, as they struggle with establishing an identity in a strange cultural milieu and within centuries-old traditions of their faith and its high-style architecture.

Julie Lawless of the Western Illinois University, USA, takes a look at the vernacular intuitiveness of a similar faith-based immigrant community in the USA, albeit of a different era. Her focus is on the Bethel Colony in the rural Missouri in the USA that was established by German immigrants of the Methodist Church in the mid-nineteenth century. Although the Colony no longer exists, the remaining buildings and the landscape are tangible reminders of the values of those who struggled to establish a utopia framed by their own interpretation of the faith in the New World. She discusses how the vernacular intuitiveness of faith and place of their insular internal culture interacted with the external culture of the rest of America in developing a unique landscape of communitarian architecture.

Barry Ballinger and Allison Wilke of the University of Kansas, USA, explore the vernacular intuitiveness of sustainable dwelling in rather unlikely place and people, the residents of the favelas of the Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. They argue that the informal or squatter settlements like favelas should be considered contemporary vernacular environments and that, contrary to popular belief that these places are unliveable, people in favelas have developed intuitive and creative ways of making their favelas sustainable ecologically, socially, and economically. They use the *Ahwahnee Principles*, derived by the New Urbanists, to assess the sustainability in favelas and argue that the *Ahwahnee Principles* perhaps be revised based on the vernacular intuitiveness of sustainability that the favela residents have demonstrated.

Supitcha Tovivich of the Silpakorn University in Thailand argues that the prevailing notion of vernacular architecture in Thailand is narrowly and mistakenly associated with the historic forms of architecture. This static view is inadequate to understand the dynamics of contemporary vernacular settings and for their proper conservation. She presents the findings of two workshops held in Klong Bangluang village in Bangkok in which the local community was engaged in, in order to elicit the community's intuitive understanding of their vernacular environment.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr. RanjithDayaratne, the Editor-in-Chief of the ISVS Journal for inviting me to guest edit this issue. It has been a pleasure to work with him, the reviewers and the contributing authors. I do hope that the readers of the journal would also take great pleasure in reading the scholarly work published.

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