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Journal 58 is scheduled for March 2018. Authors who would like to contribute to this issue are kindly invited to contact docomomo@tecnico.ulisboa.pt.

Guideline to contributors

• A copy on cd or an e-mail version of the text. The cd should be clearly labeled with the author(s) name(s), the title, and the names of the files containing the text and illustrations. The name and version of the word-processing software used to prepare the text should also be given.

• A hard copy on paper by postal mail. The title and author’s name should be clearly mentioned on each page of the manuscript and the name, title, postal address and e-mail address should also be given at the end of each contribution.

Form

• All texts must be in English; if translated, the text in the original language must be enclosed as well.

• Manuscripts should be written with double spacing and liberal margins with all pages numbered in sequence.

• A short resume of the author(s), in connection with the contribution, must be included.

• Illustrations referred to in the text should be mentioned and abbreviated as follows: (figure 1).

• Articles must include a short bibliography of about 5 to 10 reference books or articles.

• Footnotes should be numbered and should follow the following style:


Illustrations

We accept 3 to 6 illustrations for short contributions (about 600 words) and up to 10 illustrations for full-length articles (about 1500 words). It is essential that authors provide good quality illustrations either printed on paper or as digital data on disk or CD (size of images: 300 dpi for an A5 format). For figure captions, the order of information is: designer, name of building or object, location, date, description, source. If a building has been destroyed, include that information.
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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 DJ 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 the significance of their colonial past in relation to the postcolonial present. Between identity and nationalist demand, local knowledge and universal education, modern materials and tropical climate, different architectural discourses have been produced showing that the most interesting way to approach the postcolonial issue is through the idea of exchange.

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 or the threat 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 hybrid or the otherness have recently promoted a nuanced analysis on architecture and politics beyond the Eurocentric framework.

In fact, the maseana declaration (2001) 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”. As one of the first efforts to develop a common understanding of the architectural development in the Southeast Asia, this DJ reveals the most up-to-date research on modern heritage in the different countries. The aim is to challenge initiatives as the MAEANA 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 Yamana 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 Fumihiko 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). ASEAN is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, set up in 1967, to promote cultural, economic and political development in the region.


In the summer of the year 2000, a group of like-minded architectural scholars and practitioners gathered in Guangzhou, The People’s Republic of China, to discuss what constituted common concerns about the recent rapid economic growth and physical development of Asian cities and landscapes. New opportunities in the early 2000s seemed to be promising Asian countries a new start after the 1997 Asian financial crisis. By then, Southeast Asian economic powerhouses such as Thailand and Indonesia (along with South Korea), were badly shaken by the currency crisis (which eventually led to a political crisis), gasping for bailout from the International Monetary Fund. The crisis also affected Hong Kong, Laos, Brunei, China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Mongolia as well as Japan.

The Asian economy began to rebound in the early 2000s. Cities were, once again, expanding along with the population and industrialization. Architectural projects, after having halted for a few years, were coming back providing new opportunities for Asian practices. Sharing optimism as well as anxieties, Asian architects and scholars were looking forward to the future as well as once again taking a glimpse back at their recent architectural past, roughly from the late 19th century and throughout the 20th century. With this opportunity, they decided to take a moment to reflect on how Asian cities, landscapes, and their architectural heritage were shaped, altered, grown in the process of Asian societies embracing modernity. The group, namely the modern Asian Architecture Network (MAAN), agreed to establish a common platform enabling scholars, practitioners and students to reflect and to build knowledge of homegrown Asian modern architectures. “MAAN”, with lower case “m”, reflected their intention to open the debates on modernism, modernity, and modernization processes especially in Asian contexts. The network was set up with the spirit of equality, friendship, freedom, and openness – modeled after a Chinese dining table or like an Asian food-court, where people with similar intentions and goodwill may come together – to exchange ideas and to push forward the discourse into new theorization through comprehensive inventories, seminars, workshops, critical exchanges, researches, education, outreach, and publications.

The founding MAAN conference was held in Macau, July 2001. Building on a nascent idea, the second conference in Singapore, September 2002, went ahead by declaring the members’ strong will to discover ideas and stories behind the multifaceted architectural developments in Asian countries. The 3rd conference in 2003 was hosted in Surabaya, Indonesia, focusing on the importance and challenges of documenting the Asian built environment. After this conference, docomomo International was invited to participate, with Maristela Casciato (as chair back then) as one of the keynote speakers in the subsequent MAAN annual conferences.

An important milestone happened in 2003, when MAAN, docomomo International, and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, supported by the Chandigarh Administration, joined hands together in Chandigarh (India) for the UNESCO World Heritage Centre 2nd Regional Meeting on “Modern Heritage in Asia”. This historical meeting was followed up with the publication of docomomo Journal 29 on “Modernism in Asia Pacific”, September 2003.

The 4th MAAN conference in Shanghai in 2004 was focused on how the network could contribute to safeguard, to revitalize, and to map Asian historical districts, industrial heritage, and 20th century architectural modern heritage and its historiographies. Shanghai also set a stepping stone for MAAN’s wider engagement with architectural pedagogy and hands-on experience by holding an international design workshop to revitalize an ex-industrial site in the heart of the city. Some of the ideas were strengthened in the 5th conference held in Istanbul, Turkey, 2005.

In November 2006, Tokyo hosted the 6th conference with respect and sensitivity to what is particular – and maybe peculiar – in Asian urban heritage. In this conference, docomomo International stressed the necessity of MAAN and docomomo have a common platform for discussing modern architectural heritage beyond boundaries, in order to have a critical re-appropriation of modern discourse in architecture. The discourse on the “otherness” was raised further by docomomo International in 2007 with the publication of the docomomo Journal 36 with the theme “Other Modernism: A Selection from The Docomomo Registers”.

In Indonesia, MAAN went further by engaging local communities (in several cities) to build up urban architectural inventory activities as well as stirring up discourse on the bases of heritage listing. The years of 2007-2008 also marked MAAN’s further involvement in documenting and preserving an archive of modernist Indonesian architects. In the 7th
conference, in New Delhi, 2009, maan continued to discuss Asian cities as legacies of modernity as well as of recognizing Asian communal lifestyles, sustainability, and future challenges. Inspired by the Shanghai workshop, maan was invited to host a similar activity in 2009 to preserve and to revitalize the Indarung cement plant owned by Semen Padang, the oldest Portland cement factory in Southeast Asia (established in 1912).

In 2010, Singapore hosted slightly a different maan conference by bringing much younger participants to exchange creative ideas about the future of the historic Kallang airport site and to talk about empowering “the city makers” in Asia. In 2011, maan was also invited by PT Timah – Indonesia’s tin mining company – to provide ideas and a working plan on how to revitalize the historic tin mining city of Muntok through the company’s historic assets. maan’s experiences in industrial heritage sites provided the network with a rich social and historical context, thus, in turn, providing interesting insights on how maan perceives sites and architecture in Asia. In 2011, maan explored even further the uncharted vast terrain of Asian modern heritage by visiting and rethinking the Union Carbide factory site and the city of Bhopal in India where the Bhopal gas tragedy happened in 1974. The tragic event sets a very strong gravity to our understanding of what we consider as a “heritage site” and further enhances the way we anticipate “modernity” in Asia. The 2011 maan conference took place in Seoul, consequently taking the theme “industrial heritage” as the main focus.

Asia, Southeast

In 2015, born out from maan, a new initiative called The maseana Project was created by docomomo Japan, with the collaboration of docomomo International, to continue bringing the focus back on architecture and architects. “maseana” stands for “modern asean architecture” with a lower case “m” and “a” standing for the 10 members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Brunei Darussalam, and Myanmar). The maseana Project sets out to form a 5-year collaborative platform for researchers working on the documentation, inventory, historiography, as well as preservation of modern Southeast Asian architecture and architects.

The challenge of the maseana Project lies in the very essence of Southeast Asia as a historical and a socio-political entity. Geographically, Southeast Asia consists of a vast region made up of an archipelago and a peninsula. Being part of the Asian continent, the peninsular part is occupied by most of the Southeast Asian countries, including the few countries formerly grouped as Indochina. The archipelago comprises a vast territory held by Indonesia and a portion at the northeast by the Philippines.

Historically the region was considered “Greater India” from as early as the 5th century BC due to strong Hindu-Buddhist cultural influences lasting until the rise of Islamic influences in the 12th century. Despite the strong influence of Indian culture on the Southeast Asian kingdoms, the vast territory still hosts thousands of tribal communities living their indigenous lifestyles. Among them, tribal maritime communities consist of sea nomads and sojourners that have been roaming the waters since as early as 10,000 BC. Waterways act as bridges to form a population as well as cultural exchange, and help to form linguistic genealogy that spans from Madagascar to Polynesia, from Taiwan to New Zealand. Even after the massive spread of Islam and Christianity, many of these communities retain their thousands-of-years-old social structures and customs; some retain a simpler form of communal life while others have turned into more sophisticated societies.

