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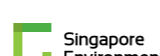
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Dear *FuturArc* readers,

“Words mean more than what is written on paper. They need the human voice to give them deeper meaning.” Maya Angelou

This was what we attempted to do for this year-ender: to bring forth, through pictures and words, deep-seated (internal and external) relations between different players and variables: between architectural practice and architects’ personal principles; between projects and people; between policy and practicality; between progress and the planet. We hope this endeavour would find a voice beyond the pages, to bring the issues from meaningful discourse to meaningful action.

Between practice and principles, do architects align their ethical and social obligations with the work that they do? Whether designing private homes or public projects, could architects translate their know-how and responsibility to ecology, nature and society into good-looking, sensible architecture that looks after not only the occupants, but also the wider community and environment?

Between policy and practicality, Dr Ann Deslandes looked at Quezon City, the most populous city in the Philippines, and the practical concerns it faces when setting up a municipal sustainability framework.

Pictures and words, however, could not fully express the undertones between architects and labourers, which Bhawna Jaimini sought to bring to light. She found out that, even today, the road to building projects based on ethically sourced labour and materials is still the one less travelled.

Travelling to the UK and experiencing its hottest days this year, Nipun Prabhakar admitted his photos could not fully capture the intensity of the heat and glare, nor convey how one’s skin sizzled like his did when he was there. But he lived to tell the tale, with a critique on the local architecture and its effect on heat gain in buildings; and possible resolutions that should be acted on, fast.

Between progress and the planet, should architects and planners still find themselves caught ‘in a dilemma’ between planet-damaging designs and sustainable ones? Or is it really a matter of nonconcern?

Swati Janu, Founder of Social Design Collaborative, recipient of the Moira Gemmill Prize in Emerging Architecture 2022, and this issue’s FuturArc Interviewee, said that today’s economic structure “has led or added to the inequalities and inequities around us”, and since “architecture is a tool of this same system, that is why most practices are responding to the needs of a neoliberal world”. She cautioned with an example of how when architects “bypass processes that are intrinsic to the success of any community or socially conscious project”, things could literally fall apart, endangering the very safety of those for whom the project was designed.

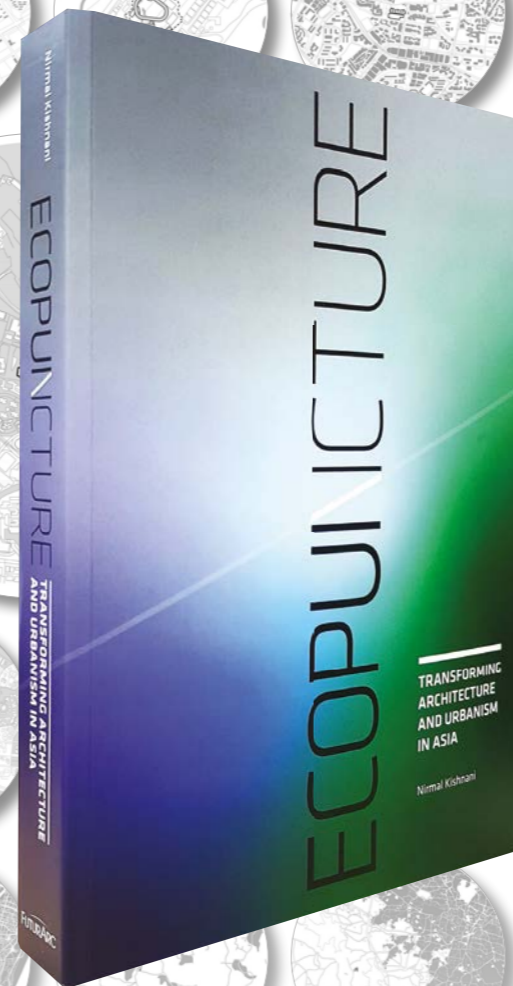
“The architect’s call to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public has a new and broader meaning amid challenges such as increasing climate extremes and social inequity... Every line drawn should be a source of good in the world.” AIA Framework for Design Excellence



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This book unpacks misconceptions about sustainability, and examines the designer's role in bridging human-made and natural systems. The 16 built projects featured here bear testimony to an ecological worldview. Each is an extraordinary act of ecopuncture that aims to better its world in different ways, and for different reasons. This book is a resource for theorists, researchers, policymakers, planners, developers, and designers. It has **432 pages** featuring projects from India, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Republic of China and Vietnam.

