

Crafted Space

A Hybrid Structure in Platres Village

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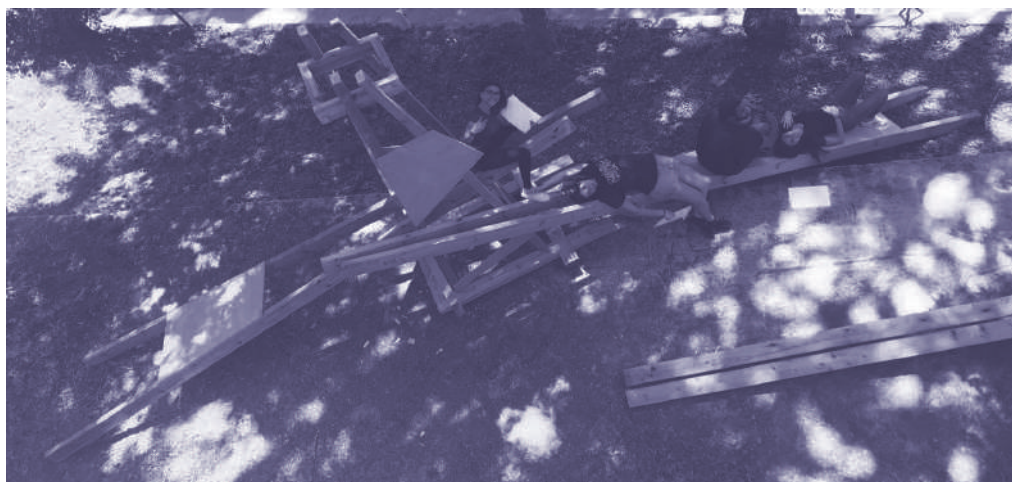
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A journalistic narrative on the process of an architectural workshop at a mountain village in Cyprus

The workshop ‘**Crafted Space**’ aimed to provide a **platform** for an **immersive cooperation** between young architects and students of architecture in a hands-on, creative workshop.

The participants of the workshop comprised:

- Cypriot architecture students and international students studying in Cyprus
- Graduates of Cypriot universities
- Students and tutors from The University of Nicosia
- Students and tutors from the Union of Mediterranean Architects
- and a specialist in Japanese Joinery.



Instructors from the University of Nicosia:

- Markella Menikou
- Angela Kyriacou Petrou
- Adonis Kleanthous
- Michalis Georgiou
- Tonia Lemonari
- Yiorgos Hadjichristou,

Special guest- Architect/specialist in Japanese Joinery

- Saimon Toshifumi

Participant from UMAR • Maha Fawzy

Pano Platres, a **former farmers' village**, was developed and expanded rapidly during the British colonial era, particularly during the period of 1900 to 1960. Attracted by its temperate climate and natural beauty, the British turned Platres into a **holiday resort**.

The village hosted some of the first hotels in Cyprus. The first "Grand Hotel" was opened in 1900.

This was followed by numerous other hotels and guesthouses which catered for the increasing popularity of the village as a tourist destination. Pano Platres village gained an elite and international identity as the names of the hotels testify: Helvetia, Monte Carlo, Splendid, Petit Palais, Minerva, Vienna, New Helvetia, Edelweiss, Mount Royal.

Wealthy Cypriots, as well as international investors were also attracted to the village. Apart from the hotels, Platres also became a site for the development of holiday homes.

The mansions of Platres, were designed and built according to the trends of the



The Site _ Pano Platres Village



time, displaying characteristics of the most popular schools of architecture of the modernist era, with architects from Malta, Germany and Denmark, as well as vernacular buildings reminiscent of the



English countryside and the Alps.

The characteristic red brick, the decorative motifs, sloping roofs and semi-circular balconies are just some of the elements which stand out.



