With the support of MODERN SOUTHEAST ASIA International committee for documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement

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docomomo International is a non-profit organization dedicated to the documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods of the Modern Movement. It aims at:

• Bringing the significance of the architecture of the Modern Movement to the attention of the public, the public authorities, the professionals and the educational community.

• Identifying and promoting the surveying of the Modern Movement’s works.

• Fostering and disseminating the development of appropriate techniques and methods of conservation.

• Opposing destruction and disfigurement of significant works.

• Gathering funds for documentation and conservation.

• Exploring and developing knowledge of the Modern Movement.

docomomo International wishes to extend its field of actions to new territories, establish new partnerships with institutions, organizations and NGO active in the area of modern architecture, develop and publish the international register, and enlarge the scope of its activities in the realm of research, documentation and education.
preliminary preview

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Parallel Modernities: Architectural Narratives on Southeast Asia

Following the challenges traced by the maseana Project (2015-2020), with the collaboration of docomomo International, the aim of this D) is to discuss the Modern Movement in the Southeast Asian countries [Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam], addressing the course of the built environment and architectural development of each country, through its practice and discourse.

Coming from a common goal of preserving and promoting a sustainable future, a platform has been created to discuss documentation, conservation and reuse of modern architecture based on three main concepts: regeneration, equality and openness. Regeneration by, through training and education, involving the younger generations in the process of recognition and conservation. Equality, based on the respect for difference with no imposition of ideas or methodologies. Openness by promoting exchange through thoughtful cooperation.

Although ASEAN is coming to be united in terms of politics, economy and culture, the background of its member countries is varied, having experienced diverse European colonization. In an increasingly global world, these nations are facing changes in economy and culture, the background of its member countries with no imposition of ideas or methodologies. Openness by involving the younger generations in the process of recognition and conservation. Equality, based on the respect for difference with no imposition of ideas or methodologies. Openness by promoting exchange through thoughtful cooperation.

One of the most central questions in the debate on modernity has been the tension between a pretentious universality of the scientific-technological rationality of a so-called international format and the specific particularities of places and traditions. The homogenizing effects on the threats of the old over the new have informed different discourses on values such as authenticity, regionalism or identity. In parallel, the history of Modern Movement architecture has been written from a Eurocentric perspective although deeper studies on concepts such as hybridity or the otherness have recently promoted a nuanced analysis on architecture and politics beyond the Eurocentric framework.

In fact, the ANA declaration (2020) stated that “Modern Asia has not developed in a vacuum but has evolved through sustained interactions with the West, which has had a constant presence in our collective consciousness. The history of dealing with the West, with our [their] neighbors and with ourselves [themselves], is manifested in the myriad forms of our [their] architecture. The history of modern architecture in Asia is the history of how Asians have become modern”. Modernity is envisaged as a process of modernization which stands, as J. Widodo sustains, “when the spirit of freedom, progress and innovation flourishes”. In postcolonial circumstances “the discourse on the tropics reached a pivotal point when it coincided with the success of the modern architecture turning global and adapting to suit all climate and cultures”. The promise of a sustainable world based on urban regeneration future has a lot to do with S. Muramatsu’s theory on using natural and cultural resources to fulfill the “heritage butterfly”.

The aim of this project and this location is to discuss the maseana Project to keep working towards the preservation of this legacy for future generations, “dealing with issues common to everyone in a way that might transcend national borders in the future”.

docomomo is grateful to Shin Muramatsu, Setiadi Sopandi, Yoshiyuki Yamada and Johannes Widodo for being guest editors of this issue. Their commitment and energy which was shared by the authors who collaborated generously with their knowledge and dedicated work. A special mention must be made as well to Fumihiho Maki who gave us his wise insights through a unique interview.

The Olympic National Sports Complex, Phnom Penh, on the cover, pays homage to Vann Molyvann, who passed away this September at 99 years old. Finally, docomomo remembers Ruy Jervis d’Athouguia born in Macau 100 years ago.

Notes
1. maseana stands for modern ASEAN architecture. It was created in 2014 by docomomo Japan, in collaboration with docomomo International and maan (modern Asian Architecture Network). maseana is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, set up in 1967 to promote cultural, economic and political development in the region.
BOOK REVIEWS

Edifice Complex: Power, Myth and Marcos State Architecture

Author: Gerard Lico
Publisher: Ateneo de Manila University Press
Language: English
Year: 2003

Gerard Lico’s contribution to Philippine architectural history and criticism covers the late 20th-century phenomenon of a distinctive, but slightly demented, architectural aesthetic wielded by a “conjugal dictatorship” to legitimize its regime and perpetuate its power. It is this relationship between power and architecture that provides the framework and context for this book.

