

MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE

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ARCH 504 Seminar in Thesis Research

Coordinators: Esin Kömez, İrem Hafız

09.30 – 09:55

Mohammad Nasim Alhanoush Alkhalaf—
Remaking Urban Public Spaces in Post-Conflict City
through Participatory Design

Supervisor: Cânâ Bilsel

Jury: Ela Alanyalı Aral, Bülent Batuman

Urban public space has always been located at the center of a dichotomy between theory and praxis. However, the contemporary urban public space in cities has been mostly subjected to exclusionary deterministic design approaches. This study aims to deliver a better and more comprehensive understanding of the potentials of urban public spaces that relies upon a model that brings together the civic realm, and the state, distinctively and cooperatively. It aims to establish a theoretical and practical framework that provides an inclusive definition of urban public space in various scales and perspectives of spatial, social and political actions and practices concerning the concept of participatory design. The discursive relationship between urban public space and participatory design approaches promotes a new active, dynamic and multiple engagements of the public in urban public contexts especially, the most conflictual and complex ones. Thus, the urban public spaces in today's contemporary cities need to be analyzed in consideration of their political and social nature. This study aims to propose an alternative framework to engage the process of designing urban public spaces with participatory processes that represent and associate diverse dimensions in the context of post-conflict cities in particular.

09:55 – 10:20

Didar Çayır— An Investigation on Neighbourhoods
as a Unit of Sustainable Urban Development

Supervisor: Cânâ Bilsel

Jury: Nerkis Kural, Anlı Ataöv

The concept of sustainable development has been evolving since the 1970s. Three pillars of sustainable development: social sustainability, economic sustainability, and environmental sustainability are interrelated. Environmental and economic sustainability have been the most discussed and highlighted aspects of sustainable development since the beginning of its history, whereas social sustainability has come into the agenda after the Brundtland Report in 1987. Sustainable development can be questioned through urban form since it may affect sustainability both positively and negatively. Today, there are several researches on sustainable design of the urban form. In this context, the neighbourhood as a unit of an urban form comes to the fore. This study will focus on the question of how sustainable urban development can be achieved in neighbourhoods as units of the urban form. In this presentation, the three pillars of sustainable development will be discussed from a neighbourhood scale. The ingredients of a sustainable neighbourhood will be investigated, and recent approaches on neighbourhoods from sustainability perspective will be the concern of this paper. In addition to that, this study will examine how urban neighborhoods should serve their residents to provide a sustainable environment both socially, environmentally, and economically. Furthermore, the connection between urban neighborhoods and sustainable development will be studied through a number of case studies to compare and evaluate their existence in the literature of being sustainable neighborhoods.

10:20 – 10:45

İbrahim Alpdemir— Regeneration of Neglected
Urban Space in the Historic Core of Ankara

Supervisor: Ela Alanyalı Aral

Jury: Güliz Bilgin Altınöz, Zeki Kamil Ülkenli

Historic city centres are usually the centre for administration, commerce, culture, entertainment and leisure as well as an embodiment of the city's collective memory. Thus, the historic core plays an important role in maintaining the city as a whole and instigates the lifelines that would feed a greater urban hinterland. When the historic centre of Ankara, Ulus is observed it is possible to see that most of these properties that identify the city centre is non-existent and suffers from decay and neglect. The problem arises due to decades of economic, political strife along with unsuccessful city management. As a consequence, certain areas in the centre of Ankara cannot contribute to urbanity as well as damaging the image and perception of the city. The north section of Anafartalar, formerly known as Doğanbey, is a neighbourhood that possibly faces the greatest amount of neglect in Ulus in spite of its potential. This site will be the subject of this thesis which aims to confront the issues that have caused the current predicament starting with the problems of the city's recent history and their consequences on the situation of today's Ulus. The study intends to shed light on how ruptures within the urban tissue has caused a poor environmental quality, that is ramified into social instability, dysfunctionality, and visual disdain. Working on the Doğanbey area's current relationship with Ulus as a whole and its future place within the historic centre as its transformation continues, this document will explore the possibilities of transforming the area into a valuable asset for the public realm by utilizing urban design strategies.