The **accommodation** for the participants in the workshop took place at the Forest Park hotel, hence **truly linking their workshop experience** with the context of Pano Platres! The Forest Park Hotel was built in 1936 to international standards; known for its luxurious ballrooms and dining rooms, bar, library, lounge, billiards room, tennis courts, English tea rooms and gardens.

The site today **retains the traces of its colonial past**. The small resident population, receives an influx **of visitors and holidaymakers** that turn it into a bustling town during weekends and the summer period, attracted to its unique natural and historical characteristics, and the cool mountain climate. Dated and unused buildings coexist with tavernas and new mountain villas.



Colonial settlers and international elite were drawn to the growing resort. Pano Platres became a destination for international persons, particularly in the period of the fifties and sixties, hosting visitors such as:

- King Farouk of Egypt,
- Princes Irene of Greece,
- Princess Mary of England,
- the Prime Minister of India,
- Indira Ghandi,
- the infamous writer, Daphne du Murie,
- the Nobel poet, Giorgos Seferis
- The site is located adjacent to a winding road.
- It is relatively close to the central area of Platres.
- The strip of land is bounded on one side by a vehicular route and an exposed concrete retaining wall on the other side.
- It hosts six young Platanus trees.
- It is enhanced by its mountainous context



as it is on an inclined topography.

- The surrounding buildings are sparse.
- It offers distant views and a shady

stopping point.

- It can be characterised as more of a thoroughfare rather than a destination.



The site offers good opportunities for redefinition.

Hybrid Schedule

The **International identity** of the remote mountain village **was critically re-created** through an equally international experience during our two week workshop.

Saturated by the impact of the domineering Colonial era, the workshop opened up a discussion on local, European and international identities, and in particular on the notion of history and place.









The, **multi ethnic group** came into contact with :

local carpentry workshops combined with

- high end timber joinery
- mountain festivals
- Japanese tea ceremonies
- the mountain environment
- local food
- hiking and playing
- and other aspects of cultural exchange

Designed as a series of **diverse, informal activities**, the workshop initiated a **creative** and **collaborative** teaching and learning environment.

ΘΕΡΙΝΟ ΕΡΓΑΣΤΗΡΙΟ 2016 ΦΟΙΤΗΤΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΝΕΩΝ ΑΡΧΙΤΕΚΤΟΝΩΝ ΣΥΛΛΟΓΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΤΕΚΤΟΝΩΝ ΚΥΠΡΟΥ

| TOOLS FROM CAA | | |
|----------------|--|---|
| A/A | Description | Image |
| 1. | Bench Drill – POWER PLUS |  |
| 2. | Orbital Sander - BOSCH |  |
| 3. | Circular Sander – BOSCH (without case) |  |
| 4. | Hammer Drill - RYOBI |  |
| 5. | Jigsaw - RYOBI |  |
| 6. | Recipro Saw - Makita |  |
| 7. | 2 X Drill Bit Sets Φ4-10mm - BOSCH |  |
| 8. | 2 X Socket Wrench Set – HONITON / HISTAR |  |

| JULY | ACTIVITY |
|--|--|
| Tues 02 July | Introduction to the site and programme, discussion about the provided drawings and details through sketches and rough models: individual components and overall arrangements Preparation and planning of site work |
| Wed. 03 July | Selection/ Allocation of joinery methods – assigned groups /preparation of prototypes and tests at local wood workshop. |
| Thur. 04 July Fri. 05 July | Fabrication at the local wood workshop, and partial assembly (prefabrication) of modules, ready to be transported for onsite erection. Groundwork will happen in parallel on-site. On site production and testing |
| Sat. 06 July | Assessing structure, improving component design, refining ideas and strategies. Sketches and models of varied joinery and components developed. Refining and finalising required one-to-one production and assemblage |
| Sun 07* | No Activities |
| Mon 08 July Tues 09 July Wed 10 July | Completion of masonry groundwork. Fabrication at the local wood workshop, and partial assembly (prefabrication) of modules, ready to be transported for onsite erection on Partial on-site assembly/testing of prefabricated components. |



CULTURAL BRIDGING WORKSHOPS

Interweaving a diverse set of activities - interchanging the brainstorming, with construction and building, cultural, social, and recreational activities.