Climate is the common feature of the area. The region is dominated by an equatorial climate which is generally hot and humid with little variations of temperature during day/night throughout the year. In the northern-most tip of Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam there may be a wet and chilly winter due to the humid subtropical climate. Torrential rainfall could happen almost anytime, but more at the beginning of the year, according to the monsoonal cycle. Lush vegetation dominates the natural landscape, while wet-rice cultivation is the common view in inhabited fertile volcanic regions. Communities residing in the hinterland enjoy slightly cooler temperatures than the ones in the coastal regions. The eastern tropical savannah islands generally have more dry months compared to the western part, and consequently people tend to develop different cultures.

Responding to the climate, Southeast Asian communities developed specific lifestyles and dwelling types. Elaborate and extensive roof types dominated the overall expression of Southeast Asian traditional dwellings. The use of hardwood timber for primary columns and beams is common, while soft and flexible materials, like bamboo, are employed for roof coverings, ties, and tensile elements. Dried grass and leaves are common materials for roof coverings, while terracotta tiles are popular only in some regions. Building floors are commonly raised at considerable height, away from the frequently wet (or even flooded) ground; some even have their houses on stilts above rivers, lakes, and sea. Livestock is kept below, while the spaces between the buildings are usually considered immediate extensions of the living activities of each household. People generally do almost all activities outside or under the shade of trees and roofs. Indoor spaces are commonly occupied only at night time, during heavy rain, or restricted to storing food supplies.

Heavily influenced by Indian culture, early states were comprised of maritime kingdoms like Funan, Champa, and Srivijaya. These “centers” created “concentric realms” with subordinate states around the metropole. This political system was very dynamic and unstable, as smaller kingdoms could break off and join other centers accordingly. Throughout two millennia, Southeast Asian waters witnessed political and cultural dynamics through maritime trading activities. Similarly, land-based agrarian societies developed advanced hydrological engineering to utilize the wet lands for rice growing. Channels, moats and man-made lakes along with vast rice fields, elaborate temples, and ancient settlements are evident in the ancient remains of
Angkor, Singhasari, Majapahit, Pagan, and Ayudhya. Masonry – stones and bricks – were commonly reserved for the temples and other political-religious edifices.

The region was also subject to “foreign” territorial claims. Southeast Asia was once associated with a Sinocentric label “Nanyang”, literally meaning “South Seas”, indicating the growing political influence of China and the massive emigration of Chinese which lasted until the early 20th century.

During the early 16th century, Portuguese maritime explorations persistently pushed the eastward-bound route to the east, passing the Cape of Good Hope to Asia and consequently setting the course of European presence – Spanish, Dutch, and British – in the region. Much later, the era of colonization divided the region into parts which eventually, in the mid-20th century, became separate nations. In the 19th century, colonialism became a state-enterprise, resulting in each “colonial nation” becoming increasingly conscious of themselves as members of territorially defined nations. The colonial territories eventually led to the demarcation of sovereign national territories. The vast territory of the former Dutch East Indies became Indonesia, while British Borneo – the northern side of Borneo Island – now largely belongs to the federation of Malaysia, joining the peninsular territory. The Philippines territories reflect the former possession by Spain – and afterwards, the United States, while the eastern tip of Timor island ruled by Portugal became Timor Leste.

The division of Papua is a result of occupation of the island by the Dutch in the western half and the Germans and Australians in the eastern half and, after WWII, by Australia governing the entire eastern half.

The European rule imposed decision to grab further potential natural resources, land and minerals. To support the distribution of commodities and services, the European rulers invested in transportation infrastructures and industrialization. By the early 20th century, European settlers – firstly men and later women – were coming with private corporations seeking opportunities in the colonies. Roads and railway lines were built to connect cities and ports with production centers, which in turn also mobilized populations to cities. Laborers were deployed in remote mining areas creating new immigrant communities, while natural landscapes were changing drastically into production sites. Southeast Asian cities were expanding and equipped with modern amenities like offices, factories, banks, post offices, schools, satellite towns, “garden cities”, restaurants, hotels, railway stations, hospitals, and public services. This was the point in history when Southeast Asian colonies were exposed to the massive influx of buildings, modern infrastructures and modern lifestyles.

White plastered façades were becoming common, and slowly replaced the humble look of the 19th century verandah of plantation houses. Particular building types and elements, then, were no longer confined to particular communities. Newly introduced materials such as cast and wrought iron, even steel, were available for those who were willing to pay. The shipping of building materials from the metropoles was common practice by the early decades of the 20th century. The development of reinforced concrete in Europe and the United States was soon applied globally, and raised the demand of Portland cement and steel bar imports. The standardized techniques of construction were employed by agencies like the colonial public works department, employing European-educated engineers and (later) architects. Urban sanitizing and rationalization were deployed to maintain orderliness and hygiene in public as well as private spaces to prevent epidemic tropical diseases like malaria.

Being introduced to such unprecedented changes, the landscape and society were set in motion. Colonial society was formed as stratified society, topped by the European ruling class and sometimes accompanied by the aristocratic elites. Along with a socially mobile merchant class, children born to aristocratic elites could enjoy a European education, learn European languages and vocational skills for modern professions. Exposed to liberal thinking and growing self-consciousness, some of these Western-educated elites then became revolutionary in thinking and further developed national awareness among their fellow citizens. The growing popularity of socialist ideologies provided a headwind for emancipation in the colonies. Religious figures and elites were also often playing important parts in developing national awakenings among the native populations.

Nations, Struggles

Until the mid-20th century, Southeast Asian countries and communities had shared an arguably similar fate in modern history. They went through a phase when nationalism grew among the native population which eventually demanded independence from the foreign ruler. The relatively short occupation of Southeast Asian countries by the Japanese armed forces during WWII set a new course for the region. The Japanese campaign of the so-called “Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere” was seen as a promising alliance to end European colonialism, as well as a path towards independence. However, as the Japanese became more oppressive and directed resources to the cause of war, nationalist revolutionaries became increasingly impatient and demanded independence even more. The Japanese occupation was then challenged by rebellions by the Japanese-trained armed forces as well as political activities by the native elites.

Following the defeat of Japan and the end of WWII, some Southeast Asian countries took the momentum by declaring independence or by negotiating the possibility of self-governing status. These were proven far from simple. The devastated European countries were losing their sovereignty in the region and giving way to the victors of WWII – namely the United States, the Soviet Union, and China – who were contesting their way in. These countries paved their way to win sympathy by providing economic aid and military support, while at the same time being involved in creating embargoes, stirring up conflicts among the factions and, in many instances, being directly involved in armed conflict. For the second half of the 20th century, Southeast Asian countries embarked on a bumpy journey as self-governing entities marked with economic and political crises, coup d’etats, political repression, corrupt governments, insurrections, violent humanitar-
of scars and tears from the calamities of 20th century events. Prosperity, Southeast Asia nations are still showing the trail of setbacks in human and economic development, and worrisome democratization.

Generally speaking, despite the recent relative peace and prosperity, Southeast Asia nations are still showing the trail of scars and tears from the calamities of 20th century events. This includes the dissociation of the region inherited from the height of the Cold War era when countries were polarized and oriented towards the two ideologies. Southeast Asian countries with liberal market-oriented economies enjoyed the early start of global consumerism and economic growth following the economic boom of the 1970s. Political stability and rich natural resources were the key factors that attracted foreign investment. Some suffered the violent and harrowing fate of being in prolonged conflicts and political crises, causing setbacks in human and economic development.

The struggle for independence in the Philippines started very early. The country had initially proclaimed independence in 1898 but was only granted independence from the United States in July 1946. The Philippines suffered great physical damage during the war between the Japanese and the Allied forces, leaving the city of Manila in ruin. With close ties with the United States, the Philippines developed liberal democracy in appointing the leaders and the representatives. However, during Ferdinand Marcos’ (1917-1989) early years of his second term as the president (started in 1969), the Philippines suffered an escalation of crime and civil disobedience. Several separatist movements broke out in 1970 causing the country oppressively, curtailting press freedom, abolishing Congress, arresting opposition leaders and militant activists. Ferdinand Marcos’ rule was ended following the successive events triggered by the assassination of an opposition leader, Benigno Aquino, Jr. (1917-1983). A peaceful civilian-military uprising sent Marcos into exile and installed Corazon Aquino (1933-2009) as president in 1986. Since 1986, the Philippines has continued to struggle for political stability, in the midst of natural disasters, corruption, drug wars, and separatist insurgencies.