Lico provides straightforward historical narrative and architectural criticism of the buildings within the prime site of Marcosian architecture that is the CCP Complex, but he situates these within the terrain of tyranny that rerouted foreign aid funds and co-opted the architectural flair of the likes of Locsin, Mañosa, and Hong.

The CCP Complex, Lico states, was architecture as propaganda, a “noncoercive mode of power imposition in stone, concrete, and glass”. Lico points out that the modernist, almost inhuman geometries and scale of the complex had a human and social cost. It was a price those in power then were willing to pay.

Lico’s is a departure from traditional forms of architectural inquiry. Most previous works have been limited to stylistic influences or confined to Spanish era architecture. Few writers have looked at the larger political and theoretical context of buildings. For those still accustomed to pre-postmodern modes of architectural thought, the theoretical underpinnings may be a tad difficult. The effort, though, is necessary to reframe our understanding of the process and product of the architecture of that phase of our history.

Paulo G. Aleazaren


Authors: Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Leon Collins
Publisher: The Key Publisher Company Limited
ISBN: 978-979341216
Language: English
Year: 2006

After 6 years of research in Cambodia, France and Australia, Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Leon presented, in 2006, the “New Khmer Architecture” as an architectural movement that took place in Cambodia during the 1950s and 1960s, as the combination of Western modernism with traditional Cambodian architecture built in harmony with the tropical climate.

Between 1953 and 1972 Cambodia enjoyed an unprecedented era of economic and social development, associated with a renaissance of the arts and architecture where the national identity was taken into account regarding how to re-imagine new forms of culture in the framework of local traditions. In this publication, the authors explain how the “New Khmer Architecture” engaged diverse international architects, urbanists and engineers – who enthusiastically combined Western modern forms, materials and functions with traditional Cambodian designs, practices and local materials.

By analyzing public and private buildings through different perspectives – archives, photography, drawings –, Helen Grant Ross and Darryl Leon present a genealogy of this architectural production, with notes on its current state, crossing different themes: “nation in the making”, “the artist and patron”, “the builders”, “modern traditional”, “new khmer”, “public investment”, “the architect” and “innovative modern”.

Catarina Andrade

Rumah Silaban: Silaban’s House

Edited by m/a/small Indonesia and the School of Architecture, Tarumanagara University Publisher: m/a/small Indonesia Publishing
ISBN: 978-979-17381-0-1
Language: Indonesian and English
Year: 2008

This book was created as a record of the workshop held to document the works of Friedrich Silaban (1912-1984). Hosted by modern Asian Architecture Network (m/a/small) Indonesia and co-hosted by Tarumanagara University, the Center for Sustainable Urban Regeneration (csurk) at the University of Tokyo, and m/a/small at the site of the architect’s home from July 22nd to 25th, 2007. This international workshop was a significant opportunity for us not only to record the past but also to sustain and regenerate cities in which we live.

Silaban, who was the focus of the workshop, worked as an apprentice in a Dutch architect’s office and learned architectural designs during the colonial period. After Indonesia achieved independence, he designed
many monumental buildings as requested by Sukarno, the nation’s first president. Among them are the National Mosque, Gedung Pola, and the Bank of Indonesia Headquarters. However, as time goes by, both Sukarno and Silaban have passed into oblivion. It is unfortunate that the current generation of Indonesian architects is no longer aware of Silaban’s design talents, so most of them are no longer able to appreciate the modernist legacy of Indonesia’s early independence period.

There are various ways to allow cities to sustain their development: reducing emissions of carbon dioxide, controlling unruly urban expansion, and restraining the amount of resource consumption, for example. I myself would like to contribute to our common goal of urban sustenance and regeneration by taking advantage of my fields of specialty in urban history and architectural history. I believe that to cherish and keep using old buildings from the past could lead to saving of our resources and significantly reducing carbon dioxide emissions. It also allows us to inherit our predecessors’ memories.

It is also true, however, that keeping all the buildings built in the past prevents us from building new ones that can constitute a better future environment. Thus, it is important to create standards based on each society’s value system, with which to decide whether a certain building should be preserved or demolished. Given this understanding, CSUR at the University of Tokyo has produced Jakarta Heritage Map in collaboration with maaN Indonesia, Tarumanagara University and maaN International, and now we are working to clarify the achievement of Silaban as an Indonesian architect.

