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The Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture at the University of Oklahoma, College of Architecture seeks to advance knowledge of the Middle Eastern built environment and culture for its intellectual and academic values. The Center supports scholarship that is of historical and contemporary importance by acting as a coordinating body for participating universities and institutions whose research focus relates to this geographic area and beyond. The Center also welcomes interdisciplinary perspectives in the study of architecture and culture of the region.
The Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture at the OU College of Architecture presents an all-encompassing study of building in the Middle East. “Building,” taken in a broad sense, comprises all means by which humans give shape to their environment, including architecture, town planning and landscape architecture. In building their environment, humans must consider natural conditions such as climate and landscape, as well as the social and cultural traditions of their society. Depending on these contingencies, certain large regions in the world can be discerned where architecture is characterized by common traits. The Middle East is the nucleus of one of these regions, as it also encompasses parts of North Africa and central Asia.

The architecture and culture of the Middle East have developed distinct traits that set them apart from other regions. For building in the Middle East, it is important to take into account not only the natural, technical and economic possibilities of the region, but also the expectations and desires of the inhabitants based on their local traditions. Demands posed by developing relations with the world outside the Middle East also must be considered. Especially in a time of incisive social and technological changes, it is important that architects, scholars and artists maintain the region’s cultural heritage in order to preserve and shape a sense of identity. The Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture at OU studies the architectural traditions of the region and the way these traditions, in the course of history, have been formed by social and cultural factors over the course of centuries; contemplates the consequences of modern dynamics that are placing new demands on architectural developments in the region; and makes plans based upon these insights for future activities in Middle Eastern countries. The Center accomplishes these objectives through teaching, research, the organization of conferences, workshops and seminars, as well as other cultural activities that highlight relevant developments in the Middle East.

The Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture acknowledges and celebrates both the similarities and diversities of the region and aims towards bridging differences through a convergent, academic stance concerning architecture and its constituent cultural and technological makeup, ultimately providing an opportunity for dialogue supporting the greater good of all involved.

Dr. Khosrow Bozorgi, Director, Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture
For its inauguration, the Center celebrated its official existence through organizing and presenting its first interdisciplinary symposium with a theme that related to Middle Eastern architecture and the history of its built environment and technology. The Center’s first symposium was offered during March 7-8, 2013, at the University of Oklahoma, hosted by the College of Architecture.
1. Historians and the Middle East
   Dr. Rienk Vermij. History of Science, The University of Oklahoma

2. Caesarea Maritima: Characteristics of an early Middle-Eastern City in Judaea
   Dr. Farland Stanley. Department of Classics and Letters, The University of Oklahoma

3. Lycian and Etruscan Rock Cut Tombs
   Dr. Rozmeri Basic. School of Art and Art History, The University of Oklahoma

4. Imported Embellishment: European adoption/adaptation of Middle Eastern Design Elements
   Theodore Drab. Oklahoma State University

5. Denotation and Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture
   Mohammed Bilbeisi. School of Architecture, Oklahoma State University

6. The Rebuilding of Tehran in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century
   Dr. Afshin Marashi. Department of International and Area Studies, The University of Oklahoma

7. Cultural Exchange: Searching for a New Identity in Traditional Middle Eastern Architecture
   Dr. Khosrow Bozorgi. College of Architecture, The University of Oklahoma

8. Today’s Souk: Modern Retail Design in the Middle East
   Jeffrey Gunning. Vice President, RTKL, Architecture & Planning
Interdisciplinary Symposium, March 2013. Examples of paper.
From Top to Bottom:

- Reception, celebrating the CMEAC symposium and the exhibition of the work of Abdolhossein Pazoki.
- Opening Remarks by Dr. Khosrow Bozorgi, Director of CMEAC.
- Opening Remarks by Dr. Suzette Grillot, Dean of College of International Area Studies
- Abdolhossein Pazoki is teaching drawing techniques in his workshop at the College of Architecture.
Gisue Hariri is the founder and creative principal of Hariri & Hariri, a New York-based multi-disciplinary design firm established in 1986 by Iranian-born and Cornell-educated sisters Gisue Hariri and Mojgan Hariri.
By screening movies and documentaries, CMEAC aims to examine the urban morphology and culture of architecture throughout the history of the Middle East. With a theme of “Cinema and Architecture in the Middle Eastern City,” our film screenings explore the relationships between the tectonics of building and site, the making of space, and perceptual and cinematic phenomena.
For the first time ever, the Palaces and Gardens of Cyrus at Pasargadae have been comprehensively reconstructed with the participation of many international scholars using modern digital high resolution imagery and state of the art computer and visual media. This exciting new project (with accompanying book and DVD film) includes original narration never before made public. Pasargadae’s first full excavator, Professor David Stronach, leads the scholarly field and the project incorporates new commentary by Iranian and global historians, architects archaeologists, paleobotanists, hydrologists, geologists and other specialist authorities. With detailed modeling in virtual reality CGI and interactive media using multiple formats, Farzin Rezaeian’s Recreating Pasargadae achieves the highest possible scholarship to exponentially increase our understanding of this majestic and timeless Achaemenid Persian complex.

Pasargadae: Cyrus the Great’s Paradise
A Presentation by Farzin Rezaeian
Sponsored by The Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture College of Architecture
and in Collaboration with The College of International and Area Studies

Tuesday Oct 8, 2013 5:30pm. Reception followed by Presentation at 6:00PM
Location: The Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation Auditorium Gaylord Hall College of Journalism, The University of Oklahoma

This is a free event open to the public

Dr. Farzin Rezaeian, the film director is making his public presentation.

Audience are attending the screening of Pasargadae, directed by Dr. Farzin Rezaeian,
CMEAC Will Host a Screening of

**Kingdom of Heaven**

Directed by Ridley Scott

This Program Features an Interdisciplinary Panel Discussion on the Cinematic Representation of the Historical City of Jerusalem

Panel Members From the University of Oklahoma

- Catherine Barrett, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of History, Theory, and Design, Coordinator of Bruce Goff Lecture Series, College of Architecture
- Khoros Bregod, Ph.D. Professor of Architecture and Urban Design, Director, Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture, College of Architecture
- Rangar Cline, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of History and Archaeology, Religious Studies Program, Department of the History
- Lloyd Crandall, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Costume Design, School of Drama
- Eugene Enrico, Ph.D. Professor of Renaissance and Baroque Music, School of Music Chorus
- Robert Gritz, Professor Emeritus, Urban Planner, Senior Fellow in the Institute for Quality Communities, College of Architecture
- Farland Stanley, Ph.D. Professor of Archaeology and Civilization, Director, Center for Classical Archaeology and Civilizations, Department of Classics and Letters
- Norman Stillman, Ph.D. Professor of Judaic History, Schusterman/Joey Chair in Judaic History, Department of History
Introduction by Dr. Bozorgi
CMEAC Director

Opening Comments by:
Dr. Kelvin Droegemeier,
OU Vice President for Research
CMEAC Film Screening, February 2014

Lawrence of Arabia: The Impact of Landscape on Politics

5 p.m. Thursday, February 20, 2014
Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation Auditorium
Gaylord Hall
Introduction by: Dr. Joshua M. Landis

The Afterlife of Paradise: Influences of the Persian Paradise Garden on Architecture and Landscape in Ancient Greece and Rome

Annette Giesecke, Ph.D.
Professor of Ancient Greek and Roman Studies
Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
University of Delaware

6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 17, 2014
Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation Auditorium
Gaylord Hall, The University of Oklahoma
Teaching and research on desert architecture