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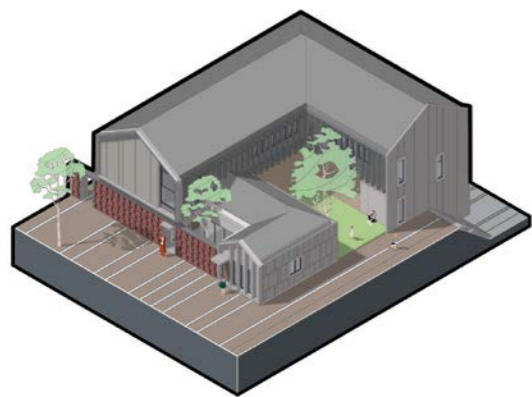
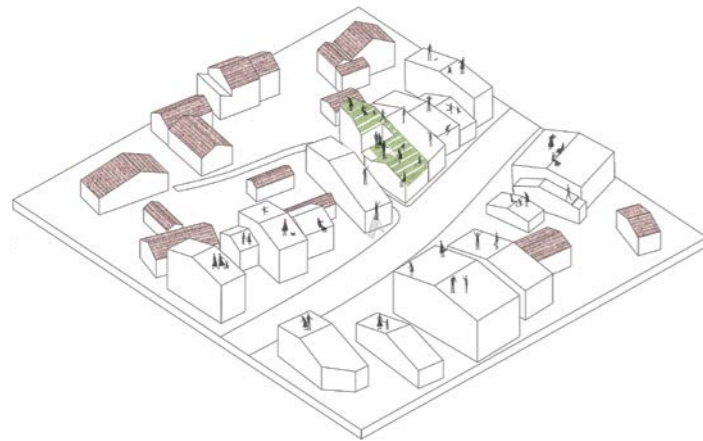
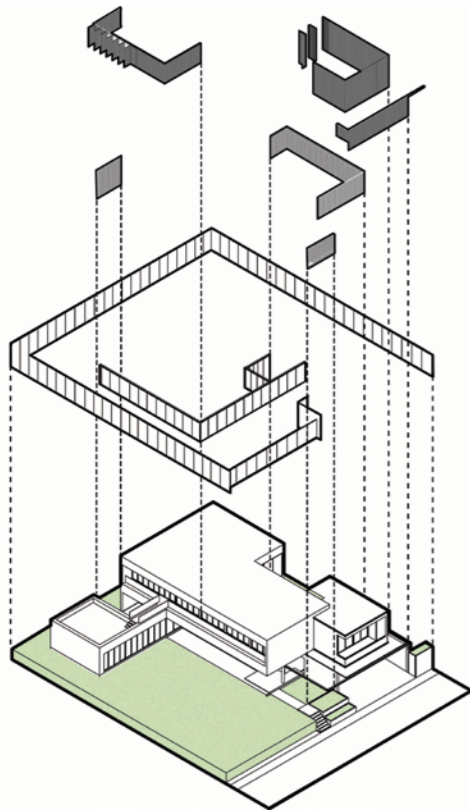
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The Uneasy Relationship Between Architecture Practices and Labour