Our project, which can be called the “F Silaban Inventory Research Project”, is now proceeding beyond just documenting history. In the near future, we are planning to build a database of Silaban’s complete works as well as publishing his memoir and autobiogrophy. To know what Silaban, one of Indonesia’s most influential architects, thought and designed should allow the Indonesian people to acquire their own viewpoints for evaluating architecture in general. And, as I expect with strong hope, this will encourage the establishment of the study of sustainable urban regeneration in Jakarta and other parts of Indonesia.

I wish this pioneering book will be widely read and inspired many people, not only in Indonesia but also across Asia and the rest of the world, to think about the significance of documenting works of one’s own nation’s architects.
June 2014, Venice. The 14th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale 2014 was launched by Rem Koolhaas with the statement “Architecture, not architects.” After years of biennales dedicated to the celebration of the most acclaimed contemporary architectural practices, this time the president of the Venice Biennale, Paolo Baratta, envisaged a research centered exhibition. Consisting of three exhibitions – Elements of Architecture, Monditalia and Absorbing Modernity: 1914-2014 –, the main theme of the exhibition was Fundamentals, as a call for going back to basics and centering the attention of the participants on the past and present of the architectural discipline, as a ground for speculating on its future.

In the national pavilion representations, the participating countries were asked to address the single subject of Absorbing Modernity: 1914-2014, as an invitation to reflect and develop territorial narratives on the way that the local and the global, the national and the “universal”, have met in architecture’s evolution of the last 100 years. Rem Koolhaas went further, provocatively asking each country “to show, each in their own way, the process of the erasure of national characteristics in architecture in favor of the almost universal adoption of a single modern language and a single repertoire of typologies – a more complex process than we typically recognize, involving significant encounters between cultures, technical inventions, and hidden ways of remaining ‘national’.”

There were 66 national contributions. Indonesia participated for the first time, under the theme “Craftsmanship: Material Consciousness.” Entering the Indonesian pavilion, one was gradually transported to somewhere else far from the space before us, from Venice, from Europe. The eyes being slowly prepared to the clarity of the image in the dark and the ears to the precision of different layers of crystalline sound, allowing a sensorial travel into what I guessed, back then, to be the Indonesian materiality or its art of building. In the space, moving images projected into 7 floating glass screens were revealing 100 years of architecture in Indonesia, within the journey of 6 materials: timber [kayu], stone [batu], brick [bata], steel [ baja], concrete [beton] and bamboo [ bambu]. Glass, intentionally excluded from the story for not being a suitable material for the tropical climate, was paradoxically present as the perfect technology to project the story in Venice. The 7th screen was dedicated to the concept that entitled the exhibition: “Craftsmanship: Material Consciousness” [Ketukanan: Kesadaran Material].

Going deep into the meaning of this title, one can confirm the very clear message of the exhibition, effectively transmitted by only 3 elements: outspoken images, outright sounds and essential text. Craftsmanship ([kru: (t)i] smanip), noun, in the Oxford Dictionary is explained as 1) skill in a particular craft, 2) the quality of design and work shown in something made by hand; artistry. Richard Sennett defined it, in ‘The Craftsman’, as “the basic human impulse to do a job well for its own sake” and that “good craftsmanship involves developing skills and focusing on the work rather than ourselves”, through the development of connections between material consciousness and ethical values. This consideration approaches us to the Indonesian meaning of Tukang [craftsmen]: “anyone who has ability for manual labor”, “people whose job is to do something naturally” or “regularly”, “anyone who is involved in the act of building”, “somebody who is committed to their work”. In a country composed by more than 17,000 islands and with a surprising abundance of natural resources and cultural diversity, one can easily understand how craftsmanship, and its attached “material consciousness”, “is not merely a matter of practicality and technicality; it is also a value, an ethos, and a commitment, (...) practiced and internalized (...) diverse traditions as a driving factor to achieve excellence”.