Dr. Khosrow Bozorgi, Yazd, November 2014

Students of College of Architecture visiting Masdar City
Abu Dhabi, January 2005

Students of College of Architecture visiting historical
Dubai, January 2005
Seventeen University of Oklahoma students participated in an intersession course exploring “United Arab Emirates Building Design & Construction,” led by College of Architecture professors Dr. Khosrow Bozorgi and Richard Ryan. These construction, interior design and architecture students participated in a travel study experience in Dubai and Abu Dhabi from December 29, 2014, to January 06, 2015. This course was organized by the Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture.
Design Build-Dubai
Collaborative Study of Building Design, Urban Planning and Construction by Students of the College Of Architecture, The University of Oklahoma
The Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture at the University of Oklahoma, College of Architecture is proposing a new course on Iranian Architecture. The goal of the course is to guide students into an understanding of the important contributions that Persian has made to the art of building and landscape architecture. The rich legacy and tradition of Iranian architecture has accrued over at least the last thousand years and this course provides a comprehensive history of ancient Iranian architecture and urbanism, from the first societies to the present. Included in this course will be a consideration of the universal sense and unity of the diverse components of Persian architecture and their impact on the perennial dictates of man and nature.

In this course students will analyze buildings and the built environment as the products of culture and in relation to the special problems of architectural design and the history of architecture. The course will have an urbanist perspective that stresses the cultural and political context from which building arises. The intent of the course is to help students develop critical tools for the analysis and appreciation of architecture and its role in the intellectual environment in which we conduct our lives. Therefore, instruction in the course will include strong emphasis on the components of reading, critical thinking, and practice in oral and written communication.
The 5th year students of architecture at the University of Oklahoma created an urban design concept integrated with the historical complex of Ganj Ali Khan, Kerman Iran.
Having roots as a settlement in the Elamite period (2700–1600 BCE), Isfahan developed during the unique historical period of the Seljuk era (11th century), and was transformed in the 16th century by Shah Abbas into a cultural capital that ushered in a renaissance of the arts, architecture and landscape architecture. With the passage of time, the city declined, only to rise anew in the modern era, transformed but bearing the imprint of its original genius and splendor. Thus, in essence, the city and its evolution offers an important historical precedent in planning and urban beautification, exemplifying inspirational and innovative ideas that have made important contributions toward thinking about architecture and urban design in the 21st century.

Among other topics, symposium presenters addressed the following: civic culture and ritual as a determining factor in architecture and landscape design; interpretations of public and private space in the context of Persian culture; pre-Islamic origins and later adaptation of the paradise garden; and cinematic or photographic representations of Persian vernacular architecture.
Isfahan Symposium. March 2016

Leila Araghian, Architect and Design Manager
Diba Tensile Architecture, Tehran, Iran

Nader Ardalan, Architect and President
Ardalan Associates, LLC, Naples, Fl
Harvard Senior Research Associate Emeritus

Dr. Peter Barker, Professor
Department of the History of Science
The University of Oklahoma

Dr. Khosrow Bozorgi, Professor and Director
Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture
The University of Oklahoma

Dr. Mohammad Gharipour, Associate Professor
School of Architecture and Planning
Morgan State University

Dr. Marco Brambilla, Architect
Forum Architectural Planning, California

Mehran Gharleghi, Educator
Architectural Association London
Designer, Studio Integration, London

Dr. Annette Giesecke, Professor and Chair
Languages, Literatures and Cultures
University of Delaware

Dr. Renata Holod, Professor and Curator
Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology
University of Pennsylvania

Morna Livingston, Associate Professor
College of Architecture
Philadelphia University

Tahmineh Milani, Architect and Movie Director
Tehran, Iran

Dr. Nerina Rustonji, Associate Professor
Director of Graduate Studies
St. John’s University

Dr. James Wesevat, Agha Khan Professor
Department of Architecture
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Isfahan Archetypal City