by **Bhawna Jaimini**



The FuturArc Interview

SWATI JANU
Founder, Social Design Collaborative

by Bhawna Jaimini

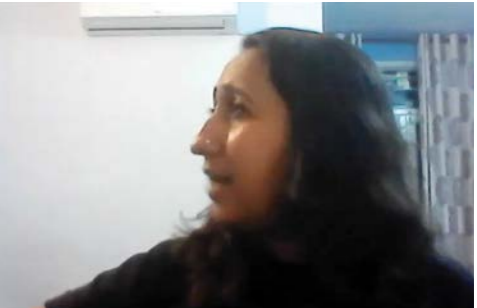


Photo by Suryan/Dang; all images courtesy of Social Design Collaborative



A TALE OF TWO PLATINUM FIRSTS

In Malaysia, the two most popular local certification bodies for private sector projects seem to be Green Building Index (GBI) and Green Real Estate (GreenRE). It has become increasingly common for developers or owners to undertake Green certification for their properties, and there has been an increased top-down push to all sectors to achieve nationally committed carbon reduction targets. Case in point: as part of the National Low Carbon Cities Masterplan (NLCCM), 33 cities have been identified to achieve a net zero target in the built environment between 2055–2060. Several local authorities, such as Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (DBKL) or Kuala Lumpur City Hall and Majlis Bandaraya Petaling Jaya (MBPJ) or Petaling Jaya City Council, have already implemented Green building requirements in planning permission for new projects. Even so, the fact remains that only less than 1 per cent of the building stock in Malaysia are currently Green certified, according to National Property Information Centre (NAPIC) statistics.¹

While Green building certification systems have evolved to accommodate changing factors, they are but tools to be leveraged and put to good use to achieve one's overall objectives for a Green building project—they are not the driving force or an end in themselves.

Here, we showcase two projects that are both firsts: 1 Lasam (BVH Office HQ) is set to be the first Green Building Index (GBI) Platinum-certified building in Perak and the WAO House is Malaysia's first GreenRE Platinum-certified women and children's centre.

They illustrate how taking the Green building rated route does not mean being restricted to mechanical checklists of energy- or water-saving features and metrics, but rather how it can help translate one's commitment to environmentally friendly architecture into actionable, measurable steps to account for both active and passive concepts that need not be alienated from common sense design principles.

¹ <https://www.constructionplusasia.com/my/ir-ashwin-thuraiarajah/>

PEAK HEAT: LEARNING FROM LONDON'S HOTTEST DAYS

by Nipun Prabhakar

On 19 July 2022, London witnessed its hottest summer day ever recorded, where the temperature exceeded 40 degrees Celsius. This resulted in country-wide red alerts and the closure of shops and pubs. The authorities even wrapped a Victorian-era bridge in aluminium foil to protect it from the sun.

The extreme heatwave has undoubtedly caused many to suffer from exhaustion and dehydration. However, the buildings in the UK have also contributed to the crisis by not being able to alleviate the heat indoors.

Is it because the UK, being a northern island nation, has a milder climate and hence, its architecture was not built to cope with these temperatures? But is it really so?

This year, I experienced the UK heatwave first-hand during my travels in Brighton, London and Scotland. The Meteorological Office passed its first-ever Red extreme heat warning for 18 and 19 July, and urged people to stay indoors between 11 am and 4 pm. They were advised to “wear sun cream, a hat, stay in the shade and keep hydrated with water.” Social media was filled with do’s and don’ts, and other guides on protecting oneself from the heatwave.

On 18 July, I was in Brighton, a beach town near the capital, and had planned to travel to London and then to Scotland on 19 July. The next day, after several unsuccessful attempts, I finally boarded a train to undertake my journey. Many trains were cancelled that day because “very hot temperatures can affect rails, overhead power lines and signalling equipment”¹ as the Transport for London website reported. Upon reaching London, I spent the day going to different areas, using various public transport systems.

HOT TUBE

The underground metro, or the Tube as they call it, was swelteringly hot and, at times, unbearable. I later learned that the heat did not affect all the metro lines because the underground system is not one unit but comprises many routes and technologies built in phases over the years. So, the older and completely underground systems were too hot due to poor ventilation and lack of air-conditioning. Someone even made a Tube map showing which lines are air-conditioned and would be relatively more comfortable for travelling.

The station of my destination was shut down on that day. I had to disembark at the previous station and walk instead. While walking on the road, I saw thick glass buildings reflecting so much sunlight

that it was blinding. I wondered what would happen to those buildings bearing the direct glare of the reflection—more about this later.