The catalog of the exhibition, maintaining the same structure as the exhibition (with a chapter on each material, complementary texts and an epilogue on the history of architecture in Indonesia between 1914 and 2014), reveals how craftsmanship, through the conscious labor of each material, is the identifying backbone of architecture in Indonesia. Envisaged as an ethical answer to materiality, craftsmanship is exposed as the conscious way to work with the available tools, including human resources, materials – which also implies how to cultivate them, to know how to select and work with them –, the natural environment and every other changing element involved in the process. It is precisely in this knowledge of how to deal with change that the “absorption” of modernity is encountered: “Within the span of a hundred years, attitudes, values, and viewpoints on craftsmanship have developed and responded to change. Modernity arrived to introduce new building technologies and new building materials. However, the wave of modernity did not diminish or extinguish craftsmanship values. Instead, it has fostered a dialog that continues to open new opportunities in architecture”. Reading this publication, or watching the exhibition videos, one can recognize, in several architectural works, modernization, as defined by Johannes Widodo, as “a socio-cultural process that happens continuously in forms of transplantation, adjustment, adaptation, accommodation, assimilation, hybridization and materialization”.

In face of the challenges encountered by the curators – lack of archives and consistent discourses on Indonesian architectural history, slowly emerging from small groups of researchers; the common way to look at history as a frozen entity only reflected in retained objects that are emulated as proof of a glorious past, together with some difficulty in looking beyond the repression of the New Order regime (1966-1998), not allowing integrated interpretations on social, economic and cultural exchanges; the fact of modern architecture being often seen as a “foreign and dangerous idea”, as “an agent of infinite standardization, destroyer of anything local and particular”; and of course the vastness of the Indonesian territory and cultural diversity – Craftsmanship: Material Consciousness is extraordinarily notable in providing such a consistent (what they call) “glimpse” of a one-century dynamic of architecture in Indonesia.

Not having the presumption of yet have the possibility to give precise answers to some intrinsic questions of the Koolhaas challenge – “Who are we in the history (of architecture)? How did the ‘encounter’ with modernity happen? If modernity did erode our national (architectural characteristics)?, is it true that ‘we’ have ‘national (architectural characteristics)?” – the team of curators opted to try to answer the main question: “what is considered fundamental in the 100-year journey of architecture in Indonesia which related to modernity”. 
The publication neither follows the common discourses looking at history as a battle between the East and the West, or between different times, nor reveals the need for pursuing nationalist dissertations, but precisely the opposite – architecture is perceived as a common language of Indonesian society, through a continuous movement over time, neither being excluded from interactions with the outside nor neglecting its local features. Architecture is exposed, in a very unprejudiced way, as a common ground for exchanges cutting across social, economic and cultural boundaries by being faithful to means and modus operandi as the essence uniting times.

At the same time, the choice of craftsmanship as the theme of the exhibition is a smart call for “design” and “construction” not to be separated from one another, in these capitalist and technological times, leading to the death of local consciousness in favor of the mere fulfilment of production lines. It reveals how craftsmanship, throughout the past and, hopefully, into the future was, and is, able to establish social, economic and cultural boundaries by being faithfully to means and modus operandi as the essence uniting times.

It is not obvious to many that Singapore boasts an exemplary modernist architectural legacy. Built during the mid-20th century, these structures were the result of progressive, even utopian, impulses to shape a new society – a vision of the future, built to last. But that future turned out to be startlingly short-lived. Relentless development is rapidly depleting the built heritage of the nation-building period in particular, which is relatively less well studied or protected.

The Singapore Heritage Society’s decade-long project, Our Modern Past, constitutes a sustained effort to document the city-state’s modern heritage, promote appreciation of this architecture, and present a case for its selective conservation. The first of two volumes, Our Modern Past: A Visual Survey of Singapore Architecture 1920s-1970s provides a photographic guide organized into three parts: “Interwar Period (1919-1943),” “Post-War Years (1945-1965),” and “Post-Independence (1966-1982).” Each part begins with a survey of that period’s architectural elements, illustrating how locally typical modern expressions of form, type, materiality, and detail have been shaped by their contexts. “Feature buildings” then complete each part, providing a closer look at definitive works that capture the times. The book contains a total of 649 photographs, 34 elements, and 44 feature buildings, including several that have since been demolished.

The Living Machines: Malaysia’s Modern Architectural Heritage is a documentation effort to perpetuate the legacy of modern architecture designed and constructed in Malaysia, from the 1942 to the 1982.

The publication reveals a collection of 30 Malaysian modern buildings that has put together the /one.oldstyle/nine.oldstyle/four.oldstyle/zero.oldstyles to the /one.oldstyle/nine.oldstyle/eight.oldstyle/zero.oldstyles.

“It is now wish that this book had been published earlier to create an awareness of the value and significance of those buildings. Sadly, some of these buildings have been destroyed or had major renovations that have changed their character”.