The 'Getting to know each other' exercise provided a strong foundation for the workshop. It distinctly defined the workshop's identity through various game-like, enjoyable playful activities in groups, ranging from one whole group to smaller groups of two or more participants, or in different spatial arrangements. It served as a successful attempt to bridge cultural, educational, background and language differences.



Representatives of the **community** and the **local authorities** delivered a range of **presentations** about Pano Platres:

- historical,
- cultural,
- geographical,
- social,
- economic
- architectural
- on nature and landscape
- towards the future

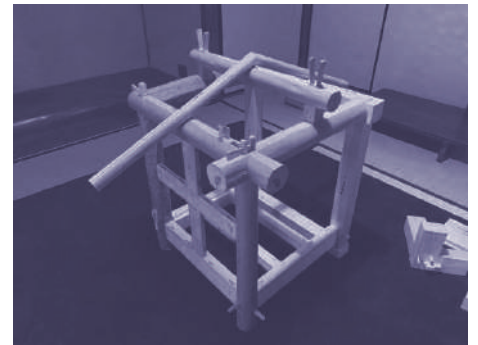
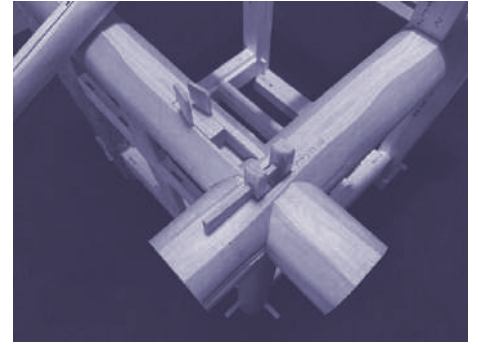


The students were introduced to the international style holiday homes on the first day of the workshop, by the local Mukhtar who proudly boasted about the rich heritage of the village.

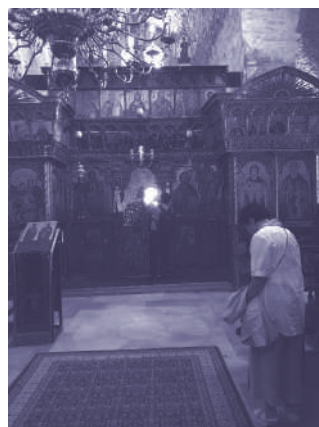
Inter- relationships

Introduction to the traditional Japanese Wood Joinery by Toshifumi Saimon, - Kyoto Seika University Director of the Kyoto Design Association.

The direct contact with the original pieces/ samples of Japanese Joinery enhanced the tactile sensory experience offering a haptic form of knowledge.



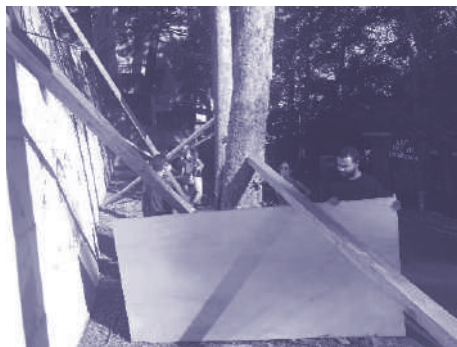
INTRODUCING CYPRUS TO THE JAPANESE SPECIALIST AS A WAY OF **BRIDGING KNOWLEDGE AND COLLABORATION**



Visit and workshop at a **local carpentry yard.**

The introduction to, and familiarisation with, local and Japanese carpentry techniques, getting acquainted with tools, material properties, rules of thumb etc, opened up the students' horizons and made them appreciate that all elements of timber construction are tightly related to cultural issues and vernacular architectures.