Despite never been officially occupied by foreign powers, Thailand has been living a precarious political life since the abolition of the absolute monarchy in 1932. Adopting constitutional monarchy, Thailand has been through several coups and conflicts throughout the century as well as adopting a fascist ideology at the dawn of WWII. Despite acknowledging the constitutional monarchy as the form of governance, Thailand had been ruled by a series of military governments with brief democratic periods in between numerous coups. During the late 1960s and 1970s, despite the continuous political instabilities, Thailand went through steady economic growth and enjoyed intensive exposure to American culture and the rise of an educated urban middle class.

After 1945, Malaysia went through several changes before being constituted as it is now. Starting out as the Malayan Union proposed by the British Empire in 1946, Malaysia was restructured as the Federation of Malaya in 1948 to restore the autonomy of Malay states under British protection. Later in 1957 Malaysia declared an independent nation within the Commonwealth of Nations. The process continued by incorporating the North Borneo territories and federal republican states and sultanates under a federal constitutional elective monarchy.

Singapore’s separation from Malaysia in 1965 started as a harrowing process. Following the uneasy union with the Federation of Malaya, the relationship between Singapore – as a state – and Malaysia was filled with problems smeared with racial tensions. Singapore, as an island nation, started its early years of independence by restoring economic and political stability and was very determined to reposition itself in the region by increasing its capacity in shipbuilding and the shipping industry. This resulted in significant economic growth from the 1970s and made Singapore one of the “Four Tigers” (along with Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea) during the Asian economic boom.

Indonesia declared its independence in August 1945, but had to resist Allied-backed invasions. Through diplomatic negotiations, the Netherlands finally recognized Indonesia’s sovereignty in 1949. Indonesia only managed to gain the territorial sovereignty of the easternmost province of West Papua in the early 1960s through several armed conflicts with the Dutch and after mediation by the United Nations. The political climate remained precarious throughout the 1950s and reached a climax in 1965 when a major revolution broke out causing atrocities, including the purging of communist loyalists, racial persecution of the Chinese, and overthrowing a civil dictatorial rule only to be replaced by a repressive military regime for the next three decades. Under the oppressive military regime, Indonesia enjoyed unprecedented economic growth and urban development before finally succumbing to a free fall during the 1997 Asian monetary crisis. After 1998, Indonesia embarked on an open ended economic reform, democratization in politics, and massive anti-corruption campaigns.

Ho Chi Minh (1890-1969) declared the independence of Vietnam in September 1945 which was followed by a prolonged war against France. The conflict resulted in France’s
defeat and was concluded by the Geneva Accords of 1954 which acknowledged the independence of Vietnam. The accord effectively separated the country into two: North Vietnam and South Vietnam. The interference of American foreign politics led to a prolonged armed conflict between the two countries from 1955 until 1975. Following the victory by North Vietnam, the country was unified as the Republic of Vietnam. After reunification, Vietnam remained involved at the center of global Cold War politics. Until the 2000s, Vietnam remained in isolation to many pro-USA countries as well as having constant disagreements with China. For the last 22 years Vietnam has been opening up her economy and encouraging the establishment of private businesses and initiatives. As a result, Vietnam is one of the most rapidly emerging economies in the world.

The Kingdom of Cambodia was formed amidst the political turbulence in the Indochina War (1946-1954). The fight was largely caused by the conflict between the French forces and Viet Minh involving the neighboring French Indochina territories of Laos and Vietnam. Cambodia became independent from 1953 and its status was then ratified in the Geneva Conference in 1954 along with peace agreements among the conflicting territories. From 1966, Cambodia fell into disarray due to military coups and conflicts. In 1975, a coup by the right-wing element toppled the government and led Cambodia into a military dictatorship, resulting in the formation of the Khmer Republic. In 1975 another coup by the pro-left element, the Khmer Rouge, successfully overthrew the government and formed Democratic Kampuchea. During the reign of the Khmer Rouge, Cambodia went through the worst political purges and violence. The atrocities by the Khmer Rouge were ended after the invasion led by the Vietnamese army and the Kampuchea United Front for National Salvation. In 1993 the United Nations initiated a ceasefire and an authority to lead the country through a peaceful transition. In 1993 Cambodia held an election, successfully decided on a new constitution, and elected Hun Sen and Norodom Ranariddh to be the second and first prime minister respectively. Another coup in 1997 managed to oust Norodom Ranariddh that resulted in Hun Sen remaining in power until now.

Myanmar went through a bloody transitional period before becoming fully independent in 1948 as the Union of Burma. Between 1948 and 1962 the country was torn by internal conflicts between political groups which ended in the 1962 military coup. From then on, Myanmar was governed by a repressive military rule which lasted from 1962 to 2011. Under central planning, many aspects of society were under strict government control. Sporadic protests and uprisings were always violently suppressed, while steps closer to democratic society were taken slowly. The military junta was abolished and paths toward reconciliation were taken. Nowadays, despite the promising future towards democracy, Myanmar is still facing worrisome internal conflicts involving ethnic and religious groups.

Laos is a landlocked country surrounded by neighboring Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, and China. Once part of the French protectorate, Laos was granted autonomy by France in 1949 and declared her independence as a constitutional monarchy in 1953. As the result of the 1955 election, Laos formed a short-lived coalition government led by a monarch prince. After the 1962 coup, Laos was unable to form a stable government and succumbed to a long civil war. Laos adopted one-party socialism controlled by military figures in 1975. Until 1991, Laos was heavily influenced by Vietnam and received aid from the Soviet Union. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Laos government no longer maintained centralized control and has shown significant economic progress in recent years.

Amidst the on-going problems and conflicts, steps towards future development and shared economic prosperity have been taken by the Southeast Asian countries. Motivated by the common fear of communism during the height of the Cold War, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Over the years, following the economic liberalization in communist countries, ASEAN has recently incorporated Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. The bond grows stronger with the signing of the trade bloc agreement, ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA, first signed in 1992), the association maintains good relations with India, China, Bangladesh, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, Australia, South Korea, and other communities.

Architecture, Culture

Despite a common history and cultural background, Southeast Asian countries are far from being homogenous. The region hosts hundreds of ethnic groups living in different localities, governed by different rules and different paces of life. Southeast Asia is also the home of cultural paradox. Some of the world's fastest growing metropolises perform as the economic machines of the region, while some remote villages still maintain natural lifestyles inherited from thousands of years ago.

Within the last two decades we are witnessing an intensifying exchange in architectural ideas within the region, especially the ones that cater for the growing tourism industry. The infrastructure for Southeast Asian tourism includes the design and idea development for specific types of accommodation – hotels and villas – as well as airports and cultural tourism attractions, and the restoration and preservation of important historic sites and cultural properties. Architects have been experimenting with so many ideas to cater for the growing demands of tourism in Southeast Asia, including exploring how to bring “authentic” local experiences to the visitors. The wealth of Southeast Asian vernacular architecture serves as the reference: Balinese houses and temples, Thai vernacular houses, Malay platform houses, Chinese urban shop houses, ancient Buddhist and Hindu monuments, and many variations of “primitive huts”. Forms and materials are appropriated into modern hotel designs, and transplanted into different localities. The tropical climate and beaches serve as the common dominating theme for Southeast Asian tourism. Publications on “tropical” architecture and interior design in the 1990s...
helped feed the idea back to the professionals who in turn appropriated the idea into projects outside the tourism industry. Amidst this trend, reflections on Southeast Asian architecture as a unified cultural expression, as well as individual national ones, emerged from architects and scholars. The Aga Khan Awards for Architecture (AKAA) – started in 1977, and awarding from 1980 – has put the region onto the global stage engaging academics and professionals in (but not limited to) Southeast Asia. In its early years, the AKAA focused the discourse of architecture, not only as space and language, but also as an expression of identity. This was extended through publications and conferences. AKAA established Concept Media, a publication house based in Singapore. Concept Media published *Mimar: Architecture in Development*, the architecture journal of the AKAA, which consistently covered and promoted the wide range of practices on regionalist approaches between 1981 and 1992. The journal helped to counterbalance the dominance of European-American architectural publications and spread architectural developments in non-European/American countries. *Mimar* published 43 issues over the years and gained readership among students, academics, architects in the region and among other developing countries.

In 1983 the AKAA invited prominent architects and scholars from nine Southeast Asia countries to discuss the discourse on identity in architecture at an international conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It turned out to be an inspiration from where further publications and exchange of ideas were developed not only among the Southeast Asian countries but also in the African continent, South Asian subcontinent, and the Middle East. A special proceedings publication was issued to document the discussion highlighting concerns and exploring ideas from well-known Asian (primarily Southeast Asian) architects. From then on, the AKAA continued to provide a good resource for Southeast Asians to know more about their own traditional and modern architectural developments. Between 1986 and 1989 Udo Kultermann (1927-2013) contributed several architectural surveys on inventories of four “Southeast” Asian countries; Indonesia and Thailand were published in 1986, Malaysia in 1987, and Hong Kong in 1989.