The publication is written to the general public and profusely illustrated with photographs of different architectural elements, being hopefully able to interest different stakeholders in the public and private sectors towards the acknowledgment of the merit and historical significance of the expressive modern built landscape of Malaysia.

1 Ar Steven Thang Boon Ann (Chairman of the Heritage and Conservation Committee, Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia).

Zara Ferreira
The publication *Tropicality: Revisited* documents the exhibition under the same name that took place at Deutsches Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt, within the framework of the Frankfurt Book Fair 2015, with the curatorsship of Avianti Armand, Setiadi Sopandi and Peter Cachola Schmal.

The catalog explores modern Indonesian architecture as being a great contribution to the architectural discourse in Indonesia itself and its dissemination in Europe.

The research starting point is based in the explanation of the current understanding of “tropicality” analyzing the following topics: “the tropics”; “climate, hygiene and building”; “climatology”; “Dutch East Indies architectural discourse”; “the history of tropical architecture”; “towards an Indonesian architecture” and “the reinvention of tropical discourse”. These subjects are exemplified with two oldstyle case studies — both private and public — relating to effortlessly adapt to the rain and the sun.

For the ones living along the equatorial belt, the tropical climate seems to be naturally taken for granted. Despite there being problems, its heat and torrential rain seem to be part of casual daily life. Cultures learn to live surrounded by foliage and creatures. Throughout the year, the pattern monotonously provides the tropical living organism a safe haven of abundance far from extremes. In most cases, apart from steamy afternoons, human settlements are rarely prepared for cold winds and excessive heat waves. Shade, provided by the lush greenery, was one of the essential features of living the tropical life. All of those conditions make the tropics hospitable to survival. Vernacular houses of the tropics are commonly dominated by extensive roofs made out of organic materials. Apart from their function to symbolize certain social and spiritual values, house forms often reflect immediate practical purposes to effortlessly adapt to the rain and the sun. However, we are now living in a world that has become so different from our ancestors’.

What we are facing now are crowded tropical cities with tarmac streets and air-conditioned shopping malls. We are distanced from the natural world as our cities and architecture are becoming more and more dependent on mechanical apparatuses that enables us to build everywhere on earth in whatever styles we want. This is how the tropical resorts slip into our mind when we plan our holidays.

But it was not the case with the European settlers when they first built colonial outposts. The tropics were depicted as a place filled with miasma, which brought illness and death among the whites. When it was not lethal, the unpleasant heat caused by the sun and the humidity was believed to be conducive to idleness and to be capable of dispiriting the white man. As military and industrial activities began to increase in the tropical colonies along with the growing population, climate was becoming an important subject in developing cities, settlements, and other infrastructure. Densely occupied cantonments and city centers in the second half of the 20th century were alarmingly hazardous to public health and were considered as unfavorable.

This story begins the newly published monograph by Chang Jiat-Hwee, *A Genealogy of Tropical Architecture*. The book tells us about an unusually ordinary story of so-called tropical architecture. It is “unusual” because it is a rarity to be able to tell an interesting story for something as mundane as tropical buildings. When I first heard his idea to research “the tropics” in the Department of Architecture at National University of Singapore (NUS), I immediately felt that it would only lead to yet more technical learning, such as how to handle excessive sun light, how to invite breezes into interior spaces, or how to handle downpours, as it always was. Apparently, it did not. In fact, if we are meticulous and determined enough to trace back far and wide, we can find how the term “tropical” could expose us to cultural, social, political, and – of course – technical realms. In that sense, our image-laden understanding of tropical architecture would no longer be simple and limited. The idea stems from a trail of research in the Department of Architecture at NUS, while this particular topic had been developed by Chang since as early as 2002 and would eventually become his doctoral thesis at the University of California, Berkeley. The breadth and depth of the long-nurtured knowledge is exactly what the book provides us.

The narrative of the book offers lengthy and meticulously arranged stories – classified under several general themes – passing through almost 200 years from the genesis and the development of this loosely-defined breed of architecture. The thesis is centered...
on how the idea of “tropical architecture” was generated initially as part of the colonial solution – in this book, the British Empire – for health and survival reasons particularly during the second half of the 19th century. Interestingly, as history progressed, the idea of tropical architecture grew into a norm as practices were standardized and spread out around the colonies. The stories that Chang includes – well researched and backed up by impressive records – are mainly centered on events in Singapore: from the establishment of the military barracks, the building of Singapore General Hospital, the development of swampy areas, and the urban improvement attempts by the colonial government. But the stories progress far and wide from technical feats into interesting encounters with sanitation issues as well as urban political conflicts imbued with racial tensions.

