TANGIBLE - INTANGIBLE HERITAGE(S) – DESIGN, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CRITIQUES ON THE PAST, PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
From Past to Heritage: Social values renegotiated through The Big House

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• Presentation Method. I would like to:
  i. present in person (with/without a written paper)

• Abstract (300 words):
20th century architecture often sought to break from tradition and redefine a brave new society through modernist ideologies, mechanisms and forms. Post-modern communities, however, often prefer to read the physical remnants of that modernist past as an integrated part of their cultural continuum, hoping to replace the adhesive of a once ideologically cohesive society with a sense of continuity fostered by a common past / a shared heritage.

This paper will focus on the renovation of The Big House, the first educational institute of the communal Kibbutz movement of Hashomer Hatzair, established in Palestine in the 1929. Conceived as the foremost tool for molding the young into a new society, free from Bourgeois preconceptions, the building was designed to complement the Kibbutz movement’s radical educational approach with the cutting-edge language of Modernism. Concepts such as minimalism, equality, and frugality are clearly and
intentionally pronounced in this ideological flagship’s architecture, tangibly projecting the ethos of the community it served. From its construction during the 1930’s, through the decline of the Kibbutz, the growing controversy and the building’s gradual abandonment in the 1970’s, and finally to its current revival through transformation and re-use, The Big House’s fate continues to reflect the changing values of its community. The paper will describe the 12-year long design process, during which, through ongoing community consultation, intangible and complex communal and controversial values were renegotiated and translated into an intricate architectural program and an integrated self-curated display. The renovation of the building (completed in August 2017) and the exhibit it contains utilize the educational institution's historic, architectural and iconic assets as the anchors of a new center for contemporary Kibbutz life, retaining, transforming and facilitating a dialog between the legacy of the monolithic and 'heroic' past and the multiplicity of present day identities.

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

Arch. Ruth Liberty-Shalev heads the Architectural Conservation Unit at the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning, Technion Israel Institute of Technology. Since 2005 she runs her own architectural practice in Haifa, Israel, and since 2003 has been working as head architect with the community of Kibbutz Mishmar Haemek on plans to renovate and re-activate The Big House, executed 2015-2017.

Adi Hay-Noy is a senior partner at Ruth Liberty-Shalev Architecture & Conservation. She was project architect on the renovation of The Big House, completed August 2017.