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Designing for People



PAR Amos Rapoport

Editorial

This special issue of TRIALOG is dedicated to **Amos Rapoport**, the architect who became famous for his writings on vernacular architecture in the 1960s and 1970s. Unlike other authors of that time, he went beyond just phenomenologically describing traditional architectures of the world, and also presented a theory explaining a genesis of their forms.

His essay 'Designing for People – Some Implications', presented in this issue of TRIALOG, is an original text based on a conference held in Darmstadt on the occasion of TRIALOG's 25th jubilee in January, 2010. In this text he turns to contemporary architecture and its frequent shortcomings in design, which he blames on the widespread refusal of the architectural profession to conduct and apply serious research as a basis of their work.

Rapoport is returning to Darmstadt again for the presentation of this publication in September, 2011. This will occur within the framework of another symposium organised by PAR, the Department of Planning and Building in Non-European Regions at Darmstadt University of Technology. This event, 'Taming the Megacity', will also commemorate the 31 year history of PAR, which has also been the home of TRIALOG since day one. PAR will be closing down this year following the retirement of its director, Professor Dr. Kosta Mathéy. However, Kosta Mathéy, a member of the TRIALOG steering committee, will continue his engagement with the TRIALOG association and journal from his new base elsewhere.

Apart from Amos Rapoport's essay, there are only two other and shorter papers included in this issue of TRIALOG. They are both inspired by Amos Rapoport's earlier publications – among which the book 'House Form and Culture' (1969) probably is most widely known. **Franco Frescura**, another authority on the documentation and critical analysis of rural and vernacular architecture in Southern Africa, expands in his article 'From Vernacular to High Design' on Rapoport's references to architectural form and social formation.

The paper 'Cultural Identities, Social Cohesion, and the Built Environment', by **Kosta Mathéy**, documents a lecture given by the author in Brazil, 2010. It, too, is inspired by Rapoport's 'House Form and Culture', but takes it to the urban scale. Mathéy argues that in order to overcome the uniformity of the built environment in the age of globalization, the lost cultural identity of place can and must be recovered by consciously incorporating the combination of various design factors that are unique to each particular place.

Last but not least, we want to draw our readers' attention to Amos Rapoport's vernacular design image archive; it contains over 25,000 slides taken by Prof. Rapoport himself since the 1950s and includes depictions of vernacular settings from over 70 countries. It can be accessed under <www.sadp.ku.edu/rapoport>. A bibliography of Rapoport's publications up to 1970 can be found under <www.archive.org/details/bibliographyofwr331mill>.

Silvia Matuk

Kosta Mathéy

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