This is not all. Chang reveals an interesting escalation in the way climatology progressed in the 20th century and influenced the way the British colonial government deployed weather stations and established numerous “Building Research Stations” to conduct research into building performance in given climatic and local conditions. This activity was also simultaneously followed by developments conducted by scientists and engineers in other countries – such as the United States and Germany – establishing a global network of science and technology.

The second part of the book tells how the development of modern (international) architecture coincided with the new world order. After WWII, postcolonial countries – many are coincidentally located along the tropical belt – were trying to catch up with their former metropoles by building modern infrastructure and facilities. Assisted by the expertise and newly developed sciences and technologies, professionals from tropical countries learned the know-how and the climatic nature of their countries from a new point of view. The technoscience learned in research powerhouses like the University College in London and the Architectural Association in London enabled young engineers and architects to approach architectural design more as a rational and scientific pursuit rather than an aesthetic and cultural treat. The spread of the “architectural sciences” was also helped by the United Nations’ development program in the 1960s, which was aimed at helping new developing countries to provide low-cost housing programs.

The stories raised and framed by Chang help us to understand how the development of science and technology during the mid-20th century shaped many technical aspects of our education and professional conduct nowadays. Design principles and procedures had been built around scientific development and taught in technical schools around the world, planting seeds of knowledge which became common to us. The book also helps us realize how much of that knowledge had been forgotten, rendered as irrelevant and unimportant. Accordingly, our idea of tropical architecture has been changing over several decades. To some architects in Southeast Asian countries, the idea of tropical architecture had been associated not only with the climate-control performance of buildings but also with national architectural identity. It also suited the growing tourism industry and real-estate booms in countries like Indonesia, especially during the 1980s. We grew accustomed to the stylistic consequences of the tropics and we may be no longer be developing awareness of what “tropical” or “climatic” might have entailed.

Nowadays, with the alarming global environmental crisis, architects all over the world have been grappling with old ideas and inspirations in order to minimize energy consumption and to come to better terms with nature. From the dusty old archives and not-so-distant past, the mid-century architectural novelty seems to linger and promise us a way forward we have forgotten. By the end of the trail, the book subtly exposes us to a question about how far we have gone and how we can possibly provide a better responsible architecture. Being a fish who knows well about water is maybe a good idea after all.

Setiadi Sopandi

Friedrich Silaban
Authors: Setiadi Sopandi
Publisher: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama
ISBN: 9786220239997
Language: Indonesian
Year: 2017

“I am an architect, but not an ordinary one” is what Friedrich Silaban (1912-1984) wrote in his letter to a job application letter for the United Nations in New York in the mid-1960s. This extraordinary self-confidence came from an autodidact Indonesian architect, coming from a newly born nation that had just freed itself from Dutch colonialism and Japanese occupation just a few years before. Silaban is the best representation of the new soul of modernity in Indonesia, in line with the raging spirit of nationalism and self-esteem among newly independent countries in post-WWII Asia. His architecture faithfully responds to the tropical climate, is economically efficient, elegantly functional, and rationally embraces cultural traditions’. JW

“While his contribution to the Indonesian capital is significant, little is known about the architect, his architecture and his time. Setiadi Sopandi’s study is by far the most comprehensive account of Silaban’s works. It situates the architect in the context of Indonesian nation-building and the geo-cultural formation of postcolonial internationalism. A grand guided tour of a crucial period in the history of Indonesian architecture, revealing the innermost of the political-artistic life of a nation and providing a rare glimpse into the work of a unique character of a most important Indonesian architect”. AK

“Silaban was aware of his own history but clearly projected the future as well. A future that represented an idea of Indonesian architecture within an international context. It is fantastic to see the works of Silaban concentrated together in this publication in a way you would never be able to see in reality. The publication not only provides an insight into the work of Silaban and the era he worked in, but allows readers to look forward and to enables us to contextualize our present time”. MV

“This book is a result of a long journey of self-discovery through the discourse of modern Asian architecture that began with the formation of MAAN (modern Asian Architecture Network) in 2001 with specific aims to push the critical discourse and theorization from Asian perspectives based on the comprehensive inventory and study of the pioneers of Asian architects. After more than a decade, the movement has produced a new generation of young architects, academics, and writers, who have been actively pursuing this objective.