The term “critical regionalism” was an overwhelming professional discourse in the early 1980s, especially among Southeast Asian architects. They were having a moment of reflection on their current practices by looking back at recent decades of architectural developments in the region. Renowned Malaysian architect, Kenneth Yeang (1948-) grounded his practice on such a stepping stone. He published *Tropical Urban Regionalism* and *The Tropical Verandah City* in 1987 discussing the inevitable climatic nature of the changing Southeast Asian cities and the local architectural traditions as his source of inspiration. Apart from conceptual sketches, thoughts on technical skill were also deemed an important aspect to bring the idea of regionalism into practice. In *Architectural Detailing for The Tropics* (Singapore University Press, 1988), Evelyn Lip and Bill Lim from the National University of Singapore collected architectural detail solutions on dealing with the hot-humid tropical climate from the works of Singaporean and Malaysian architects. Sumet Jumsai na Ayudhya (1939), a prominent Thai architect and painter, took a more philosophical approach by considering the mythical dragon-like serpent figure “Naga” as a symbol of a common cultural “roots” among the Southeast Asian communities, which governs the many ways of living adopted into so many traditions of architecture, crafts, and arts in the region. Johannes Widodo in *The Boat and the City* (2004) explores the common urban and architectural roots shared widely by almost every Southeast Asian city.

Apart from being attentive to the vernacular tradition, some Southeast Asian architects and scholars cover architectural works, especially the ones originating from the 19th century and early 20th century. Exemplary projects on architectural restoration in Southeast Asian old port “colonial” cities – from Singapore, Bangkok, Jakarta, Malacca, Manila, and others – set the momentum further for historic urban preservation initiatives. Sharing common cultural roots and historical events, we cannot afford to isolate our architectural and urban knowledge only to particular spots and simply ignore the intertwining course of history. A common thread of cosmopolitanism and European interference are imbedded in those cities. We learn that the nature of “colonial” architecture was initiated as an act of recreation of familiar environments in alien locations; as something that was dislocated and relocated in the process of cultural exchange. Equally this idea also applied to the later form of architectural exchanges. In the past 10-15 years, the attention spans even wider to cover the formative historical periods of many Southeast Asian countries, mainly in the period between the 1950s and the late 1970s.
This historical period comes with a special gravity that puts almost every single architectural project from the time in an even wider global cultural exchange framework. With the aforementioned national histories, Southeast Asian countries embarked on a self-conscious mission to modernize many aspects of life through architectural discourse, conceptualizing modern cities, creating monumental buildings, and all forms of appropriated modern aesthetics. Ideas of modern architecture were imported, transplanted, adapted, and eventually gained a new "existential foothold" in Southeast Asian grounds. These grounds are, of course, not neutral, instead they are full of subjectivities and contradicting values; pride, honor, respect, claim, fear, suspicion as well as prejudice and allegation. Essays presented here are gathered from various researchers working under a similar theme but with a wide variety of intentions, social-political backgrounds and exposure to theoretical or historical resources.

In this volume of the docomomo Journal, maseana are exploring what has been carefully recognized, acknowledged, identified, documented, and analyzed in Southeast Asian countries. Some authors may begin with some architecturally-aesthetically interesting objects while some opt for more historically-charged monuments. Some essays put extra emphasis on the role of “Western” educated figures in the narrative over the “home-grown” talents to build their stories. Many extend to a wider time frame than others to pull the string between the objects discussed. Contributing as representatives of respective countries, some essays inescapably have to deal with a nationalistic undertone to address the important themes given in the essays. For the cases presented here, some are quite distant to present a wider context to enable us to be free from the danger of the overly subjectified views of the authors, but some might still be immersed in a national context of the case studies. Some readers might feel that particular presentation insinuates a particular point of view to appreciate projects or narrative. As myopic as those might seem, here we would like to bring what maseana has on the table whilst paving the way for a shared platform about architectural development in the region. Consequently, here, we are not necessarily sharing a common understanding on ideas contained in terms like “modern”, “modern architecture”, or even “architecture”. Thus, at first, this seems to be an editorial nightmare. However, as clichéd as this may sound, this can also be a good chance to expand our horizons or simply a pause to see a world from a different point of view.

For many Southeast Asian countries, due to their nationalistic and patriotic symbolic values, many modern architectural monuments are protected and highly regarded as one of the countries’ cultural treasures. But for some others, the political changes and rapid urban developments had been diminishing the value of modernist buildings and monuments. Unprotected and despised by successive political regimes, many are in a state of neglect and disrepair. Some countries began to notice this crisis and promote evaluation, documentation, and preservation of the mid-century architectural heritage – exactly what maseana is doing. After decades promoting and supporting the restoration and reuse of numerous colonial-era buildings, now more attention is seemingly given to the buildings done in the late 1950s and 1960s. Many ground-up initiatives managed to bring modernist architectural works to the public discourse and resulted in heritage protection listings.

We are more than happy to take the readers on a tour of the region through these essays and a selection of monographs produced on Southeast Asian architectural development. Pen Sereypagna explores the extent of the so-called “New Khmer Architecture” within the time frame of 1953-1970 as a bold movement in the Cambodian search for national identity and cultural engagement. Setiadi Sopandi presents the search for national identity in Indonesian architecture not as an institutionalized movement, but rather as a recurrent underlying obsession among architects practicing in the country. While providing us a rich listing of notable monuments, Gerard Lico exposes the dynamic and patriotic symbolic values, many modern architectural works to the public discourse and resulted in the roles of British and overseas-trained Singapore-born architects in the 19th century and the early decade of the 20th century, thus providing us with information on the introduction of modern materials from Europe to Singapore. The essay from Myanmar is the result of an extensive inventory led by Su Su, Swe Swe Aye, and Win Thant Win Shwino covering the role of British architect Raglan Squire (1912-2004), the establishment of the first architectural training in the country, the importation of Soviet buildings, as well as the design and building of religious architecture, public spaces, and mausoleums. Pongkwan Lassus from Thailand takes a longer introduction to give the readers a wide-reaching narrative she presents as “pre-modernism”. Lassus’ essay generously provides us with key events and many noteworthy monuments not only up to the 1970s, but also from the 1980s and 1990s. Nor Hayati Hussain discusses the formation of a distinct “national” architectural language produced in Malaysia surrounding the formation years of the Federation of Malaya in the late 1950s. With this breadth of information in a single volume, we humbly hope that docomomo Journal 57 will serve the readers as a proper introduction to the course of modern architectural development amidst the rich and dynamic background of the Southeast Asian countries.

Notes

1 So far, maseana organised four meetings:
- “Modern Architectural Heritage in ASEAN and Japan” – Workshop,


Setiadi Sopandi (b. Indonesia, 1975), Practicing architect and lecturer based in Universitas Perta Harapan, Indonesia. He is an Asian Cultural Council Fellow (2016), co-curated the only Indonesian participation in the 14th International Architecture Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia (2014) and co-curated ‘Tropicality: Revisted exhibit in the Deutsches Architekturforum, Frankfurt (2015). He is the co-founder and a member of the board of curators in arsitekturindonesia.org, the first architecture-dedicated archival service in the country. He recently published the biographical monograph FriedrichSilaban (Jakarta, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2017).

Yoshiyuki Yamana (b. Japan, 1966). Architecte dipl., PhD on Art History (University of Paris), Professor at Tokyo University of Science. He is a member of docomom Japan, a special mention.

New Khmer Architecture:
Modern Movement
in Cambodia between 1953 and 1970

BY PEN SEREYPAGNA

This essay will examine the Modern Movement in Cambodia through architecture, known as New Khmer Architecture, from 1953 to 1970, that has distinct continuum characteristics from vernacular architecture, like other Modern Movement architecture in Southeast Asia, because of socio-political movements and cultural engagement.

Introduction
After 90 years of French colonization, Cambodia received its independence in 1953. During the post-independence period, as a contrast to French ideas on art and culture, Cambodia created new forms of art and culture to define a new national form towards modernization, thus creating a blend of Western modernization and Khmer culture. Those forms included “New Khmer architecture, speaking theatre, Khmer film, modern music, and modern painting”. At the same time, national identity was taken into account regarding how to re-imagine new forms of the arts and culture in the context of existing local tradition and how to introduce these new movements into Cambodia, the Southeast Asian region and the world.

