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

Paper / Proposal Title:
The concealed locus

Author(s) Name:
Nikolia Kartalou

University or Company Affiliation:
Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture,
The University of Edinburgh

Presentation Method. I would like to:

i. present in person (with/without a written paper)

Abstract (300 words):

This paper examines the interrelationships between the tangible and intangible elements of cultural heritage and suggests that these should be equally considered for understanding a city’s patrimonial dimension. At the same time, it proposes a theory that goes beyond a visual comprehension of cultural heritage usually reflected through its physical spaces, and considers the immaterial elements of spaces. Taking the city of Edinburgh as an example, this paper argues that the city conceals itself in its image, or else in the image of its established heritage. The hypothesis is tested by examining a ‘representative’ piece of Edinburgh’s urban tissue – i.e. Chambers Street – through processes that involve uncovering annihilated layers of previous eras, analysing both its physical and immaterial elements, with a view
to inform the present through the past. Particular emphasis in these analyses is given to the condition of the locus of Chambers Street in relation to its intangible heritage. The selected locus is treated as an artefact itself, due to its footprint (i.e. in terms of materiality) and its memory (i.e. in terms of occurrences), and it is examined as a design intervention with intangible layers of memory relating to the latter's spatial and temporal dimension.

This experiment serves as an example to appreciate the endurance of material and immaterial through their constant relationship with processes that affect the city’s imagery by shifting the assumed linear perception of time. The intention here is to initiate a discussion on the correlations between tangible and intangible elements of cultural heritage in order to inform architectural practices and conservation approaches in historic context.

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

Nikolia Kartalou is a PhD Candidate in Architecture at the University of Edinburgh (UoE). Alongside her research, she is a practising architect (ARB) and a tutor at the Edinburgh School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (ESALA). Nikolia received her MSc Architectural Conservation from the University of Edinburgh and her diploma in Architecture Engineering from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Her architectural practice work to date has ranged from small scale interventions in historic ensembles to large scale projects in Greece, France and UK. Since 2013, she is one of the main contributors of new architectures of heritage (naoh), a knowledge-sharing and exploratory platform between industry, academia and public bodies, involving exhibitions, conferences and workshops. She is co-editor of the current issue of ESALA’s academic journal Edinburgh Architecture Research. Her research investigates the embodiment of memory in spaces and its relation with cultural heritage, with a view to enhance pre-compositional approaches that architects use while creating architectural artefacts as attempts to bridge the past with the future. Nikolia’s research interests include: cultural heritage and architectural design-research practices; history and theory of architecture and urbanism; visuality, place memory and identity of urban environments.