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Ariel University – School of Architecture & DIDA Italy

Solomon Project – Interdisciplinary Seminar in Architectural Planning Between Florence and Jerusalem

Solomon Project is the result of a continuous dialog between two schools of architecture. This project consists of an international exchange between Italian and Israeli students that alternately meets in each country for a period of ten days, during which they work on two different architectural projects: one in Florence, and one in Jerusalem.

Both schools represent two polar cultures. One is rooted in European history, while the second represents on the one hand an innovative tendency of a young Nation to express the dynamic innovation of their world, but on the other hand, derives from an ancient culture that grew on the land of Abraham and Jesus. The teaching staff is composed of leading professors of each institute, specializing in different aspects of architectural planning and research. Therefore, the seminar structure allows students to get in touch with different cultures, planning methods, approaches and built environments. The students work together in mix groups, giving their contribution to the projects - a contribution based on personal experience and planning method of their origin university.

Contextual Architecture in an Era of Globalization

In an age of universal architecture that tends to operate like product design, the seminar is based on parametric architectural study that aims to extract the particular spirit of place of each site, and thus, to assist and prove the feasibility of maintaining a chain of architectural development endemic to a specific place. The seminar deals with the character, identity, form and function of the built urban space, in search of the memory of the place and its genius loci. The

project, therefore, asks to apply on the different sites the same functional program suggested by the students.

The constant comparison encourages the students to grow a new creativity, flexibility, awareness, and self-confidence. Notably, the experience developed in small time eases and forces a superior and more profitable approach to two cultures that have many points of touch but also many differences. All these factors contribute to creating a fertile terrain for the professional and personal growth of the students.

In the last three years we investigated different issues and aspects of architectural planning linked to Florence and Jerusalem: City Walls (2015), Urban Piazza (2016), Architecture and Water (2017). The results are over 20 fascinating architectural projects.

The encounter has also produced shared publications by professors from the two institutes on themes and issues presented during the seminars, as well as exhibitions that were held in Israel and Italy showing students's projects and cultural activities.

Teaching team

Ariel University – School of Architecture: Yoram Ginzburg (Project Manager), David Cassuto, Gílad Dushani, Itzik Elhadif, Yair Varon (scientific coordinator)
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