In this essay, I review the Cambodian Modern Movement in architecture, known as New Khmer Architecture, which reflected the social and political movements after the French colonial period by proposing four aspects: firstly, a brief introduction to the era of the 1960s in Cambodia, known as Sangkum Reastr Niyum, giving a general overview of the movement. Secondly, an examination of the definition and origin of New Khmer Architecture, the Modern Movement in architecture in Cambodia between 1953 and 1970. Thirdly, highlighting the national identity and cultural engagement in the design of modern buildings in the style of New Khmer Architecture with three examples: The White Building (1963), the Olympic National Sports Complex (1964) and the Institute of Foreign Languages (1972). Finally, a review of the political ideology of Prince Norodom Sihanouk’s (1922-2012) post-independence regime regarding New Khmer Architecture will be provided.

Norodom Sihanouk’s Era
After independence, Prince Norodom Sihanouk abdicated the throne to his father His Majesty King Norodom Suramarit (1896-1960) in order to enter politics. He formed his own party in 1955 (Sangkum Reastr Niyum) and won the national election in the same year. Sihanouk became the first Prime Minister of Cambodia (figure 01) and he began to build his vision of a new nation.

The meaning of Sangkum Reastr Niyum is difficult to translate. In Ross and Collins’ book, Building Cambodia: ‘New Khmer Architecture’, 1953-1975, the monthly pictorial, Cambodge d’Aujourd'hui, is quoted as defining Sangkum Reastr Niyum not as a political party, but rather as a group of Cambodian people who had a mission for their own country. The name, Sangkum Reastr Niyum, was later adopted by Cambodians to refer to the post-independence period between 1953 and 1970. Sangkum Reastr Niyum is a Khmer term which comes from the words “Sangkum”, meaning “Society”, “Reastr” meaning “People” and “Niyum” meaning “Determination”. The combination of the Khmer terms Sangkum Reastr Niyum corresponds to “socialism” in the Western sense. At that time, Cambodia enjoyed an unprecedented era of economic and social development, associated with a renaissance of the arts and architecture. Countrywide modernization and construction works were undertaken by national and international experts in urban planning, architectural design and engineering. Domestic and foreign financing was available for major construction works like roads, airports, hospitals, universities and factories, that were often staffed and fully equipped upon completion. Norodom Sihanouk also asked other countries to provide aid in the form of technical assistance and buildings.

The cosmopolitanism and the visual order of Phnom Penh in the 1960s allowed the city to gain a reputation as the “Garden City of Southeast Asia”. Urban planning employed devices such as boulevards and monuments – traces left by the colonial regime – as anchors to establish a system of urban order. Expansion of the city to the west was facilitated by the construction of dikes which were an extension of colonial planning and formed a series of concentric arcs for the city’s major boulevards (figure 03).
Modern Indonesian Architecture: a Cultural Discourse

BY SETIADI SOPANDI

The paper highlights the course of Indonesian architectural development through the narrative of national and cultural identity which prevailed almost consistently from the early years of the 20th century. Despite the various contexts and the involvement of participants from different eras, the question of identity recurs among architectural practitioners, political figures, as well as the general public in Indonesia. In this light, architects are perceived as active agents continually contributing models of national identity through architectural forms, expressions, materials, and narratives.

Identities

Indonesian architectural historiography has been overwhelmed by the recurring questions of a national identity. Starting from the early 20th century, there is a continual tendency to drive architectural works and discourse in search of a self-cultural and national expression. Despite being irrelevant to architectural project commissioning, this had become a nation-wide obsession shared by other professionals: archeologists, historians, writers, poets, artists (especially painters), and performance artists.

Starting from the 1920-1930s, “Dutch” architects working in the Netherlands East Indies had been actively conversing and experimenting with ways to express a new “national” identity. The spirit grew out of the midst of the global clash between the new progressive European modernity and the seemingly dormant old splendor of the “East”. Since the last decade of the 19th century, professionals – including engineers, pharmacists, as well as architects – had been dealing with the introduction of new materials and building techniques, building standardization, the problem of urban sanitation and public hygiene, as well as the hot-humid tropical climate. Many considerable urban architectural – and infrastructural – works are depicted as a cultural modernizing agency during the last decades of the Netherlands East Indies as well as in the early Indonesian independence period. In this light, architecture serves as a beacon of cultural development while, on the other hand, provides pragmatic problem-solving strategies and technical art. However, the issue of national identity reemerges and intertwines with other narratives, making it the only dominant theme.

A Synthesis

The year 1909 is marked by a few works done by the earliest professional architects practicing in the Netherlands East Indies as well as in the early Indonesian independence period. In this light, architecture serves as a beacon of cultural development while, on the other hand, provides pragmatic problem-solving strategies and technical art. However, the issue of national identity reemerges and intertwines with other narratives, making it the only dominant theme.
Kington Loo of BEP, Dewan Tunku Canselor [The Chancellery Hall], Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 1966. The Chancellery Hall is one of the most modern buildings in the city with a strong resemblance to Le Corbusier’s Brutalist architecture. © Nor Hayati Hussain, 2017.
This paper explores the historical development of modern architecture in Malaysia, which is evident in the emerging architectural language; the efforts of the Federation of Malaya Society of Architects (later known as the Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia); as well as the direction taken by the architectural practice in the country; all of which were driven by the prevailing political, economic as well as the socio-cultural attributes of the new nation, and the vision on Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya. The outcome of all these is an architecture that speaks of the nation’s modern society’s values and identity.

**Nation Building and Modern Architecture in Malaysia**

The period after the WWII saw Malaya attempting to cope with problems of independence, nationalism, language, Malayanisation and education. The existing diversity established during the colonial periods had to be ended to produce a unified national system. The post-war reconstruction effort was aimed at unifying all the people in Malaya into a nation. Many buildings were constructed to meet public needs and, at the same time, express a national vision for the future, an indication that architecture was seen as a means to unite the people. One of the common strategies employed by a nation in its pursuit of a single national identity is the construction and dissemination of a certain “image” of the nation, which, in most cases, is evident in its sheer size and lasting impression. It would be constructed to “portray images referencing ethnic, cultural or religious belief in order to potentially evoke the nationalistic sentiments among the masses”1. This notion is further strengthened by Amos Rapoport, who stated that architecture “occupies and shapes the physical social context as well as influencing the perceptual nature of human behavior”2, thus, mirroring the spiritual and physical values, political ideology and technological achievement of a society3. Be it through its function or expression, architectural design carries messages that identify the building with the nation and society at a particular time. It is a common practice of the leaders of a nation, as well as politicians, to determine the direction of the nation’s political agenda in suitting the aspiration of its people. As seen in many great civilizations, monuments and landmarks were constructed by their leaders, as an indication of the nation’s achievements and progress. It would also serve as indicators of their performance while in power.

"Works of architecture become the major focus for political leaders to render their national ideologies. Architecture is the best tool as it metaphorically communicates to the masses through scale, form and other elements"4.

Before going further into the history of the architectural development of the country, it is important to understand the prevailing circumstances that influence it. In a relatively young nation, one of the most influential figures that steered the direction towards unity was its first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman (1903-1990)5. As previously mentioned, the greatest challenge towards unity was to bring together the three main ethnic groups that were divided by the British colonists, and this division was strongly evident in various aspects such as cultural identity as well as language. Policies, legislation and the administration had to be molded to address the aspirations of all three groups, and to reflect the characteristics of democracy, a governance system that the leaders had collectively adopted, as highlighted by Cheah Boon Kheng6. Abdul Rahman strongly believed that unity, as well as every individual’s commitment towards it, would guarantee liberty, security, prosperity and happiness in the future7. Though strong in its quest to become a united nation, its leaders as well as its people were challenged by a number of significant events that have left deep impacts and affected many aspects including architectural practice and the development of the country.

As early as the mid-1950s, the transformation of style from neo-classical architecture to modern architecture was obvious, particularly in major cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Penang. Among significant buildings constructed in Kuala Lumpur are the Federal House [Iversen (1906-1976) and Van Sitteren (1904-1968), 1954], the British Council building [Kenneth Charles Duncan (1898-1983), 1956] and the Institute of Language and Literature Malaysia [Lee Yoon Thim (1905-1977), 1959]. The Federal House, an 8-story administrative building, contains offices with an adjoining block to house other public spaces; staircases, lift lobbies and an entrance hall that links the two blocks. The façade of the slab block is treated as a thin frame filled entirely with screens of metal-framed glass and green vitrolite panels, making the Federal House one of the earliest International Style buildings in Kuala Lumpur and
Modern Movement in Myanmar

This paper highlights the course of the development of modern architecture in Myanmar, a country with an original and vital architectural tradition. There are case studies of well-known foreign and Myanmar architects who dealt with the relationship of spatial, cultural and environmental factors of modern architecture. Some architectural masterpieces created during the second half of the 20th century between 1950 and 1970 in Yangon are presented in this article in order to highlight the inspiration, imagination and limitation of these pioneer architects. The main reason for selecting these case studies are not only because of the influences from the outside world occurred in the post-independence period, but they can reveal the intertwined logic of the nation's identity-building. They reveal the new consciousness of globalization as well as the development of regionalism.

