

EDITORIAL

We are delighted to bring to you the second issue of the Archi-Texts e-journal published by the Asian School of Knowledge (ASK). This is clear evidence that the journal as well as ASK have consolidated their presence in the academic publication sphere.

This issue also has five papers strengthening the stance the journal is taking in promoting a new direction of research related to built-environments. As previously said, this journal offers opportunities for exploring the spatial experiences and traits that manifest among architects, people and spaces through the design of built-environments: the quintessential core aspect of all forms of architectural design. It also facilitates looking at how these are achieved by means of designing.

In the first paper of this issue, Wijetunge, et al. examine the issue of elitism and the practice of architecture. It is well known that architects usually belong to the elite class, or acquire such status even if they come from a different stratum. Wijetunge et al. point this out and set out to ascertain this trait among the Asian Architects who have won the Pritzker Prize from 1979-2023. They employ qualitative case studies as research methods generating data from the pritzkerprize.com website, to examine the eleven cycles producing 12 winning starchitects from the Asian region. Theories on elitism establish that people become elites through social positions based on access to political power in as much as from the quality of the buildings they design. They conclude that among those who have won the Pritzker Prize, only two enjoy elite positions. Thus, they conclude that the Pritzker Prize does not promote elitism through architecture.

In the second paper, Ahmed Kadhem Alwan & Oday Abbas examine the potentials of parametric design in architecture, generating insights from collaborations with morphogenic biology and natural biomimicry. They show how to translate the functional principles from the natural world into the design field, thereby integrating the principles of Nature into the design process to create unique spatial experiences. They demonstrate clearly that by drawing inspiration from natural forms and applying parametric programs to modify their specifications and settings, innovative designs for architecture can be generated.

In contrast, Akash Paneliya and Shweta Suhane examine amphibious architecture and below sea level settings in creating resilient infrastructure to respond to the emerging climatic calamities in Kuttanads, India. They point out that Kerala is an Indian southernmost state that was worst hit by disastrous floods in both 2018 and 2019 and that according to a forecast by the Indian Ministry of Earth Sciences, the calamity may be repeated every year in the future too, due to the changes in weather patterns. Hence, they argue that there is a need for urgent mitigation in terms of flood and resilient infrastructure. They adopt a mixed-method approach to understand the impact of repeated floods in Kuttanad, which include in-depth, qualitative case studies and interviews with residents that represent their adaptation strategies, infrastructure, and amphibious architecture. They also carry out a quantitative survey to assess the impact of floods, response strategies and targets of the government officials. In conclusion, they propose design guidelines considering the ways in which amphibious architecture could respond effectively to Kuttanad as well as particular issues of India subject to flooding, enhancing its resilience and hence improving spatial experience and life for its residents.

Al-Olaimat, Shdafat and Al-Khazaleh look at an entirely different issue. They look at the modern architecture produced by Norman Foster and ask the question "Does Foster's High-Tech architecture respect the Building Context?" They employ the analysis of a number of Foster's projects, delving deep into the critiques that exist about them. They reveal how Foster defends his approach to these projects and articulates how he deals with the context of buildings which justifies his bias towards technology generating the aesthetic values in his architecture.

Anika Singha takes us far away from the High-Tech and modern architecture. She examines the design of staircase wells for residential settings to bring about quality of space and spatial experiences. In so doing, she offers insights from a survey of villas designed by architects in India. She specifically looks at the under-staircase spaces, focusing on their practical operations and design integrations. In fact, she examines the wide range of their conceptualizations including colourful designs and other accomplishments. This exploration identifies crucial functional aspects, such as ergonomic design principles, safety norms and storing possibilities while retaining the aesthetics through ornamentations. She reveals the unique and innovative configurations such as home services and wine basements associated with the stairs. In conclusion, she argues that stairwells can be introduced in numerous domestic situations, and opportunities for creating under-staircase spaces exist according to the size, space for the design, place or location, direction and the needs of the users.

Undeniably, these papers divulge the nuances of the manifestations of spatial experiences as well as other facets of architecture in a variety of situations bringing out insights hitherto not available. We are grateful to the authors for the insights shared. We look forward to their active contributions in the future too.

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Editor-in-Chief