The writer is one of the most prolific young Indonesian scholars and a key member of MAAN who has been working with the original Silaban archives, under special arrangement given by Silaban’s family to MAAN. This is one of the first fruits of the long pursuit of knowledge of Indonesian architectural modernism based on local first-hand sources. Hopefully this excellent semimal work will trigger snowballing effects on the sustained studies, debates, and publications on the
works of other pioneers of Indonesian and Asian architecture and modernism”. JW “This publication is one of the top documentation and research efforts by Setiadi Sopandi to perpetuate the legacy of the journey of architects and architecture in Indonesia. This achievement is not only a valuable vehicle documenting contemporary heritage, allowing it to be known, understood, appreciated and remembered, but also a call for the need for its respectful preservation”. AT

The English version of this publication will be available soon.

Publication endorsements by
JJW–Johannes Widodo (National University of Singapore, m/a/small/s/small/e/small/a/small/n/small)
AK–Abidin Kusno (York University)
MV–Marien de Vletter (Canadian Centre for Architecture)
AT–Ana Tostões (Chair of docomomo international; Técno – University of Lisbon)

Building Memories: People, Architecture, Independence

Authors: Lai Chee Kien, Koh Hong Teng, Chuan Yeo
Publisher: Achates 360
ISBN: 978-981-09-8935-4
Language: English
Year: 2017

Having won no less than 12 book and design awards, Building Memories is a fine blend of many features. It is a serious and meticulously prepared monograph on Singapore’s national architectural heritage as well as an informative popular pictorial book. It is also, partly, a graphic novel and a heartwarming collective account on the history of a thriving nation.

Nice old photos or personal documents set within thorough historical narratives are usually doing more than enough for most readers, but here, the collaboration between the author with the illustrator, and the graphic designer goes far to deliver intended messages for readers. The lavish design features are far from gimmicky and does not suggest the book as overly celebrative and luxurious. Instead, the features help taking us beyond what can be explained by the architecture of the building.

Above all, this book is a reminiscence, dedicated to the loving memory of four seminal buildings built between 1962 and 1972: the National Library, the National Theatre, Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House, and the National Stadium. These buildings are depicted as the icons of the two decades from 1955 to the mid 1970s which is an important phase for Singapore as an independent nation. The era marked a piece of history of the nation when Singapore – despite being a small island-nation – started becoming a major economic powerhouse in the world. For Singaporeans, the era marked the advancement of the society moving beyond just bread and butter, embracing modern lifestyles. The selection of the four buildings is not only because their architectural merits but moreover about their roles in the society – in bringing Singaporeans knowledge, cultures, a sense of nationalism, entertainment, and a place among the emerging Southeast Asian nations.

As Singapore incessantly develops her urban infrastructures, these monuments were facing their obsolesce. The collection of the National Library had multiplied. Tunnels were built underneath the National Theatre to cope with growing traffic. The National Trade Union Congress grew much larger and demanded new premises, as Singapore needs more conference halls. The National Stadium needs to host more spectactors and state-of-the-art sporting facilities. The old National Library was eventually demolished in 2004, while the National Theatre was gone even much earlier in 1986. The National Stadium was finally torn down in 2010 to give way for a new bigger stadium. The Singapore Conference Hall and Trade Union House has a better fate being refurbished as the home for Singapore Symphony Orchestra in 2001.

The author and editor Lai Chee Kien meticulously provides detail accounts on what happened before, during, and after the buildings were built. Using his own collection of mementos – and also relives from the National Archive of Singapore – along with personal accounts from seminal individuals, he brings us to details that matter to us and moreover to Singaporeans. Building Memories remembers the buildings like older family members that went before us, that left us beautiful memories and warm fuzzy feeling long after they were gone.

Setiadi Sopandi

This report summarizes the maseana Project International Round Table and Colloquium that took place in Tokyo between 31 October and 2 November 2015. Delegations from Japan and every ASEAN member country (except Brunei) attended the event, whose sessions included an introduction to organizational objectives, opportunities and actions in ASEAN, and an overview of current issues in modern architectural preservation within the region.