Myriad of Forms from Colonial to Post-Independence Periods

Myanmar passed through various political stages with difficulties during both the pre-independence and post-independence periods. There were many trends, not only in national aspirations, but also in physical appearances. However, it could be said that “Myanmar architecture” is still in a stage of flux with a myriad of forms.

The British came in the years 1829, 1852 and 1885 and the Pan-Asiatic development of ancient Myanmar architecture was fused with Western architecture. The British began to build offices and public buildings in their Western style. Then, slowly, but persistently more scientific and functional Western architecture began to replace the traditional and symbolic Myanmar architecture.

In parallel, Oriental style buildings for Myanmar elites and immigrant merchants became a trend in major cities like Yangon, Mawlamyine, Pathein, Taungyi, Thibaw and the last dynasty’s capital city Mandalay.

Since then, there has been hardly any serious attempt either to revive or modernize the old Myanmar architecture. Our city hall, the Myoma High School building and the Yangon Railway station were attempts made by Myanmar national architects, with a memory of towers and taking features from ancient palaces.

When the age of independent Myanmar was reached, citizens regarded colonial buildings as being illustrative of colonialism and the glory of imperialism. They tended not to appreciate them even though they were valuable examples of architectural heritage.

The new government of independent Myanmar wanted to build up an inclusive state with a modern ideology and to establish rules which had many differences between social and political relations. The leaders of modern and independent Myanmar, with ambitions to lift their country onto the world stage, tried to keep abreast of other countries. Their efforts can be clearly visible today through the buildings which were erected after 1948.

Before and during the development of the architectural program at the Yangon University, more than twenty Myanmar architects were educated abroad, mostly in India, the UK, and the US. In 1954, at Rangoon University, the architectural profession of independent Myanmar originated with the introduction of an architecture degree program. After years, the first five architect students graduated; U Tun Than, U Myint Thein, U Myo Myint Sein, U Tin Tun Khin and U Tin Maung Yin. During 1958-1964, the architecture education program was based at the Engineering College on Pyay Road. Starting from 1965, pioneer architects launched the architecture education program at the Department of Architecture of the newly established Rangoon Institute of Technology (currently known as the Yangon Technological University).

In order to select the best representative groups of modern buildings of the period, the following criteria are considered – diversity in building typologies, architectural concepts and principal architects (foreign or local, where and how they were trained), reflections of political and diplomatic relationships with other countries, representation of the country’s prominent position in Southeast Asia at that time, and last but not least, a building with traces of Myanmar ornamentation.

Modern Architecture Buildings Designed by Raglan Squire

The first prime minister of independent Myanmar, U Nu (1907-1995), communicated with both the US and the Soviet Union. America supported new nations to repel domestic communist armed forces through the provision of large amounts of funds. Benefits obtained by the Myanmar government’s policy can be seen in the development of
The 1945 battle for liberation witnessed the massive decimation of Manila’s urban built-heritage and the irreplaceable treasures of colonial architecture. Despite the seemingly impossible task to resuscitate war-ravaged Manila, it rose again. Out of the ashes, modernism provided the opportunity to craft a new architecture for a newly independent nation. Modernism emerged as the period’s architectural symbol of survival and optimism. In a post-colonial cultural milieu, Filipino architects pursued the iconography of national mythology channeled through the pure surfaces and unadorned geometries of modern architecture. They found in modernism a convenient aesthetic modus to denounce the colonial vestiges embodied in the infrastructure of American neoclassicism in pre-war Manila and sought to create new-built environments that conveyed emancipation from the colonial past and celebrate the vernacular forms processed through modernist geometric simplification. Modernism, therefore, was a logical choice, for it provided a progressive image. The Philippines post-independence architecture endeavored to dispense an image that stimulated a national spirit, inspired patriotism, and invoked faith in the unknown future of the national imagination.

At the end of the Pacific War in 1945, Manila lay in ruin. The city’s built-heritage and once grand edifices of Spanish and American colonial architecture were reduced to rubble by indiscriminate bombardment to liberate the city. American bombs turned Manila into the second most devastated Allied city in the world. Yet war-torn Manila rose again. Out of the ashes, Filipinos moved on to rebuild their lives and would be gripped by nostalgia for nation, a sense of mourning for the things lost during the war, but they found in modernism the foundation on which to erect a new nation.

The widespread dissemination of modernism in the Philippines happened after the Pacific War and coincided with post-war reconstruction and the birth of the Filipino nation. Despite the shaken state of the country in the aftermath of WWII, on July 4, 1946, the Philippine Islands became the independent Republic of the Philippines. Soon after, the new nation-state found in modern architecture and modernism a way to divorce itself from the vestiges of colonization and to create new-built environments that conveyed freedom from the colonial past. Modernism was found in audacious explorations of new architectural forms in the post-war creative imagination. Modernism possessed a symbolic allure of a new architecture for rebuilding a brave new world ravaged by war. Modern architecture, in the midst of post-war recuperation and the advent of national independence, provided the appropriate architectural image that represented growth, progress, advancement and decolonization.

Though modern architecture had a reputation of being arid, machine-like, and impersonal, it was considered by many as positive, rational and objective, and they championed its ability to express a new social order. The modern fervour fuelled the building of a new Capitol Complex. The adaptation of modern architecture as the official architectural style was not arbitrary but a strategic choice for it possessed a symbolic appeal of technological advancement, economic prosperity and cultural progress that an emerging nation would aspire to. Embodyingly, modernism conferred materiality to the Filipino national imagination, circulating in the potent visual politics of nation building. The US War Damage Rehabilitation Fund was also instrumental in resurrecting Manila’s pre-war neoclassical splendor. The Manila City Hall (1941), Post Office building (1931), Agriculture and Finance buildings (1940), Legislative building (1926), and a group of buildings of the University of the Philippines (1920-30s) in Manila were rebuilt approximating their original plans.

As the war damage claims reached their respective beneficiaries, a construction boom followed suit. The architects, after a long inactive practice, dusted off their drawing boards and joined the reconstruction euphoria. As they built to address the widespread housing shortage and infrastructure deficit, they had to abandon the motifs and ornament of styles of the pre-war era to reduce the construction cost and efficiently complete the structure in the shortest possible time. Post-war austerity meant straightforward and no-nonsense architectural forms which modernism readily supplied. “Form follows function” was the new doctrine proclaimed by the “third generation” Filipino architects, namely, Jose Maria Zaragoza (1912-1994), Cesar Concio (1907-2003), Angel Nakpil (1914-1980), Alfredo Luz (1904-1982), Otillo Arellano (1916-1981), Felipe Mendoza (1917-2000), Gabriel Formoso (1915-1996) and Carlos Arguelles.
Before and behind the Pioneers of Modern Architecture in Singapore

BY JIA T-HWEE CHANG

This article situates the emergence of pioneer modern architects and architecture of Singapore in the longer history of colonial and post-colonial modernities and modernization, and in relation to socio-economic forces of capitalism and socio-political influences of the modern state in both the colonial and post-colonial eras. Rather than understand modern architecture in terms of style, this article goes behind style to explore the social, economic, technological and political conditions of producing modern architecture.

In January 2017, the 3rd maseana International conference, Pioneers of Modern Architecture, was held in Hanoi to explore the history of pioneer architects in different Southeast Asian countries. Earlier, in 2015, when Singapore celebrated its 50th year of independence, organizations in the architectural and design fraternities gave out a number of awards to recognize the “pioneer architects” of the country. Despite these scholarly and professional recognitions given to pioneer architects in Southeast Asia, we do not really know what are the criteria that make one a pioneer architect. Surely it is not based on being on the national scene first during the early post-independence phase, otherwise many more architects would be recognized. If it is about architectural achievements, it remains rather unclear what the bases are for evaluating these achievements. In the case of Pioneers of Modern Architecture, these ideas and works should be related to modern architecture. But what is modern architecture in Southeast Asia in the absence of a definitive study? On what criteria should we select the appropriate figures to represent the pioneers?

As a way of answering these questions it might be useful to look at Nikolaus Pevsner’s Pioneers of Modern Design, first published in 1936, to discern how the word pioneer was first deployed in the history of modern architecture and how it has informed historiography. For Pevsner, the pioneers of modern design were those who were the first to discern the zeitgeist, or the spirit of the age, of the modern era and accordingly produce the modern style. Understood as “an invisible, pervasive driving force behind art”, zeitgeist was an influential Hegelian idea that shaped the thinking of many 19th century and early-20th-century art historians who wrote in German, such as Wilhelm Pinder (1878-1947), Pevsner’s teacher, and Alois Riegl (1858-1905).