10:45 – 11:10

Başak Ünsal— Discussions on Nonhuman Agency in Architectural Practices Focusing on the Mediums of Architectural Representation

Supervisor: Ela Alanyalı Aral

Jury: Pelin Yoncacı Arslan, Gökçen Erkılıç

This thesis work provides a discussion on nonhuman agency in the field of architecture through analyzing the mediums of architectural representation. It starts with the discussion on the mediums of architectural representation and its role on shaping our understanding and relations with human and nonhuman actors. In reference to Bruno Latour and Donna Haraway, critics on anthropocentric thinking patterns and human-nature binarity are discussed in further parts of the article. Through examining of contemporary architectural projects and processes focusing on representation tools and mediums, nonhuman agency discussion is furthered by case studies. In the times of global Covid-19 pandemic and climate crisis, we need to come up with new ways of grasping the relations between human and nonhuman communities, instead of anthropocentric thinking pattern; hierarchal, human centric, speciesist. This study aims for covering the contemporary discussions on architecture becoming a mediator for cohabitation of different, and examining the role of representation mediums in reference to showcasing the design and thinking patterns behind architectural projects.

11:10 – 11:35

Natasha Afzal— The New Public Sphere and Urban Citizenship in Post-Industrial Islamabad, Pakistan

Supervisor: Güven Arif Sargın

Jury: Ela Alanyalı Aral, Olgu Çalışkan

The capital city of Pakistan, Islamabad was designed in congruence with the prevalent zeitgeist and was translated into the city design in the form of a grid pattern in the 60's. Zones ranging from administrative, cultural, educational, commercial and auxiliary zones to the class segregated residential zones, the iron grid layout effectively bifurcates the city- functionally and

socially. Within this bifurcated sense of subjectivity and logic, the representation of power and forms of territoriality for the urban citizen derive itself from the overt, enforced and top down administratively handled urban fabric. However, the world has seen some essential shifts in the sixty years since its inception; with technological affordances there has been an economic shift from the secondary to the tertiary sector and the ubiquitous nature of wireless networks. This has allowed the creation of new digital urban institutions that mould and orchestrate political, economic and social interactions; a primary example being platforms that facilitate and connect users and providers. Sharing urban platforms like Uber, careem, bykea, Foodpanda, Airbnb dominate the curation of interaction between citizens and services – rethinking the way the urban fabric comes together; socially and materially. With increasing penetration into the market and urban domains, the platforms are redefining existing stratified territorialities and remaking the idea of being an urbanite within it. This paper explores the idea of Urban citizenship in Islamabad through the workings of the ride sharing urban platforms like Careem – a ride hailing urban platform- in terms of its networked performance, the alterations in urban specificity it generates and its impact on the public sphere.

11:35 – 12:00

Samira Asadmosaffar— Aesthetics of Destruction in the Ideological Framework of the Built Environment: The Case of Shahid Beheshti Square, Tabriz

Supervisor: Güven Arif Sargın

Jury: İnci Basa, Olgu Çalışkan

Urbanization toward the practice of destruction defines ideological formations indicating the power relations, political acts, and the significant role of the economy within society. Destruction is blatantly obvious as one of the crucial elements of the urban transformation process. Utilizing mainstream architectural practice with the instruments of creative destruction brought the potentiality of the city as a political ground into a confrontation with the

conception of it in an ideological framework. This research aims to understand urban transformation considering the aestheticization of the relationship between the representation of destruction and violence. In this regard, Shahid Beheshti Square transformation as a vital node in historical urban context on Imam Khomeini main road of Tabriz has been chosen as the main concern and the case of the study; regarding Iran's post-revolution, post-war (Iran-Iraq war) periods of urbanization, brought various economic approaches by State Ownership in the first decade, and then by economic liberalization policies, and privatization policy which refined due to the neoliberal changes. This study questions the dialectical relationship of the rhythm and cycle set up by destructing and rebuilding for diverse intentions. It also tries to understand how the state draws an ideological framework with capital using aesthetics of destruction to define/redefine an ideological perception through the production of space in this historical context after 1979.

12:00 – 12:25

Ahmet Can Karakadılar— Nature Based Design Strategies: Towards an Integrated Urban Space

Supervisor: İpek Gürsel Dino

Co-advisor: Funda Baş Bütüner

Jury: Olgu Çalışkan, Derya Güleç Özer

The increasing population and multicultural aspects of cities have increased the need for people to live together and share open spaces. The call to stay away from closed spaces during the pandemic pushed people to spend more of their lives outdoors. Open spaces have become important areas where people can spend time. Design is a process of dealing with situations involving uncertainty, uniqueness, and conflict. The early stages of architectural design with more decadent design spaces contain more optimum solutions. This design space can be scanned with evolutionary algorithms which are meta-heuristic algorithms methods inspired by the natural phenomenon of evolution and systematically explore the space of candidate solutions by iteratively

generating and evaluating a population of solutions, managing, restoring, or enhancing the biodiversity of ecosystems when applied holistically. With the recent developments in computational tools, it is possible to simulate the environment more accurately and improve microclimate to enhance urban life in open public spaces. Nature-based solutions help to address urban issues with the continuous support of and using nature. These methods offer holistic approaches to tackle problems in our cities related with thermal comfort, water management and ecosystem. This research aims to propose a design strategy that focuses on the early design stage and explores and discusses the design possibilities that enhance outdoor comfort and biodiversity in an open public place.