The participants literally faced the site. They walked around it, almost had a discussion with it, listened to it, sensed it, and created a personal and group affair with it.

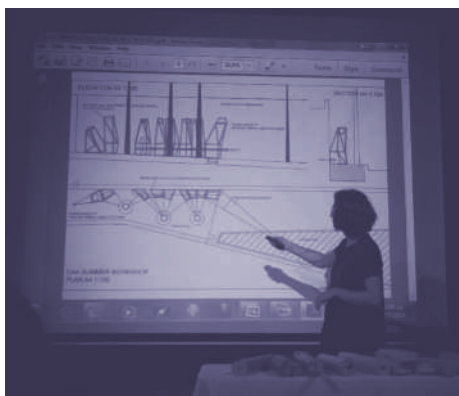
They measured it with their bodies and senses. They tested the raw timber materials in the form of beams and panels in the site.



They carried it, danced with it, placed it and interweaved it in the elements of the site. They tested their bodily contact and also the material's contact with the soil, the young platanus trees, the concrete retaining wall, even with the light, the air, the smell, the sound of the site.

Ways of reading the site and Feeling the material

Sensory and corporeal experience of the site and the material



The site visits were inter-exchanged with presentations

prepared by the tutors and interactive discussions with students.

There were discussions based on critical

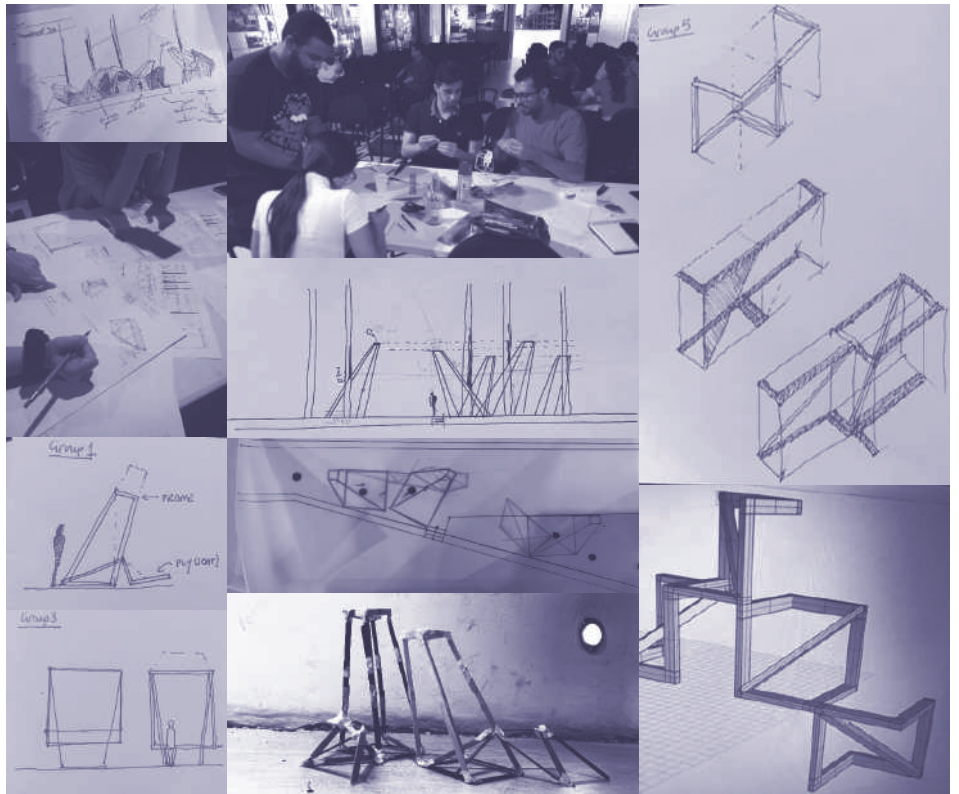
approaches to the various parameters of the project including histories, inherent potentials and visions, technological advances and vernacular possibilities, human choreographies and colonial reminiscences.



