

Professional scientific sessions for art, architecture and urban planning Thursday evenings

Held in: Conference hall of Herampey Consulting Engineers

Date: 13.06.2019

Title: Professional roundtable - art, architecture and urban planning - art in Tehran.

Roundtable's members: Mr. J. Emami, Mrs. M. Khouluq, Mr. M. Kiani, Mr. S. M. Mousavi, Mr. M. M. Mahmoudi.

Mr. Mahmoudi began the session saying that they would organize three roundtables about art, architecture and urban planning in Tehran. During the first roundtable the participants are Mrs. Khouluq, director of Borna disables rehabilitation association, Chief of social-cultural union of disables in Iran, representative of Iran in the World Disable Women Association. Mr. Kiani, assistant professor of architecture in Tehran University Fine arts faculty, Isfahan Fine arts university former chief, Chief editor of four art periodical. Mr. Mousavi, Tehran beautification organization's cultural and urban arts dep. Deputy, secretary of Int'l sculpture symposium for seven editions, Managing director of cultural and urban arts deputy. Mr. Emami, member of scientific board of industrial design of fine arts university, member of scientific committee of Iran lighting and light Int'l conference, member of Iran urban furniture festival council for the selection of the best works.

After presenting the participants to the roundtable Mr. Mahmoudi mentioned that in Tehran in the past times, different artistic categories reflected also economic aspects and each artistic category found its proper position and location in the city. Carpet weaving activities were located in the Bazar, Theatre related activities in Lalehzar street, painting in Manouchehri street. In his opinion in a second period when arts experienced a growth in value and social position, the next centers were Enqelab street, Vahdat hall, libraries, universities, Laleh park, contemporary arts and carpet museums, forming a cultural route around the Enqelab street. Mr. Mahmoudi asserted that once the urban sculptures were positioned in height but during the past years their distance with the observer has been reduced.

To begin the discussion he posed a question about artistic arguments, saying that it seems that they have been divided in two private and public categories, where the first is followed by a limited public meanwhile the second is more accessible to a larger number of public. He asked Mrs. Khouluq if in Tehran do we have artistic presentations, like sculpture, painting, music... that are considered as part of Tehran city belongings and presentations, or they have a general aspect and if they are accessible to a large number of public. He wanted her to compare here experiences with the Iranian and foreign experiences.

Mrs. Khouluq answered to this question saying that because of the responsibilities that she has in UN organizations, she travels a lot to other countries and she always focuses to see how the

citizens are respected and in her opinion the presence of art in the everyday life of the citizens is the sign of how they are respected.

Trying to define the concept of art, Mrs. Kholuq said that it's the way and manner to express and show what is in your soul, it's love, respect and positive confrontation with others.

Because she is an expert of history, in her opinion in ancient Iran the relationship between the dominating class or category and the common people was the communication through artistic expressions. Even today you can feel the presence and influence of artistic expressions in government communication tools and sculptures. In this manners you can feel that the goal was to reduce the feeling of violence increasing the sense of respect and love between mankind. Talking about artistic expressions and artistic products, she talked about Vienna and Istanbul. In both cities art is present everywhere, with sculptures, paintings, architecture and monuments, that act as a bridge between the observer and history. In this way they can live the history of the city-country in the everyday life of the city. Comparing this situation with the present of Tehran, she said that in our city this aspect of artistic expression is ignored and there is a lack cultural presence in a large scale in Tehran, that must be seriously considered. Comparing Tehran with other cities, she asked why other cities in countries like Iraq, have special places for artistic gatherings, meanwhile in Tehran this kind of places are very limited? In her opinion this is the authorities fault that have forgotten the role and importance of art in the urban life.

Continuing the speech the second expert to express his opinion was Mr. Emami. Being an expert in industrial design and an operator that has worked for many years in Tehran beautification organization, he said that even though Tehran is not comparable with many European cities regarding the physical beauty, but it can be considered an attractive city in base of its spiritual and moral structures.