12:25 – 12:50

Ayça Duran— Data-Driven Design Strategies for Solar Buildings in Urban Contexts

Supervisor: İpek Gürsel Dino

Jury: Gizem Deniz Güneri, Çağla Meral Akgül

Climate change necessitates a critical reconsideration of architectural design strategies since buildings are among the top consumers of fossil fuel energy. The world population keeps growing with the increasing building demand and expansion of built areas. Efficient use of energy and reducing the environmental impact of buildings is an urgent necessity. Buildings have great potential in climate change mitigation by harvesting solar energy using their solar exposure capacity. In addition to passive solar design approaches, the use of PV systems in architectural design has gained importance in recent decades due to an increased awareness of architectural design practices on solar technologies. However, urban contexts can limit buildings' solar energy generation capacity, as buildings interact with many elements of cities creating a local microclimate. Therefore, urban scale analysis is needed to give immediate feedback to the design process of buildings in urban contexts. Nevertheless, urban scale analyses require tedious modeling and

computationally costly simulations that are prone to errors. Predictive data-driven models can provide real-time design feedback during design exploration and the analysis of a high number of design alternatives. This thesis proposes a tool based on machine learning techniques supporting design development by informing the designer about a building's solar potential in an urban context. The proposed tool is applied to the Bahçelievler district in Ankara, and the initial results are reported. Based on the knowledge gained, a parametric optimization strategy was explored in designing a new building in the same district.

13:35 – 14:00

Abdullah Eren Demirel— Towards More Inclusive Engagements: Social Construction of Inclusivity through Architectural Program

Supervisor: Mualla Erkılıç

Jury: Zeynep Uludağ, Helga Rittersberger Tılıç

With the growing multi-layered and diverse structure of societies in the contemporary world, the notion of *inclusivity* has become more critical and influential in shaping many fields, including the design of human environments. Based on the conceptual ground of *diversity* and *equity*, the emphasis is put on *equal opportunity* for diverse individuals to achieve their full potential in life. Through a human-rights-based approach that grounds equity and inclusivity, it is unveiled that beyond the particularistic perspectives dominating the works regarding inclusivity and built environment relationship, the reality of the notion is a social construct; it is not inherent but fabricated through human interactions occurring in their social and physical environments. Rather than being a mere setting for activities to unfold, architectural space is an agent itself that defines these interactions. It produces experiences and, in return, is constructed through these experiences reciprocally. The study aims to provide an inquiry on how space as an agent constructs and influences our experienced reality of inclusivity based on a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the notion's key concepts of

diversity, equity, and human rights. Accordingly, the study focuses on the architectural program, conceived as 'the vision for spatial interactions based on philosophical, conceptual and social approaches to human values,' as the determinant for the space agency. This critical approach to the space-inclusivity relationship and its social construction through the architectural program intends to extend the social role and implications of architecture towards more inclusive engagements.

14:00 – 14:25

Nilay Karaköy— Drawing in between Architecture and City in the Works of Dogma Studio

Supervisor: Esin Kömez

Jury: Ayşen Savaş, Emre Altürk

Drawings have always been a potential space of creation in architecture and play various roles from maintaining the communication between different disciplines to representation. Due to their capability of being more than representations of their objects, they become a conceptual model of reality, not its reproduction. Therefore, drawings are not limited to architectural objects but the context that the design is built into, the city. Especially, the contemporary city that is constructed by a dense pattern of buildings and structures has been a part of the architectural debate, thus became an inseparable object of architectural drawings. Additionally, the variety of techniques and mediums used to produce drawings also affected the way architects perceive and react to the urban conditions through reading, analysing, decontextualising and recontextualising. For these reasons, the research focuses on representing architectural drawing as a project which through an interdisciplinary set of conventions, investigate the relationship between architecture and its other, the city. To do so, drawings are examined both as a mental space of architectural creation and thought and a material expression that proposes a projective look at the existing city through the very nature of its physical features. Through an analysis of the drawings of Dogma, the role of architecture in

understanding the contemporary city are evaluated to further elaborate the possibilities of architecture to propose an idea for the city.