Chiseling ideas



Through various techniques and modes of collaborations... the participants shifted from individual work, to working in pairs, to bigger group brainstorming sessions. Initial sketching was followed by model making, 3d digital explorations, endless discussions, debates about the project's behaviour, people's interaction, the sites needs, the co-living with the Platanus trees and the retaining walls, the material potential and so on.



Sukiya Tea Room Lecture by Toshifumi Saimon

The lecture by the Japanese architect and specialist in restoration of historic buildings, is part of the Cyprus Architects Association's Summer Workshop 2019, organised by University of Nicosia faculty members.

FRIDAY, 5 JULY 2019, 19:00
PALIA ILEKTRIKI
Vladimirou Eracleous 8, Paphos

More info: unic.ac.cy/sukiya19



Enhancing the saturating processes of cultures structures and architecture related to cultures and rituals

A Japanese event was held in the town of Paphos in the middle of the workshop. Paphos could represent the heart of the Cypriot culture and history, accommodating all the layers from different eras.

In this setting, the architect guest Saimon Toshifumi performed a tea ceremony with all the needed rituals and with the assistance of the Japanese community in Cyprus.

The Japanese tea was served. He then offered a presentation on the Japanese tea houses' architectural merits.



He demonstrated, through an authentic model, the abundance of Japanese joinery types.

The community of the participants of the workshop, were linked with the people that attended the event and also with the local Japanese community. The event was co-organised with Andreas Vardas, a major architect from Paphos, the municipality of Paphos and a local construction company.

The invisible participation of the workshop's everyday leisure times safeguards the success of its quality and continues the already existing amalgamations of various cultures.

The act of eating, resting, spending leisure time while connecting with the local context but also with the "imported" context; for example a sake party was offered by the Japanese Embassy in Cyprus.

Further workshop experiences interweaving -leisure times



Indulging in the workshop's charm -Constantly boosted by the Everydayness



WORKING MODES



Synergetic mode of work reassured the completion of the project within the timeline.

The rhythm of time was dictated by the bodily movements, occasionally by the bodily weight, the way it pressed the materials but also by the voices, humming, exchange of words, and even the rhythm of the singing. Hammering, sawing, nailing... working, was executed in the rhythms of the choreography of the workshop.

The working environment was adjacent to the actual site so there was an immediate connection between the two.

In addition to the rhythms of making and thinking, there were more tasks such as:

- organising the construction site
- operating all the required logistics
- assigning tasks
- thinking of temporary storage
- transportation
- access to water and other facilities
- security and safety issues...



group resting after **group working** group becoming material and human bodies

The inter-relationship of the material and human bodies in the surroundings of the site developed further

insights. It also generated further ideas on the vast possibilities of the projects' ways of appropriation by various groups of people.

Intimacies of all bodies involved allowed for an expansion of thinking processes.



The choreography of moving the pavilions from the adjacent site of their birth to the final site served as a substantial process of learning, collaborating, estimating, balancing and ...fulfilment.



Emerging entities building new narratives

The cluster of pavilions was readjusted when placed at the new location. They interacted with the Platanus trees and their foliage and branches, the hard cement base and the soft soil, the exposed concrete wall, the levels of the topography and the movements.



THE GROUP OF PAVILIONS- as temporary landmark



Indulging in the moments, scripting new possibilities

A new story telling through the ever-changing ambiances of a new world that was produced in the eclectic-built environment of Pano Platres with synergies of the contributors with so diverse backgrounds, facilitates opportunities for an abundance of appropriations, a myriad of new stories to be told.





- Intimate moments in enclosures
- informal- impromptu social encounters, spontaneous responses to the FOLLIES
- re- experiencing and appropriating the site, encountering the 'other' - the known and the unknown
- zoom in sensorial and corporeal contacts with materials both manmade and natural
- indulging in the "as found" or re-created worlds of sounds, smells, touches, views ...are some of the presents that the workshop offered to individuals and groups.