According to art historian Alina Payne, style was just Pevsner’s starting point. Pevsner also had a strong leftist message to deliver. Payne argues that Pevsner saw the social and political content of Modernism as equally significant as the aesthetics. Therefore, Pevsner celebrated Peter Behren (1868-1949) and the Werkbund, and Walter Gropius (1883-1969) and Bauhaus because these two figures and their respective movements promoted mass-oriented and socially-conscious modern design of everyday objects and environments.

One of the most interesting arguments that can be drawn from Pevsner’s Pioneers of Modern Design is that style and aesthetics are indissolubly linked to society and politics. Rather than be preoccupied solely with modern architecture and the pioneer architects, it is perhaps more productive to explore what lay behind them: the larger social and political conditions of modernity and modernization from which they emerged. When we explore these conditions in the case of Singapore, they are obviously also part of the national conditions. But these national conditions, especially in the early post-independence years, were inextricably linked to the colonial structure. Thus, in this paper, I would like to explore modernity and modernization in a longer time frame, situating the emergence of pioneer modern architects in Singapore in the longer history of modernity and modernization.

Colonial Modernity and Architecture in early 20th Century

In early 20th century, when the pioneers of the Modern Movement in Europe and North America were designing and building the early path-breaking works that emphasize dynamic experience of light-infused space and volumetric expression of mass with unadorned surfaces, the type of works produced by Singapore’s most progressive professional architectural practices were generally in the modes of eclectic classicism or Art Deco. Despite their purportedly non-modern appearance, these works were thoroughly modern in other ways, ways that were inextricably linked to colonial modernity.

First of all, these buildings were designed by the modern architectural profession that was only recently recognized by the colonial state through legislation. Despite what has
Modern Architecture in Thailand

BY PONGKWAN LASSUS

The influence of modern architecture became more visible in Thailand after the country shifted from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy in 1932 and also as a result of economic circumstances and world trends. The first generation of Thai Modernist architects (or the pioneers of modern architecture in Thailand) had their education in Europe because of the necessity to modernize Thailand. The second generation were Thai architects who received their architectural education in Thailand as well as some continuing their studies in the USA. Their works reflect the International Style with a concern for a tropical architecture vocabulary and local material utilization based on economics. As the architectural profession was declared a protected profession in 1965 for Thai architects only, there was very little modern architecture in Thailand designed by foreign architects.

Introduction: the Pre-Modernism Western Architecture in Thailand (1851-1917)

Architecture in the Kingdom of Siam (former name of Thailand) gradually changed after the arrival of Western influences during the reign of King Mongkut (Rama IV, 1851-1868). All neighboring countries were colonized by either Great Britain or France. In 1855, King Mongkut (1824-1868) signed the so-called “Bowring Treaty” which abolished import duties and integrated Siam into the world economy.

King Mongkut’s son, Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1853-1912) ascended the throne in 1868. He was entirely Western educated and he tried to modernize the country in order to avoid being colonized by showing how Siam was as civilized as Western countries. He sent his children to study abroad. During his reign (1868-1912) there was reform in every field: education, the military, finance, justice, transportation and infrastructure. Bangkok, the water-based settlement capital, was transformed into a Western land-based city with more roads and railways. During his reign, architects from the West were commissioned to design many important buildings. The iconic architecture of this period was the Chakkrabophit Palace (1876), designed by John Clunis (?-1894, worked in Thailand since 1875). There were some Italian architect-engineers who worked in Siam during this period such as: Joachim or Giochino Grassi (1837-1904), Carlo Allegri (1862-1938), Mario Tamagno (1877-1941) and Annibale Rigotti (1872-1968), as well as another important German architect, Karl S. Dohring (1879-1941). The Anantasamakom Palace (1908), a very important building, was designed in the Italian Renaissance style by Carlo Allegri, Mario Tamagno and Annibale Rigotti. Another iconic work of architecture designed by German architect Karl S. Dohring in Art Nouveau is the Baanpuen Palace in Petchburi (1912). So many important ministerial buildings were built after governance reform and most of them were designed by Western architects and engineers. A variation of architectural styles was found in this period: Classicism, Italian Renaissance, Palladianism, Baroque, Neoclassicism and Art Nouveau.

During the reign of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI, 1882-1925; reign: 1910-1925), there was an economic recession in Siam. The first university in Siam was established in 1916. In 1917, Siam joined the Allies during WWI. Construction of luxury Western architecture in this period slowed down and changed from grand symmetric planning into a more asymmetric floor plan. Siam began to fabricate Portland cement for its own use in 1913. The most important building in this period is the Bangkok Railway Station at Hualamphong designed by Karl Dohring (1912-1915). This building utilised the new construction technology of 50-meter-long semi-circular steel arches, but the front façade was still designed in a symmetrical Neoclassical style. Several palaces in this period were designed with asymmetrical floor plans and with free form gardens. We can find different styles of architecture such as Romanticism, Neo-gothic, Venetian Gothic, etc. There was a return to traditional Thai architecture reinforcing the idea of nationalism that can be seen in the Vajiravudh University, built in 1925, and the first building of Chulalongkorn University, built in the same year, designed by Edward Hilly. Many railway stations all over Thailand were built during this period. The Huahin Railway Hotel (1924) was the first resort hotel, built in Huahin (Rachuabkirikun province) and included the first golf course, designed by an Italian architect who worked for the railway department at that time.

Modern Thailand

During the reign of King Prachadhipok (Rama VII, 1893-1941; reign: 1925-1935), the group of Thais, which called themselves Kbana Ratsadon, seized power from the absolute monarchy on June 24, 1932. They installed a constitutional monarchy with Prachadhipok as king. Later on, the many unsettled constitutional roles of the Crown and the dissatisfaction with Kbana Ratsadon’s seizure of power culminated in 1933 in a counter-coup, which resulted in a small-scale civil war. King Prachadhipok abdicated and he was replaced by his 9-year-old nephew Prince Ananda Mahidol (Rama VIII, 1925-1946).
Architecture is one of the keys to the values of a society, a reflection of a people’s aspiration, and a society’s ideas and technological experiments over periods in its history. This paper will address “modern architecture in Vietnam” focusing on the general course of its development: its practice, discourse and the built environment throughout history. The guiding questions for the main content of this paper are very fundamental:

How can we define modern architecture in Vietnam?

How was it formed and developed through the modern history of the country?

Can we call modern architecture in Vietnam “Vietnamese modern architecture”?

The Analytical Framework

The MASEANA project offers a definite approach to the issue when it states that “the history of modern architecture in Asia is the history of how Asians have become modern; and has evolved through sustained interactions with the West”. In other words, modern architecture accompanies modernity, or modernism, having undergone numerous upheavals in history, from colonization, decolonization, westernization, through industrialization, and urbanization, to nation-building and globalization. These are various phenomena that help define and shape Asian modernism today.

In this regard, we would like to go back to the beginning of Vietnam’s modern history with milestones, emphasizing external influences and seeing how these encounters of modern thoughts shaped our modern architecture and generations of Vietnamese architects.

**French Colonization (1858–1954): Strong Encounter with the West**

The French colonization period lasted almost a century in Vietnam and Indochina. The quasi-feudal/colonial regime left a remarkable legacy in Vietnam; architectural heritage is nowadays one among many other assets.

**Before 1920**

When the French conducted their first colonization program, they undertook major construction works in the larger cities in Vietnam: public buildings, housing projects, infrastructure systems, ports, railway stations and factories. That was a significant period when comprehensive modernity was brought into Vietnam for the first time by the French.

The first aspect of modernity was reflected in urban planning. The French conducted a number of master plans for Hanoi, Saigon, Haiphong, Dalat city, etc. Western town planning principles of the grid, axes, boulevards, parks and public gardens, and grand facilities such as theaters, schools, libraries and hospitals were put into use. The fundamental base for modernity to take shape was urban infrastructure, which had not existed in Vietnam before. Grand road networks with sidewalks for pedestrians separated from automobile flows, networks of water supply, sanitation, electricity, communication as well as greenery, were implemented. One of the most remarkable modern works of that time was the Paul Doumer Bridge (1898-1902). It was a beautiful iron bridge that consumed 30,000 m³ of stone, 5,600 tons of laminated steel, 137 tons of cast iron, 165 tons of iron and 7 tons of lead for the construction.

