TANGIBLE - INTANGIBLE HERITAGE(S): AN INTERPLAY OF DESIGN, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Adopting performative criticism to understand the ‘in-between’ position of an urban heritage site.

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• Presentation Method. I would like to:
  i. present in person (with/without a written paper)
  ii. submit a written paper only (and not attend/present)

• Abstract (300 words):
How does the historical and cultural specificity of a site distinguish the level of contemporary design intervention? This article investigates the in-between position of an urban heritage site, Turo de la Rovira; a hilltop lookout located ‘inside’ the city of Barcelona. In this article, the ‘in-between’ position refers to the designers’ minimal intervention approach for designing the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’, as well as the typology of the site as an urban but socio-culturally informal public space. Although situated in the urban core of this city, the historical, architectural and topographical context of this site creates a distinct ‘in-between’ position. Surrounded by informal housing, untamed landscape and steep topography, in re-making the area as a public landscape and
heritage area, the site has influenced the designers’ approach towards an informality and intentional loosening of design control. In this article, we will investigate the impact of the informality of the site’s context on the designer’s approach in rebuilding the historical museum and the reconstructed landscape.

For this task, a method of ‘performative criticism’ has been developed to understand and (re)present the site’s multiple tangible and intangible layers of history, the remnants, design process, and the visitors’ quality of inhabitation and experience today. In this mode of criticism the critic explores the design strategy through ‘embodied inhabitation’ using interviews with the designer and study of the design documentation, as well as recording the experience of inhabitation through the critic’s occupation and social engagement. It is argued in this article that the designers’ minimal intervention approach in reconstructing the architectural remnant of the site and reviving the landscape has resulted in liberal and diverse occupation of the inhabitants, dissimilar from other urban public spaces in Barcelona. The performative criticism of the case study will (re)present the link between the designer’s minimal intervention strategy with the embodied inhabitation through written and visual material.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Dr. Isun A Kazerani is a sessional teaching staff at Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne. She has a multi-disciplinary background in architecture, urban spatial systems and infrastructure. She has been involved in guest lecturing, leading design studios and teaching undergraduate and masters subjects in the last 5 years. She is the author of multiple refereed conferences, journal articles and a book chapter. Her main areas of research include, design research, architecture criticism, sensory and atmosphere in architecture, design approaches and their impact in sensory and social human inhabitation.

Hannah Lewi is a Professor of Architecture in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne. Her areas of research span modern architecture history; theories of heritage and place; and the use of new media in the interpretation of history. She is currently co-editing the Routledge International Handbook of New Digital Practices in Cultural Institutions. And is co-writing a book on the history of the modern campus in Australia. She is a past president of the Society of Architecture Historians of Australia and New Zealand.