Mr. Mahmoudi talked about the role of the common people regarding the maintenance of the structures that can improve the image of the city as an artistic and attractive city. He talked about the lack of cultural education of the citizens that in many cases don't understand their duty to maintain and protect the cultural heritage. If in cities like Vienna or Istanbul the heritage of the cities are part of the citizens belongings, in our country too we must educate and prepare our citizens.

The discussion continued and Mr. Mousavi focused on the fact that Tehran as a capital city has just 200 years of history, so it's difficult to compare it with other cities that are relatively older. The reason of many lacks and unsuccessful expressions is that in Tehran the organization of the activities have been in the hands of persons that were not professional in the matter of urban management in general. Mr. Mahmoudi talked about successful experiences Tehran like the case of district 12, where the urban management "cleaned up" parts of the neighborhood, limited the circulation of motorized vehicles. This kind of interventions helped to improve the image of the city and the capability of the citizens to live and enjoy the urban space. At the same time Mr.

Mahmoudi expressed the idea that in his opinion the large use of mural paintings in order to cover the ugly sides of the buildings and transform the view of the city is not a good solution, because the successful management of this kind of artistic activity in a large city like Tehran is very difficult. One of the most important lacks in this context is the absence of citizens participation in this process.

The following speaker was Mr. Kiani. He said that when we talk about Tehran, the case is different with cities like Isfahan, Yazd or Kashan that have their own history and identity. Tehran is a city apart because there is a lack of traditional approach. It seems that in Tehran the restrictions and limitations are very limited and it permits to create new disorders and problems for a city that regarding the problems has already many. Mr. Kiani asserted that in many fields Tehran has been the first in the Iranian reality, like the universities, museums, theaters, movies... The reason is that Tehran has been an open area for all kind of novelties, far from traditional and national concepts.

Talking about the recent 150-200 years of Tehran history Mr. Kiani explained that during these years kings of Qajar dynasty ignored their managerial duties, so the roots of many problems that today we experience are caused by the lack of the management when Tehran was a city of 500 000 inhabitants.

Continuing the discussion Mr. Emami talked about the educational problems that exist in the Iranian universities. The consequences are visible in the urban environment, where the results of the university preparation are reflected in a negative manner in the everyday life of the city and citizens. If in other cities round the world the urban furniture comes to transform the city in a nicer and more comfortable environment, in Tehran the result is usually the opposite. The reason of such situation is that the urban designers often forget or ignore the main role of the furniture that they are designing, paying more attention to its aesthetic aspect. This is the reason that in other cities the citizens are pleasantly ready to spend their time in urban and common areas than it happens in a city like Tehran.

Mrs. Kholuq talked about the problems that disable people must face in a city like Tehran, where the urban management system in most of the cases ignore the existence of this category of citizens, meanwhile in other countries like for example Korea they organize a gathering of disable people, to offer them the possibility to present their capabilities and to feel and believe that they are too part of the society where they live, where they have duties but also rights that must be respected. In her opinion the problems that affect Tehran are not the structures but the persons that head these structures.

Mr. Mahmoudi focused on a problem that must be considered seriously by the urban management system. In his opinion the distance between the citizens and the urban structures must be reduced. The route to achieve this goal is to create pedestrian areas, where the access and circulation of vehicles is prohibited or restricted. In this case the citizens can return to their

“human dimension”, where they can experience forgotten habits like walking and moving in a human dimension. He mentioned the case of Tehran University, where after many years the direction decided to prohibit the entrance and circulation of vehicles belonging to the staff. At the beginning many professors protested but now it has become a normal and accepted approach. Mr. Mahmoudi expressed the idea that like many cities in the world one of the main problems to be considered is the problem of traffic and circulation and it can be a key solution for the remaining problems that are connected to.

Concluding the session all the speakers agreed that most of the problems can be solved through a cultural-social education and improvement. It's in this case that the correct way of life of every citizen can help to avoid the creation of new problems and structures.