OVERHEATED HOUSES

Such were the challenges of public transport for the people who chose to go out. However, for those who chose to stay indoors, it was not easy either. They had to find different solutions to cope with the over-heated houses. Kanya Pratita Wanaditya, an Indonesian designer living in the Finsbury Park area in London, found it hard to stay home during those days.

“My house is two-storeyed. I’m on the ground floor, and one side of my room is just a big glass sliding door, so it was boiling. Opening the window or sliding door didn’t even help because the wind (if any) was also hot. My friend who lives upstairs said it was too hot because it’s so close to the roof. So, she slept outside on a hammock, and another flatmate slept on the living room couch.”

On the day of extreme heat, 19 July, it became unbearable. Hence, she had to go to the British Library to work as it was the only place she knew that was air-conditioned and free to use. “It was jam-packed with people; lots of them were just sitting on the floor”, she added.

1 One of the best parts of London is its walkability; but what will happen if temperatures were to soar to the point that it becomes difficult to do so?

2 At Brighton railway station (built in 1840) on 19 July 2022: this was taken when I was travelling to London from Brighton; many trains were cancelled due to the high temperature and risk to railway infrastructure



All images by Nipun Prabhakar unless otherwise stated

LAND RECLAMATION IN ASIA: IS ECO-ENGINEERING POSSIBLE?

by Justin Ng

Asia has been growing at a staggering rate for quite some time now (both figuratively and literally). From Dubai, China to Malaysia, land reclamation is nothing new as the furious demand for a variety of developments has fuelled the creation of coastal reclamations from the sea. According to public projects published since 1990, China is estimated to have reclaimed over 20,000 square kilometres of land.¹ Likewise, neighbouring countries have significantly expanded via aggressive land reclamation, with Singapore's land area having increased by approximately 25 per cent² since 1819 (578 to 719 square kilometres),³ and Macau currently sitting on top at a staggering 160 per cent increase in land area (1,900 hectares).⁴

At the turn of the century, a more recent phenomenon has become prevalent across Asia: increased massive-scale land reclamation projects and the construction of entire new artificial islands. From Dubai's islands, which resemble curious art forms rather than substantial developments, to Hong Kong's planned artificial island in Lantau totalling 1,700 hectares for a whopping price tag

of HKD624 billion, it has become a 'pandemic' of mega land reclamation projects, feverishly spanning super-modern housing developments and entertainment archipelagos full of hotels, restaurants, theatres and shops.

While contributing to the economy and accommodating increasing populations, these coastal developments and artificial islands in Asia have put shoreline ecosystems at risk and ignited a global conversation on the topic of conservation. In understanding the process of land reclamation and its effects, it brings us to question: Is reclamation a sustainable option in today's context? While it has obviously served many cities and countries well in the past, does it remain a viable way to promote development in the near future?

WHY DO COUNTRIES RECLAIM LAND?

Scarcity of available land supply in certain Asian countries has been an impetus of aggressive expansion and reclamation. In Hong Kong, the city suffers from chronic overcrowding and housing shortages, with population density exceeding

Mumbai's at 27,400 persons per square kilometre of developed land and property prices reaching exorbitant amounts due to housing shortages. This explains why 6 per cent of the city's land is reclaimed, which is home to 27 per cent of its population. According to the municipal Task Force, the city will still need an additional 4,800 hectares by 2046, which is most feasibly achieved through reclamation of valuable land.⁵

This housing shortage is not limited to Hong Kong. Increasingly, artificial islands are being floated as solutions to some of the pressing challenges that cities face around overcrowding and rising land prices. Singapore, for instance, has used reclamation to expand its land, helping it to stay more competitive than Hong Kong in terms of commercial and residential property prices.

Economic growth has also driven reclamation projects across Asia. The Mall of Asia in the reclaimed Manila Bay alone has provided over 10,000 jobs to the Philippine economy.⁶ Another project in the area, Horizon Manila, is an upcoming mixed-use planned community to be built on a

1 Aerial view of Penang, Malaysia, in 2022, and its expansion of reclaimed land **2** Mall of Asia is the Philippines' largest mall, with an area spanning 67 hectares on reclaimed land



Setting up an infrastructure of sustainability

by **Dr Ann Deslandes**



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