Towards Aware Choice of Design Methods and Tools, Based on the Architectural Studio Experience

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Buildings are hardly the product of architectural design studios, at least not tangible ones. Efforts to create conditions that closely resemble reality within the studio, are most likely destined to fail. This tension between the professional intending to realize a design, and the inability of paper-architecture, produced in the architectural design studio, to do so - yet seems to be unsolved. In that context, we ask what can be a significant contribution of the design studio to the common knowledge of our discipline?

One option to answer this question could rely on the repetitive engagement with similar issues within the framework of the design studio. This accumulated work can provide a thematic input being useful when dealing with equivalent issues. Another suggested contribution, possibly with more generic implications, is a methodological one.

Till recently our directions as studio teachers, regarding methodology, have been based on our professional and personal experience and believes, but never this knowledge
was put clearly in words nor anchored by us in writing properly. We began to search for more didactic ways to consciously choose a design methodology, and started sorting our students architectural projects by relevant characteristics, that potentially indicate appropriate tools and design methods. This categorizing process has been yielded a (not final) number of seven groups, that each architectural proposal may be attributed to one or more of them, and by that to be directed to a range of suggested concrete methods and tools.

This evolving research has been developed and will be discussed, through iconic built and theoretical case-studies as well as by examples of architectural proposals developed by students in the final project studio 'Cities Through Time', supervised by Arch. Oren Ben Avraham, Arch. Iris Kashman, and Dr. Arch. Oryan Shachar, at the Technion, Israel Institute of Technology, M. Arch Program.

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Oren Ben Avraham is an architect and urban planner, graduated from the Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, Haifa. During the last decade, he has taught architecture in the Technion and in Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem, and served as the coordinator for the Technion Faculty of Architecture transition to a new master’s program. His main research and teaching interests are sustainability, history, and theory of architecture and design methodologies. His architectural practice includes projects that mediate between architecture and landscape, the urban and the architectural scale, as well as with dwelling and office buildings.

Iris Kashman is an architect based in Tel Aviv specializing in historic preservation and urban design. Among her clients are the municipalities of Tel Aviv, Petach Tikva, Ramle, the National Planning Agency, and the Israeli Authority of Antiquity. She has been teaching the thesis design studio for fifth-year B.Arch students at the Technion (Israel Institute of Technology) since 2014. Previously, Iris worked as an architect in such firms as Ennead Architects in New York City and Amnon Bar Or Architects in Tel Aviv. Iris completed her master’s studies in historic preservation at Columbia University in New York City in 2007. Her professional degree (B.Arch) was received from Tel Aviv University in 2003.