

REPORT OF ISVS 7: 7th INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON VERNACULAR SETTLEMENTS, 15th -17th October, 2014.

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Participants of ISVS 7 in front of Istanbul Technical University

The 7th International Seminar on Vernacular Settlements on the theme 'Reassessing Vernacular Architecture: Theory and Practice—traditions, identities and globalization' was successfully concluded at Istanbul Technical University, Faculty of Architecture building, Taskışla, Taksim, Istanbul-Turkey with the participation of close to 100 participants. It started a day before on the 14th October welcoming the early comers with a cocktail under the sponsorship of the Chamber of Architects of Istanbul, at Karaköy where the Chamber was located. This event was followed by a guided night tour of Architecture by bus travelling to selected architecturally interesting sites of Istanbul. It concluded with the sea cruise-Bosphorous Tour culminating in a Gala dinner at georgous restaurant overlooking the sea.

The seminar as usual received a good response to its announcement. Well above hundred scholars showed their interest by sending abstracts. Of these, only 130 were accepted. However, after the reviewing and acceptance of the final papers, a total of 66 participants registered to present their academic papers. Close to hundred attended the seminar which took place in two parallel sessions over two days. They came from 23 different countries and were mostly architects and urban planners. All papers of the participants were published in two-volume Conference proceedings and were distributed to all attendees before the conference started. The members of the organizing committee and the scientific committee, as well as the keynote speakers attended as honorable guests. There were 12 scholars in the organizing committee; 26 internationally known scholars in the scientific committee, and 4 members from the ISVS Advisory Board. Several international scholars came from European reserach centers and architectural offices.



Prof. Naser Alsayed,
University of California, Berkeley, USA..



Prof. Attilio Petruccioli
Qatar University, Qatar.



Prof. Miki Desai
CEPT University, Ahmedabad, India.

Six Keynote speakers addressed the seminar which provided intellectually rich articulations on vernacular and traditions. These included Prof. Naser Alsayed from USA, Prof. Attilio Petruccioli from Qatar and Prof. Miki Desai from CEPT University, India. Three keynote speakers from Turkey provided insights on Vernacular from Turkey which is rich in traditions and the vernacular. The Turkish keynote speakers were originally from the hosting university: the Istanbul Technical University.



However, it was not all serious talk. Many off the table conversations took place during breaks and these were coloured by the walks and travels to the historical sites of Turkey, through which networking and sharing of ideas took place. Most significantly, Turkish musicians performed and provided an ambience of art and culture culminating in the participants spontaneous dance at the end of the Gala Dinner.

Musicians from ITU performing for the participants



Dining and Dancing at the Gala Dinner

Some of the findings coming out of this conference are as follows:

- It is global dynamics rather than modernity that has a negative impact tradition.
- With rural to urban migration taking place fast in many countries, vernacular settlements are finding it increasingly difficult to retain the traditions and values.
- Vernacular remain both visible and hidden in the arts and crafts of cultures as much as in everyday practices.
- Vernacular settlements need to be sustained culturally and economically, if we need them to continue to exist.
- Concept of the vernacular has become confusing lately. It needs to relate to the locality: geography and the people.
- Without vernacular settlements, the cities will have a tendency to lose their identity.
- Examination of the existing unique vernacular architecture in place is a powerful policy tool that should provide a balance to the increasingly globalising world.



It is the participants that make a conference a real confluence.

Attendees at a presentation



A conference of this nature comes into being on the hard work of many people who work tirelessly behind the show.

Prof. Yurdanur and Dr Baslo sorting out the proceedings in the back room.