The synergetic premises of the workshop



Knowledge
 Enjoyment
 Competence
 Satisfaction
 Humbleness
 Creativity
 Awareness
 Inventiveness
 Respect
 Thinking
 Appropriating
 Belonging
 Giving
 Voicing out
 Thinking of ... **conclusion**

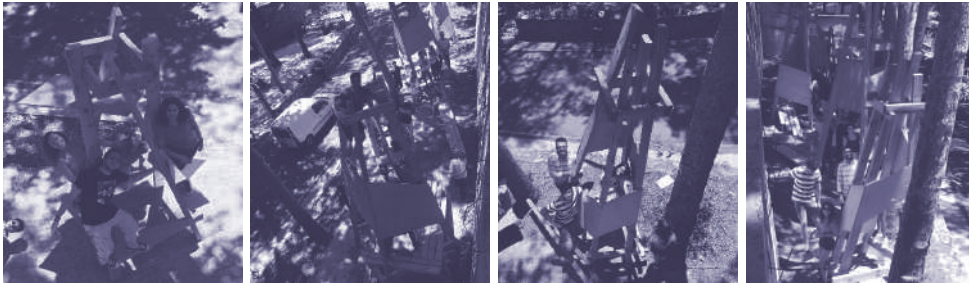


the creative performance of the workshop leads to the emergence of a performative PLACE



The workshop was an experience-based activity that enhanced the students' creativity and ability to interweave diverse influences and conditions. The students were involved in a range of academic and non-academic activities that form equal parts of the learning process.

The learning process was driven by the diverse thematics of the workshop and included thinking via making, hands-on testing, groupwork, interaction and creativity, notions of history and place, the study of vernacular construction techniques, the appreciation of the practicalities of joinery and the ability to appropriate and simplify construction methods so that they can be tested within a tight timeframe and by utilising the limited tools available.



At the beginning, the students were introduced to the history of the site and its Colonial identity but became truly familiar with the place by walking in the village, staying there for the duration of the workshop and meeting locals.

An invisible layer of complexity intentionally added to a primarily 'construction' workshop.



Distinctive technologies and social identities were intertwined towards an intentionally democratic pedagogical methodology of a multidimensional collaboration, where the instructors served more as facilitators.

The academic objectives of the workshop (beyond the actual hands-on testing and parallel activities) were not explicitly stated to the participants.

The instructors wanted to observe how the students' awareness of local, European and international identities (in particular the notion of history and place) developed/ reformulated throughout the process. Students were allowed to reflect

on these notions without consciously being critical about them. It allowed them to own the process... to be leaders of the development of the work but also to appropriate their knowledge according to their personal experience and exposure to the various cultural and practical issues.



The workshop culminated in the same way as it had started and experienced throughout: An **informal inauguration**.

- The handing of the diplomas in front of the random drivers of cars winding in the topography around the site.
- The sawing of the timber - by the chef preparing the daily meals at the hotel where the workshop participants stayed (who spontaneously joined the event as he was just driving by) - instead of an "official" person cutting a ceremonial ribbon.

Post Workshop Reflections

"The workshop posed important questions that had the potential to be revisited/ critiqued in time. However the limited budget/ resources, and the necessity to quickly build something on site within a tight timeframe, didn't allow us to fully test the resultant 'timber follies' in terms of how they added to the growing identity of the place (Platres). This is of course identified as a lead that could be further explored, both from the instructors but also from the students.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has delayed this process, as it was not possible to experience/ record the 'timber follies' in time and critically reflect on what was

implemented, how it was perceived by the local community and how it was inhabited [it was not possible to visit the site in different times of the year: e.g. winter vs busy summer period]

So reflecting back on this workshop, we would be very interested in the opportunity to introduce a similar pedagogic model in the 'classroom' environment"