The second aspect of modernity could be found in buildings and architecture. Buildings of various Western styles were constructed in many cities. In the early colonial period, French architecture was directly imported to Hanoi: classical style, French regional styles, neoclassic or Art Nouveau. The most typical and outstanding examples of these types were the Hanoi Opera House (1901-1911), and the Residence Superior of Tonkin (started 1917) illustrating traces of modern architecture as seen on Art Nouveau entrance canopies. Until 1920, almost all the significant buildings in Hanoi were built by French architects. Together with these very exotic styles, they brought into Vietnam new construction technology and materials, such as reinforced concrete, steel, glass, cement, etc. The third aspect of modernity was demonstrated in the social transformation of Vietnam. Local intellectuals began absorbing new ideas from abroad, thus gradually deviating from Confucian thoughts. Movements and organizations for cultural and educational innovation like “Duy Tan”, “Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc”, “Khai Tri Tien Duc” (AFIMA) accelerated the change in the local people’s awareness and lifestyles. With the perspective of learning Western civilization while preserving and developing traditional cultural identity, these movements and organizations exercised their
Fumihiko Maki

Contributing to the debate on the development of modern architecture in the Asian countries, in March 2017, Ana Tostões interviewed Fumihiko Maki, one of the greatest Asian architects engaged with the modern project, and member of the Metabolism group. Maki is currently developing a number of projects in Asia, including the Taipei Main Station Redevelopment in Taiwan, Shenzhen Sea World Culture and Arts Center in China, and the New City Hall of Yokohama, Japan.

AT: Being modern is a way to answer to society and society is in constant transformation, so the modern project is a work in progress. I believe you are perhaps one of the most unique architects in this respect since the very beginning of your career in the 1950s, until today, with constant improvement.

FM: Paradoxically, architects always work with expected processes: an expected layout and an expected program, but I see your point. Maintaining quality is very important for me. I often compare buildings with human beings. Both are born and survive to a certain old age, let's say, 80 or 90 years old, but are always hoping to maintain good health. Buildings must also be healthy, so I too praise construction details. But it is also about life; buildings must be appreciated by people who use them and have society’s agreement on their life. Vitruvius defined the virtues of architecture as *utilitas, firmitas* and *venustas*. *Venus* has been defined as beauty but some scholars in Europe recently argued that Vitruvius meant being in a state of delight. Overall, these values are necessary for keeping a building alive and that is what we try to do; those values are important in keeping a building healthy.

So, architecture is really like a human being. We have to make the building good to live in, so it is loved and – at the same time, to express something for society. I have been working under this philosophy for almost 60 years and I haven’t changed it, but I don’t stick to one style, or particular materials. Mies, for instance, was the kind of architect who tried to limit his expression, his use of materials, and make it deeper throughout his life. I like to vary depending on the project and the resources: when I did 4 World Trade Center Tower, glass was the basic material while, on the Aga Khan Museum, we wanted to reflect light in a stone facade and used a Brazilian stone that suited this intention. For the MediaCorp building in Singapore, just completed this year, we had a budget that allowed us to use stainless steel panels instead of aluminium. Currently we are finishing the Bihar Museum, in Patna, India. We have learnt from the experience of Corbusier in India that exposed concrete isn’t the best option, so instead we used Corten steel and stone to protect the building surface, so the building can have a long life, even if not properly maintained.

We have to be careful with projects in India, especially in the choice of materials, because maintenance is not so good. In Switzerland, in my experience with Novartis Campus in Basel, we didn’t have to worry about maintenance. Each country has a different attitude towards architecture, towards the life of architecture. We always learn from what we have done and try to do something better next time.

AT: Indeed, you have extensive work around the world. You have already been faced with many different cultures, nations, continents...
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

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Through the narration of the country's history through architecture, exemplified with buildings, construction details and information on its architects, engineers and town planners, this publication is the most comprehensive record of Cambodian architecture from the 1950s to the early 1970s, revealing a Golden Age of optimism and experimentation – which is only recently being recognized –, before being led to almost 3 decades of military dictatorship, genocide and civil war.

This book was awarded as one of the top-10 “Best Asian Books 2006” from Time Magazine, immediately in the year of its launching.

Catarina Andrade
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 Headquarter. 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 the knowledge concerning Sukarno’s intentions and 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 autobiography. 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.
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], steel [ baja], concrete [beton] and bamboo [hambu]. 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” [Ketukangan: 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 [ˈkraftsmaʃip] 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”.

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 architectural 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 countries “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”.

Ketukangan: Kesadaran Material / Craftsmanship: Material Consciousness

Editors: Avianti Armando, Setiadi Sopandi, David Hutama, Robin Hartanto, Achmad D. Tardiyana.
Publisher: Ikatan Arsitek Indonesia
ISBN: 978-602-12410-2-4
Languages: Indonesian; English
Year: 2014
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 relationships between people and matter in the process of construction; promoting interdisciplinary teamwork and awareness of all the work processes; endorsing humanized work leading to local appreciation, recognition and people’s understanding of the role of architecture; potentially contributing to avoiding natural disasters such as deforestation, global warming, floods; finally, how it can be a sustainable answer, in social, economic and environmental terms.

“Craftsmanship is a conscious decision that enjoys a close relationship with the quality of life in Indonesia”. And so it was the Indonesian curatorial decision to choose “Craftsmanship: Material Consciousness” as the reality to represent its country in the “Craftsmanship: Material Consciousness” as Indonesian curatorial decision to choose of life in Indonesia”. And so it was the

The Living Machines: Malaysia’s Modern Architectural Heritage

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 (1919-1942)”, “Post-War Years (1945-1965)”, and “Post-Independence (1966-1985)”. 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.


Authors: Ho Weng Hin, Dinesh Naidu and Tan Kar Lin
Publisher: Singapore Heritage Society and SIA Press Pte Ltd
isbn: 978-981-29-2495-9
Language: English
Year: 2015

The Living Machines: Malaysia’s Modern Architectural Heritage

Edited by Ar Azaiddy Abdullah; Tony Liew Voon Fun
Publisher: Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia; Taylor’s University
isbn: 9780675264122
Language: English
Year: 2015

From the Publisher.
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 curatorship 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 12 case studies - both private and public - responding to these issues through imaginative approaches to tropical architecture and the changing human ecology.

It is complemented with an extended 22<sup>nd</sup> century timeline revealing the tropical studies and technological devices developed through time.

Catarina Andrade

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Fish don't know they're in water, says David Foster Wallace. But fish surely know best about breathing using gills. I find the parable comfortably fitting to a theme on so-called "tropical living" and its derivative "tropical architecture". Too often we come across the two-word phrases – separately or together – to make up preconceived ideas illustrating a building or a complex of buildings dominated by the presence of the roof, frequently lacking walls, and surrounded by lush tropical gardens and water bodies. Images from resorts in Bali or Phuket proliferate in countless coffee table books, design monographs, and travel magazines.

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 distorting 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 WWI, postcolonial countries – many of which were 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 as 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 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 rusty old archives and not-so-distant past, the mid-century architectural scientific 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: 9786222339597
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-WW II Asia. His architecture faithfully responds to the tropical climate, is economically efficient, elegantly functional, and nationally 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 innards 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 seminal work will trigger snowballing effects on the sustained studies, debates, and publications on the
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 do not suggest the book as overtly 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 1960 and 1970: 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 obsolescence. 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 spectators 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 2012 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 relics from the National Archive of Singapore – along with personal accounts from seminal individuals, he brings us to details that matter to us and 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

massena Project International Round Table and Colloquium – Conservation Action Priorities for 20th Century Heritage: Sharing Experience of ASEAN Countries and Japan

Editors: massena Project
Publisher: docomomo Japan
Language: English, Japanese
Year: 2015

This report summarizes the massena 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
the man, the thinker, and the architect Manuel Vicente was, as a basis for understanding his complexity.

By revealing Manuel Vicente through the lens of those who crossed his path and debated with him the marvellous experience of architecture; by working, learning or exchanging ideas and, more than presenting his built legacy, the importance of this book lies in the revelation of the legacy that Manuel Vicente has left as a way of thinking on architecture and the city. The reflection about its repercussion in the built production of Macau until the present day remind us of his intense and unique role in the creation of a Macau school. Following some arguments carried by Pedro Vieira de Almeida (“Uma História do Futuro”, Colóquio Artes, nº 89, 1991), exposing the idea already identified among some of us of a Macau school based on the intense action of Manuel Vicente operated in the space of Macau since the 60’s.

As a meeting point between East and West, Manuel Vicente found in Macau an available territory for the exploration of crossed influences 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 Pennsylvania following his master Louis Kahn, and Macau’s local culture – dense, informal, somehow 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 architecture 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 a critical reflection of Macau in physical and cultural terms, that has left decisive questions to continue to be explored.

Ana Tostões

This report summarizes the second and third international conferences of the mASEA Na 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 report 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 Toyko conference, Modern Architectural Heritage in asean and Japan, took place on 12 and 13 March. The first day was dedicated to sessions on the pioneers of modern architecture in asean and Japan and to the value and possibility of its modern architectural 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: • Brining 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.