

Columbia GSAPP

Advanced Architectural Design Studio, Summer 2014

Yannis Aesopos

Post-crisis Tourism Inhabitation



The studio draws its inspiration from *Tourism Landscapes: Remaking Greece*, the Greek participation in this year's Venice Architecture Biennale.

The exhibition explored the role of tourism as a vehicle for the modernization of Greece through the incessant remaking of the built landscape and the emergence of constructed tourism landscapes — archaeological sites and museums, public spaces, traditional settlements-turned-tourism-ensembles, infrastructures and, of course, beaches, hotels and resorts.

It also examined the (re)configuration of (national) identity brought about by the continuous contact with the 'other', the 'foreign', and the adjustment to the 'new', that tourism, by definition an extrovert industry, presupposes.

Within this perspective, tourism landscapes can be perceived as modernization landscapes.

In the first post-War decades of the 1950s and 1960s, hotels and organized beaches adopted the modern architectural language while assimilating into a single entity with their surrounding natural landscape, building and nature becoming one.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the rising number of tourists led to the production of larger, object-like, buildings of the international style that were detached from the landscape.

The move towards a global aesthetic brought about a simultaneous look backwards towards tradition and the forms of the past. Increasing legal constraints placed on the design of buildings' exteriors in numerous tourist locations —that seemed to 'assign' them to tradition— defined a clear 'split' with their interiors — that remained a field for architectural experimentation and fantasy.

In the 2000s, the decade of opulence, many elements of the international (minimalist) life-style and the wellness culture were incorporated in the design of interiors in a process of an increasing 'interiorization' that eclipsed buildings' exteriors.

The economic crisis at the end of the 2000s led to the fading of glamour and the need for a new paradigm for tourism inhabitation.

Studio

The studio will deal with the design of a tourism inhabitation —not necessarily a hotel structure— placed in the landscape. It will research the (often forgotten) relationship between architecture, nature and landscape, land and sea.

It will consider the re-occupation and re-programming of the existing 'inactive' tourism building stock with which architecture could re-engage.

It will attempt to identify and question well-established clichés of tourism inhabitation such as the 'unobstructed view'.

The tourism inhabitation structure should be able to accommodate at least 100 people.

Time frame

The time frame is the post-crisis period; a period of limited natural and economic resources that asks for a spiritual restructuring, the reassessment of priorities, the re-establishment of values, the re-thinking of human imposition on nature (the environmental footprint).

Experience

The project seeks for a 'sober', 'primary', 'self-restrained', even 'ascetic' tourism inhabitation that has to do with 'less' (leaving home in search of less and not of more) — less not in an aestheticized or a purely structural manner. It is based on a spiritual reappraisal of architecture's role.