14:25 – 14:50

Ayça Akay— The Critical Limits of Architecture in Public Exhibitions: The Venice Architecture Biennale

Supervisor: Celal Abdi Güzer

Jury: Ayşen Savaş, Esin Boyacıoğlu

The perception and criticism of an architectural object is made by not only architects but also its users. Therefore, starting from built environment, architecture asserts different tools to enhance the interaction of diverse group of people with the discipline like seminars, exhibitions; or more specifically, the biennales. While representing architecture in such mediums with various scales or forms may constitute connotations or priorities, which have an important transformative effect in terms of documenting the history of architecture and contributing to the ongoing discussions, or the solution of societal problems, it may also eventuate in representational and contextual complexities or uncertainties. Taking biennales as substantial places for architectural criticism and representation, an organization, the Venice Biennale, becomes prominent with the initial attempt to devote a section to architecture. In order to reveal this attempt and the domains of the discipline, after 1991, 'the main themes' have been featured with a main exhibition correspondingly. However, organization has also continued to involve alternative representations of not directly following the theme, but to prefer putting emphasis on other artistic or architectural expressions. Therefore, it is the claim of this study that the biennale works harbor different 'priorities' that may breed representational and contextual problems. Because the main exhibitions have already adhered to themes, this study will principally concern with "the other exhibitions" and their priorities to question the critical limits of architecture in public exhibitions. Yet, not the main themes and statements will be the main focus, but the continuity between the themes and

exhibitions as well as their impact on architectural criticism. The analysis will be conducted with the sampling works exhibited in the Venice Architecture Biennale between 2014 and 2021.

14:50 – 15:15

Sara Rraja— Gated Landscapes: METU Forest and the Formation of a Topological Ground

Supervisor: Ayşen Savaş

Jury: Funda Baş Bütüner, Nesli Naz Aksu

This thesis, among others, is part of the Getty project. METU benefited from the support of the Getty Foundation with a grant awarded in 2017 through its Keeping It Modern initiative. The international, grant-making program focuses on the conservation of the significant buildings of the 20th century to address the values, challenges, and the risks they encounter. Each thesis written upon the project will cover different subjects aiming to inform about, represent, rediscover and/or archive the distinctive values of the campus. This thesis in particular will invest on understanding the campus landscape, its design elements and details, the forestation of the campus, its sustainability and function on establishing the campus and the society as a whole. The forest area of the campus breaks a new ground not only in that it is different ecologically but also in its intentions on functioning. Together with the main campus's territory and plantation, the forest gives life to a new concept in Turkey, being a gated landscape of an urban scale. Hosting individual layers of meaning; physical as well as cognitive and intellectual inscribed in the surface of a landscape, METU Camps is a topological ground to be researched and discovered further. The term ground holds both a physical approach, as in the meaning of a land/territory as well as a foundation of a new way of thinking. Considering the fact that this urban landscape offered a vision not similar to the models and examples already existing, it is necessary to understand its land cover and use by analyzing its program, functionality and elements, being at the same time the purpose of this research.

15:15 – 15:40

Batuhan Türker— The Other Modes of Abstraction: A Re-Reading of the METU Faculty of Architecture Building

Supervisor: Ayşen Savaş

Jury: Jale Erzen, Ahter Bademli Kırıl

'The Other Modes of Abstraction' is an experimental project based on the claim that developing discursive modes of representation is an essential method for re-reading and thus re-activating the cultural heritage. With that motivation, as a part of the Keeping It Modern Project initiated by Getty Foundation, this study focuses on an outstanding example of the modernist doctrine and recently declared twentieth century cultural heritage, the METU Faculty of Architecture building and its campus. By introducing concepts that involve reproduction, displacement, decontextualization, speculation, fiction, layering, documentation, disassembling and reassembling, this study will explore discursive modes to re-read the architectural space; but not only in its current condition, also in a historical development of ideals, desires, and stylistic necessities. As a part of the project, Marcel Duchamp's La Boîte-en-valise will be investigated as an archival medium for the taxonomy, classification, annotation and curation of the architectural artifacts including models, drawings, objects, documents, 1/1 reproductions; all produced by the author which are the outcomes of the various re-readings of the METU Campus through in-situ and archival analysis.