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Retracing and Reframing the Legacy of Modern Movement

Uta Pottgiesser

CHAIR DOCOMOMO INTERNATIONAL

The 17th International DOCOMOMO Conference in València —the World Design Capital of 2022— seeks the links between the spirit and values of Modern Movement and the wider design context under the title of *Modern Design: Social Commitment & Quality of Life*. The biennial international conference is hosted from at the School of Architecture of the Valencia Polytechnic University (UPV) 6 to 9 September 2022. The conference combines five keynote lectures, 26 thematic paper sessions with 130 academic and professional contributions, an international student workshop (31 August–4 September) and architectural tours in Valencia.

With the focus on social commitment & quality of life the conference emphasises the role of design in shaping and impacting our daily habits and our built and lived environment. Two years after the outbreak of the COVID-pandemic our lives are still not back to the speed and routines from before. And the current war in Ukraine in combination with climatic threats has further shaken our individual, social and political self-conceptions between global connectivity and local traditions. The fragility of current systems and societies requires all the more the redesign and creation of sustainable and qualitative living and working conditions worldwide: one of the main ambitions of Modern Movement in the early 20th century.

Ten years ago, the 12th International DOCOMOMO Conference 2012 took place in Espoo, Finland, then World Design Capital and explored the role of design under the theme of “Survival through Modern. From Coffee cup to Plan”. In his keynote Juhani Pallasmaa reflected on ‘Newness, Tradition and Identity’ and defined cultural identity as “a sense of rootedness and belonging in an irreplaceable ground of our very humanity”. (Conference Proceedings, 23). Since then —in only ten years— the challenges of and for change have drastically increased and make the proposed conference theme even more relevant. Taking equally into account the environmental, economic and societal challenges and the global scarcity of resources, a distinct development and selection of interventions is needed to preserve, rehabilitate, upgrade and reuse buildings, sites and neighbourhoods and interiors.

The contributions in these Conference Proceedings follow the eight major conference themes. Two themes reflect on how modern movement and modern design evolved in Europe and in other parts of the world (#01 THE EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDE - 2 sessions), #02 POST-WAR. INTERNATIONAL EXPANSION - 5 sessions) and #03 THE LATIN AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION - 4

sessions). For the first time puts a focus to the role of women in the field (#04 MODERN PIONEERING WOMEN – 4 sessions). And with regard to Valencia as World Design Capital the cultural identity of and in Iberia is discussed (#05 IBERIA. CULTURAL IDENTITY – 3 sessions). Less from a theoretical but from a practical perspective the three remaining themes (#06 NEW MATERIALS AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES – 2 sessions, #07 URBAN DESIGN AND PUBLIC SPACE – 4 sessions and #08 LANDSCAPES AND GARDENS – 2 sessions) focus on best practices and are also witness of the aspirations to consider the building and its interior and exterior spaces as functional unit to be dealt with holistically.

Over its 33 years of existence DOCOMOMO International has laid the foundations of a distinct knowledge about tangible and intangible values of Modern Movement's legacy and suitable approaches to preservation and reuse, documented in the *DOCOMOMO Journal* (www.docomomojournal.com), the preservation technology Dossiers (<https://docomomo.com/dossiers-isc-t-2/>), several books and in increasingly in digital archives (<https://docomomo.com/digital-archives/>). In Europe and in many Western countries the recognition of this modern heritage has been established and cities like Valencia in urgent need of feasible concepts and efficient solutions to improve their building stock and public space in a future proof way. In other parts of the world the identification and documentation of Modern Movement's legacy is still pending or less developed, even though more threatened by rapid urbanisation and real estate developments. Both challenging fields need to be addressed by better knowledge distribution, FAIR Data and Open Educational Resources (OER) and finally by adapted educational programs. This is why education, digitisation and sustainability are in the focus of the closing roundtable of the 17th International DOCOMOMO Conference to discuss and present the Tokyo-València-Educational Charter.

Conference and workshop locations are both educational environments and will surely inspire and enrich the discussions during the conference. Schools and universities were cornerstones of Modern Movement by combining spatial and educational concepts. This is why the 9th DOCOMOMO International Student Workshop entitled *A Modern Utopia. Design as a Tool for the Conservation and Reuse of Modern Heritage* held at the Cheste Workers University (Universidad Laboral de Cheste) near València, requires a special mention. Again, a university campus serves as a case study and confronts us with the achievements of post-war modern concepts which see education as a common societal good that constitutes sustainable societies. Built from 1965–69 in very short time and designed by the architect Fernando Moreno Barberá the Cheste Complex hosted up to 5,000 boarding students, it is a splendid example of this belief.

Once more the student workshop allows to compare and further develop DOCOMOMO's educational aims and tools:

- to apply different tools for documentation, research and analysis and for communication towards different target groups,
- to raise awareness about qualities, particularities and values of Modern Architecture,
- to identify and evaluate significant aspects, elements and details as prerequisite for future design interventions,
- finally, to analyse and interpret the societal relevance of space and architecture to improve the quality of life.

DOCOMOMO International likes to express its gratitude to the City of València to support the 17th International DOCOMOMO Conference as the World Design Capital 2022 and wants further to congratulate the city on its ambitious and urgent 2030 Urban Strategy, which prioritises the urban regeneration of the post-war city in line with DOCOMOMO's mission. Further, DOCOMOMO International thanks all the institutions who made this conference, workshop and proceedings possible: the Architecture School of València Polytechnic University (ETSA/UPV) and the Cheste Workers University for generously hosting the conference and workshop. We also like to acknowledge the ambitious and continuous work of the Advisory Board and the Organising Committee to formulate and realize this challenging program, in particular the engagement of Carmen Jordá Such, Maite Palomares Figueres, Fernando Usó and Pasqual Herrero.

Special thanks go to the 17th International DOCOMOMO Conference Scientific Committee and the session chairs for the scientific work and active support in the assessment of the submitted abstracts and the presentation of the final papers. This includes to thank all the authors for sharing their knowledge in the proceedings and at the conference, and also all the contributors who helped and made it possible to present these proceedings at the conference.

On this occasion, we are truly thankful to the former DOCOMOMO International chair Ana Tostoes and the International secretariat with Zara Ferreira and Joana Coutinho for their huge efforts to bring the 17th International DOCOMOMO Conference to València and to organise the transition of DOCOMOMO International's headquarter from Lisbon to Delft so smoothly.

Finally, DOCOMOMO International is happy to welcome members of the 79 DOCOMOMO chapters and DOCOMOMO friends at the conference to further develop and disseminate the rich knowledge of our organisation to contribute to a sustainable built environment.