Laura Phelps

Macau: Reading the Hybrid City, Discovering Manuel Vicente

Edited by Rui Leão
Publisher: docomomo Macau
ISBN: 978-99965-672-0-9
Language: English
Year: 2016

Discovering Manuel Vicente is a result of three international conferences held in 2014 and the homonymous exhibition, in 2015, organised by docomomo Macau. It is a dense catalogue presenting a broad collection of diverse and divergent points of views from...
Vicente, always controversial and even because it reveals how the work of Manuel capacity of critical thinking. Vicente built in people around him the revealing the value of interrogation, Manuel questions instead of giving answers. Through based on confrontation, posing wide open the remarkable body of knowledge he built new meanings and paths, of exploring the finding the time, the place or the argument became the actor of the whole script, always ing the banality of the real, Manuel Vicente created the spaces where people could live of intense magic and happy grandiosity he at every scale, on every place. With a sense architecture had to be magnificent to everyone, to be understood, for Manuel Vicente archi-
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As a meeting point between East and West, Manuel Vicente found in Macau an available territory for the exploration of crossed in-
fluences between Europe and Asia, bringing together the American culture – pop, critical, cinematic – which he realises quite well due to his studies at the University of Pennsy-
vania following his master Louis Kahn, and Macau's local culture – dense, informal, some-
how secret which he codifies through the richness of the Asian world, sophistication and fantasy. Macau enabled his migration of ideas and allowed it to be contaminated by the development of a school of thought based on his method of approaching the city and architectural practice.

Believing that the chaos was an order yet to be understood, for Manuel Vicente archi-
tecture had to be magnificent to everyone, at every scale, on every place. With a sense of intense magic and happy grandiosity he created the spaces where people could live with glory!

Serving the city and its people, transcending the banality of the real, Manuel Vicente became the actor of the whole script, always finding the time, the place or the argument to tell new stories as the result of looking for new meanings and paths, of exploring the imagination and the memory.

The legacy of Manuel Vicente is above all the remarkable body of knowledge he built through his teachings and professional debate based on confrontation, posing wide open questions instead of giving answers. Through revealing the value of interrogation, Manuel Vicente built in people around him the capacity of critical thinking.

That's why this book is so important, because it reveals how the work of Manuel Vicente, always controversial and even sometimes unloved, has been, in the end, a critical reflection of Macau in physical and cultural terms, that has left decisive ques-
tions to continue to be explored.

Ana Tostões

Sanriku Tsunami and the Reorganization of Villages Beyond Modern Disaster Reconstruction

Author: Kentaro Okamura
Publisher: Kajima Publishing
ISBN: 978-4-326-24647-4
Languages: Japanese
Year: 2017

The Sanriku area, located in the northeast-
ern part of Japan, was hit by four tsunami disasters including the East Japan great earthquake (2011) since the Meiji Restoration (1867). However, the area has undergone a miraculous reconstruction every time. Among them, the reconstruction method of Kirikiri Village as “the ideal village” after the Showa Sanriku Tsunami (1933) is still worthy of reference as the “Merckumar of Modern Disaster Reconstruction”. This book clarifies the process of the reconstruction of villages, from the change of the governance mechanism, the transition of institutions and operations, and the dynamics of the people. A contemporary reconstruction model is also discussed. This book contains many pictures of disaster areas photographed after the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Kentaro Okamura

This report summarizes the second and third international conferences of the mASEAN Project which were held in 2017 in Hanoi and Tokyo respectively.

The Hanoi conference, Pioneers of Modern Architecture, took place between 12 and 14 January with contributions from Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Singapore, Philippines and Malaysia. The re-
port includes inventories of modern buildings in the cities of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, complemented with texts on the history of its modern architecture, as on policies and strategies of building conservation and reuse.

The Tokyo conference, Modern Architectu-
al Heritage in ASEAN and Japan, took place on 12 and 13 March. The first day was dedicat-
ed to sessions on the pioneers of modern architecture in ASEAN and Japan and to the value and possibility of its modern archi-
tectural heritage. The second day worked as a workshop with the goal of overcoming issues in conservation of modern heritage in ASEAN and Japan, organized around 3 main sessions dedicated to philosophy, method and documentation.

Laura Phelps
docomomo International is a non-profit organization dedicated to the documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods of the Modern Movement. It aims at: • Bringing the significance of the architecture of the Modern Movement to the attention of the public, the public authorities, the professionals and the educational community. • Identifying and promoting the surveying of the Modern Movement’s works. • Fostering and disseminating the development of appropriate techniques and methods of conservation. • Opposing destruction and disfigurement of significant works. • Gathering funds for documentation and conservation. • Exploring and developing knowledge of the Modern Movement.

docomomo International wishes to extend its field of actions to new territories, establish new partnerships with institutions, organizations and NGOs active in the area of modern architecture, develop and publish the international register, and enlarge the scope of its activities in the realm of research, documentation and education.