

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

**Held in: Conference hall of Herampey Consulting Engineers**

**Date: 12.12.2019**

**Title: Academic Process of Teaching Architecture in Iran. 3. Elm-o-San'at.**

**Round Table Members: Mr. D. Diba, Mr. A. Ekhlasi, Mr. M. Khakzand, Mr. M. Taraqhi Jah and Mr. M. M. Mahmoudi.**

Introducing the argument of day, Mr. Mahmoudi explained that during last two sessions they had discussed the academic process of architecture teaching in Iran in Fine Arts faculty and Shahid Beheshti University and Today the participants would discuss about the experience of Elm-o-San'at University. Thanking Mr. Diba for his precious assistance during the past sessions, because of his scientific-professional experience and various functions that he had in many years of presence in Iranian academic word Mr. Mahmoudi said that they would talk about the relationship that characterized the mentioned universities.

Mr. Mahmoudi remembered the foundation of Fine Arts faculty in 1939, Shahid Beheshti in 1961, Elm-o-San'at in 1969 and the foundation of both architecture faculty and Islamic Azad University in 1990, that in 2020 will be celebrated the 30th anniversary of foundation.

Continuing the presentation Mr. Mahmoudi talked about the history of Iranian universities from the foundation of Jondi Shapour university about 15 centuries ago and modern schools-universities like Dar-ol-Fonun, where different fields were taught, but the field of architecture was ignored. Mr. Mahmoudi explained how in 1929 the first steps and ideas saturated for the foundation of a modern university in Iran, when the Technical faculty followed by Fine Arts faculty were founded, becoming during the coming years a completed version of architecture faculty.

Before inviting Mr. Diba to express his opinion on this regard, Mr. Mahmoudi asked himself and the participants how the faculty of Fine Arts and the other faculties of architecture were formed in Iran?

Thanking the presents for the participation, Mr. Diba posed the question what was the reason and goal of such gatherings. The main question, in his opinion was if in the field of architecture, during the last century, we succeeded to have acceptable results in terms of architectural production and human-professional resources, in national and int'l arenas. He continued and completed his question asking if the architectural outcome during the last 80 years can be comparable to the heritage that Iranian society has from its ancient civilization? The Iranian architectural society represented in the principal universities had a main Manifesto to define the road map for his present and future aims and activities? The answer that Mr. Diba gave to the last question was negative.

Continuing his speech Mr. Diba talked about what happened during the cultural revolution, when a unified program is ordered to all universities and if it's expectable to see developing different tendencies. Answering to the question that he had posed, Mr. Diba expressed the idea that in the Iranian universities the same approach and teaching manners were repeated and copied without

trying to develop independent and creative manners and paths, to push toward an innovative approach in modern architecture. He completed his assertion saying that during the first ten years after the Islamic Revolution the academic world of architecture wasn't able to find the right path.

Before inviting Mr. Ekhlesi to express himself, Mr. Mahmoudi asked what was the reason that none of the universities where architecture was taught, hasn't been able to affirm an original and decisive program regarding the architectural developments in Iran.

The third speaker was Mr. Ekhlesi that talking about architecture in general, said that during the history the field of architecture has been of the lowest and smooth developing fields, even in the modern era, but regarding the existence of a Manifesto in the Iranian architecture after the Islamic Revolution, he asserted that it should go back and see what happened before the Islamic Revolution and particularly from Qajar to Pahlavi eras. He said that generally we have had a classical process in the history of Iranian architecture that continued also during the period before Revolution. Talking about the main three universities, Mr. Ekhlesi said that the professors that worked in Fine Arts faculty were graduated from France, the professors of Shahid Beheshti were graduated from Italy and the Elm-o-San'at were graduated from Germany and this is the reason that the last one was also the most technically equipped university in Iran. In few words Mr. Ekhlesi asserted that students graduated from Tehran University were absorbed by consultant engineers companies, in Shahid Beheshti the students focused on theoretical studies and in Elm-o-San'at technical matters were more considered. Talking about the processes that characterized the universities of architecture, Mr. Ekhlesi said that after the revolution they lost the continuity that they had to follow, creating some kind of disorder and disorganization in the field of architectural teaching and the following preparation of professional for the market.

In base of Mr. Ekhlesi's assertions regarding the flow of graduates from western main three countries, Mr. Mahmoudi asked they were really professionally prepared or the West didn't give its best.

The next speaker was Mr. Khakzand. He said that he was working on a study to collect and present the activities and personalities of Elm-o-San'at University, presenting the experiences and achievements of the elderly generation. He talked about the main buildings of the university and their characteristics. He also presented the outstanding personalities that worked and taught in Elm-o-San'at University as teaching staff; most of them in a specific period went to study in England, returning back to Iran after graduation and dedicating themselves to the education of the youngest generation.

Talking about the professional spirit dominating in the university during the first years of foundation Mr. Khakzand explained that because most of the teaching staff were somehow under German mentality, the focus of transferring knowledge was on a technological approach reflected in the teaching of architecture, creating a mental ordered structure in the education and preparation of the students.

Continuing the discussion Mr. Mahmoudi wanted to compare the situations and academic approach that characterized the Elm-o-San'at before and after the Islamic Revolution.

The next speaker to join the discussion was Mr. Taraqhi Jah. Being a graduate after the victory of Islamic Revolution, he asserted that in those years the graduate from Elm-o-San'at was professionally prepared to be absorbed by the job market, meanwhile today the situation is not satisfying, because of educational program and its content, that must be revised. Talking about his personal experience he explained the path that he followed during the last 10-15 years, trying to combine both professional activity with academic-educational activities, keeping in mind that the academic education must be continued by activity and production in the professional market.

Comparing the two universities of Shahid Beheshti, Elm-o-San'at and Fine Arts, Mr. Mahmoudi reported that the last ones were famous to present esthetically nice projects, the graduate from Elm-o-San'at could build the project properly and the ones from Shahid Beheshti could present it in nice words. The assertions of Mr. Mahmoudi could be the reflection of social provenience of the students from various components of Iranian society.

The following speaker was Mr. Ekhlasi that talked about the characteristics and differences that exist between the three universities that the participants talked about. In his opinion it wasn't possible to make absolute assertions because each condition and situation affected in different manners the academic route and development of each university. Talking about the lacks and problems that influenced the activities of the universities in general and particularly the mentioned universities in Iran in a negative way, Mr. Ekhlasi pointed on the nationalization of the universities, that limited the activities and independence of each university in order to design and select the best academic path to follow. In this situation many academic board members don't comply with the requests and necessities that must have a university professor in order to prepare professionally and artistically the next generations. In opinion of Mr. Ekhlasi the difference that characterizes the Iranian and foreign universities is that the last ones are continuously updated, meanwhile the local universities aren't able to improve the educational system quality, eliminating and correcting the lacks. Mr. Ekhlasi believes that each past generation has better qualities and characteristics compared with the following one, because the main problem depends on the selection of the student mass. Every year the universities increase the capacity of absorbing new students, while the university board isn't ready to keep the pace with the increase of demand and the natural consequence is the incomplete professional-academic preparation of the students. Another important problem and duty that the universities ignored in the last decades is the lack of cooperation and comprehension of the problems and necessities that the Iranian modern society must face, like the disaster management as it could be a possible earthquake.

The final part of the discussion was dedicated to analyse and see the problems that generally affected the academic world of Iran and especially the three mentioned universities. The participants believed that the main problems were the mismanagement and the lack of a long term policy in order to satisfy the continuous changes and demands that the Iranian society must face and satisfy.