2016

BUSKUHL GALLERY

MARCH 29-30

Symposium

Presented by

The Center
for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture
College of Architecture
The University of Oklahoma

www.ou.edu/cmeac
Top from left to right (during Isfahan Symposium)
- Dr. Khosrow Bozorgi, CMEAC Director
- Hans Butzer, Dean, College of Architecture, The University of Oklahoma
- David Boren, President of the University of Oklahoma
- Mohammad Farzaneh, symposium sponsor
- Jalal Farzaneh, symposium sponsor
- Dr. Suzette Grillot, Dean, College of Area and International Studies

Middle From left to right
- Audience attending the symposium
- President David Boren addressing the symposium

Bottom
- Unveiling of the Omar Khayam Statue at the campus of The University of Oklahoma
Tabiat (Nature) Pedestrian Bridge, Tehran, Iran
Leila Araghian

Safavid Isfahan as Perennial Urban Metaphor
Nader Ardalan

Western Debts to Eastern Sciences
Dr. Peter Barker

Desert Utopia: Viewing the Hidden Unity of Iranian Architecture
Dr. Khosrow Bozorgi

Gardens of Isfahan and Renaissance Italy: Safavid Urban Landscape in its Global Context
Dr. Mohammad Gharipour

New Djulfa and Isfahan in the 17th Century: Development and Relevance of a Unique Ethnic Enclave within the Larger Area of Isfahan.
Dr. Marco Brambilla

Analysis of Architecture and Infrastructure of Isfahan from Evolutionary Perspective.
Mehran Gharleghi

Imprint of Paradise: Cyrus, Pasargadae, and the Chahar Bagh of Isfahan
Dr. Annette Giesecke

Panel Discussion
Moderated and introduced by
Dr. Khosrow Bozorgi and Dr. Annette Giesecke

Blue-Gold: Water, Pavilions and Garden Imagery in Isfahan
Morna Livingston

Cinematic Representation of Architecture
Tahmineh Milani

The Sense of the Garden
Dr. Nerina Rustomji

Islamic Urban Waterworks in Comparative Perspective: Isfahan, Istanbul, and Delhi
Dr. James Wescoat
Desert Utopia: The Hidden Unity of Iranian Architecture

INSTITUTION
Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture
College of Architecture, The University of Oklahoma

PROJECT DIRECTOR
Dr. Khosrow Bozorgi

Desert Utopia focuses on a unique culture that, over centuries, developed distinctive architectural forms of great beauty and utility that were able to confront the harsh challenges of the desert environment of Iran.

Desert Utopia will show how architecture contributed to the long-term survival of people living in one of the world’s most punitive climates. Relevant to modern environmental concerns, this film will illustrate the architectural forms of a culture of desert-living people in Iran who were among the earliest groups to create a sustainable living condition. But the film will also consider and illustrate the unique aesthetic aspects that arose from the diverse influences on this architecture’s development. Thus, while the film will investigate the physical features of this distinctive architecture, it will also explore the relationship of the human spirit to desert architecture.

The intent of this film is to explore Iranian traditional architecture visually and intellectually in a manner that illustrates how its interior and exterior aspects are rooted in the dualities of its forms and functions. Exploring this specific vernacular architecture in Iran will both inform our understanding of sustainability and contribute to our knowledge about local and global issues in architecture and urban living, which in turn are pertinent to human sustainability, multi-culturalism, geo-political forces, and architectural meaning. Given the mounting evidence for and public awareness of climatic change, this film comes at a fortuitous moment.
Film Proposal: Desert Architecture

Agha Bozorg Mosque. Kashan, Iran
Photographed by Dr. Khosrow Bozorgi

Desert (Kaluts) outside of Kerman, Iran
Photographed by Dr. Khosrow Bozorgi
In a “Diplomacy Lab” partnership with the U.S. Department of State, fifth year architecture students at The University of Oklahoma are researching and providing designs for the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. They are designing a multi-building complex to be situated on a large site that will include a Consulate Office building, a Consul General’s Residence, a Marine Security Guard Residence, support buildings and facilities for the Consulate community. The new complex will provide Consulate employees with a safe, secure, sustainable, and modern workplace.