

OPEN HOUSE INTERNATIONAL OHI

Academic Refereed Journal

Volume 31 No.3 September 2006

Design Studio Teaching Practices

Between Traditional, Revolutionary, and Virtual Models

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Open House International Volume 31 No. 3 September 2006 ISSN 0168-2601 Director & Chief Editor: Nicholas Wilkinson	
DESIGN STUDIO TEACHING PRACTICES <i>Between Traditional, Revolutionary, and Virtual Models</i>	
Guest Editor: Ashraf Salama	
Guest Reviewers: Henry Sanoff, Julia Robinson; Michael Crosbie; Ruth Morrow; & Thomas Dutton.	
IN THIS ISSUE	
Ashraf Salama	Guest Editorial: Committed Educators are Reshaping Studio Pedagogy
Nisha Fernando	Design as Exploration: An Integrative Model
Kevin Mitchell	Lessons from Practice: Architectural Education and the Notion of Critical Inquiry
Noam Austerlitz & Avigail Sachs	Community Collaboration and Communication in the Design Studio
Malika Bose, Eliza Pennypacker, and Tom Yahner	Enhancing Critical Thinking through "Independent Design Decision Making" in the Studio
Gulita Farivarsadri and Ustun Alsaç	Let's Play Design
Joongsu Kim	Exploring Social Construction in Architectural Pedagogy
Tasoulla Hadjiyanni	Integrating Social Science Research into Studio Teaching: Housing New Immigrants
Carlos Balsas	The Phoenix Capitol Mall Studios as Examples of Community Embeddedness
Rabee Reffat	Application of an Alternative Teaching Model in a Virtual Architectural Design Studio: Impacts and Constraints
Jeffrey Hou & Min Jay Kang	Differences and Dialogic Learning in a Collaborative Virtual Design Studio
Jamal Al Qawasmi	Transformations in Design Education: The Paperless and the Virtual Design Studio
Jeffrey Haase	Temporary Space – Permanent Knowledge
Contact: "Carol Nicholson" <Carol.Nicholson@ribaenterprises.com>	

The process of educating future architects and designers around the world varies dramatically. However, there is one striking similarity – the dominance of the design studio as the main forum for knowledge acquisition and assimilation, and for creative exploration and interaction. Such a setting encompasses intensive cognitive and physical activities, which ultimately result in conceptualizing meaningful environments proposed to accommodate related human activities. The design studio is the primary space where students explore their creative skills that are so prized by the profession; it is the kiln where future architects are molded. It has occupied a central position since architectural education was formalized two centuries ago in France and later in Germany, the rest of Europe, North America, and the rest of the world.

My personal experience of the design studio comes principally from being academic, studio educator, and researcher on architectural education and studio teaching practices for over fifteen years. Continuous endeavors have resulted in a number of publications that analyzed traditional studio while probing into the motivations of my colleague educators and allowing for critical examination of studio pedagogy (Salama, 1995; 1996; 1998; 1999; 2002; 2005; 2006). My passion for a continued

exploration and investigation of the studio underlying rituals, teaching styles and learning outcomes, design processes and studio projects motivated me to entertain the idea of guest editing this issue and to venture a call for contributions for soliciting visions and experiences on the theme. This initiation was further encouraged and supported by the Editor in Chief – Nicholas Wilkinson.

This issue of Open House International-OHI is concerned with the studio pedagogy's increasing importance within the context of contemporary architectural and design education, a crucial subject that poses itself confidently on the map of current academic research. Twelve papers are included; of them, nine were selected from over 30 submission responses to the call for contributions. These are of ASHRAF SALAMA; NISHA FERNANDO; KEVIN MITCHELL, MALIKA BOSE, ELIZA PENNYPACKER, and TOM YAHNER; TASOULLA HADJIYANNI; CARLOS BALSAS; RABEE REFFAT; JEFFREY HOU and MIN-JAY KANG; JAMAL AL QAWASMI; and JEFFREY HAASE.

Three papers were selected as they won the first three awards of the International Architectural Education Competition entitled "*Alternative Educational Ways for Teaching and Learning Architectural Design*," which was organized in 2005 by Open House International and the Faculty of Architecture, Eastern Mediterranean University, Northern Cyprus. Results were announced in April 2006 and the three winners were JOONGSUB KIM (1st Prize); NOAM AUSTERLITZ & AVIGAIL SACHS (2nd Prize); and GUITA FARIVARSADRI & USTUN ALSAC (3rd Prize).

Efforts of these concerned and committed educators are integrated to openly debate the delivery system of education in the studio. Actually, they are advancing the discussions on how this subject has become a recognized area of research in recent years, how studio teaching invigorates the attitudes of future architects and designers, and how it may contribute to the creation of better environments. The papers in this edition of OHI capture the body of knowledge about design studio teaching. However, they can be regarded as different studio typologies that delineate a paradigm shift. Such a shift is from the traditional approach that follows principles and practices developed in the past, and not equipped to deal with the practical realities of contemporary societies, to a more responsive approach that effectively challenges recent advances in social and behavioral sciences, and telecommunication technologies. Such an approach is characterized by committing itself to a student-centered learning process by shaping and identifying studio objectives and thereby recognizing the impacts they may have on the life-long learning skills of future architects.