

EDITORIAL

The Asian School of Knowledge (ASK) is delighted to bring to you this issue of the ISVS e-journal. This is while the world is in turmoil in the midst of a war between the West and the East. It is also amidst the reluctance of some academics to publish in the ISVS e-journal since it was discontinued from Scopus. Nevertheless, the ISVS e-journal 13.04 is published as planned, demonstrating the stature of the journal, and the trust of the researchers about its place in the world. At the end, that is what matters.

This issue has eight papers in keeping with the scale-down approach it is following since the beginning of 2025. In the first paper, Malak Jassim Alaiwi examines the Mashrabiya screens and courtyard strategies in Bahrain that used to be part of the traditional buildings. Today, they are being reinterpreted as vernacular cooling methods for contemporary architecture. The research concludes that contemporary Mashrabiya / courtyard reinterpretations perform best when design variables are aligned with climate exposure and user needs, supporting recommendations for performance-informed shading rather than decorative applications.

In the second paper, Fatima Hamza Jaffer employs Neuroscience to gain insights from the traditional houses in Bahrain. She argues that rapid urban transformations in Bahrain have led to the gradual erasure of a built vocabulary that once anchored collective identity: the courtyards (Hoosh), the wind towers (Badageer), coral stone walls, and the sensory sequences that structured daily life across generations. However, she confirms that emotional attachments formed through repeated sensory inhabitation over time, along with the courtyard typology supports collective and transmissible memories across generations in ways that no individual modern house can replicate. The research concludes that preserving traditional Bahraini architecture is not merely an aesthetic or heritage concern, but a neurological and cultural necessity.

Omar Mustafa Abbas & Mohammad Glubb Al-Kinani take us on a completely different path. They discuss the transformation of the traditional creative art studio to an experimental bio-art studio as a science laboratory. Offering a historical analysis, they conclude that a growing number of organizations and museums show interest in setting up participatory bio-art laboratories as a method of teaching and a tool for raising cultural and social awareness. This paper reveals how traditional practices undergo change influenced by technological advancements. Indeed, similar transformations are happening today with the arrival of AI.

Bardia Hajirasouliha & Eisa Esfanjary Kenaribthere remind us that scholars in Iran are still active despite the bombardments and the threat to erase that country from the earth. Unconcerned about the war, they look at how to interpret architectural history through mud-brick modularity and construction materials. In fact, they offer great insights into the spatial organization in Muzaffarid domestic architecture of Yazd, Iran. They demonstrate that mud-brick has functioned not only as a construction material but also as a proportional module that established geometric order and spatial coherence in the domestic architecture of fourteenth-century Yazd.

Raymond Iheanyichukwu Mbata & Gabriel Warebi Brisibe look at the heritage buildings in Nigeria, with the intention of supporting regeneration. They conduct a building condition assessment of decay and durability of the colonial mercantile warehouses on the waterfront of Port Harcourt, Nigeria and offer a documentary basis for a heritage-led, rather than demolition-led, regeneration of these buildings.

With Maryam Sayed Jawad Darwish Alsharkhat, we return to Bahrain again. She examines the impact of traditional and contemporary architecture on social interactions and cultural identity in Bahrain. By looking closely at the case of Muharraq and Manama, she points out that integrating traditional design principles into future urban planning could help foster stronger community bonds and preserve cultural identity amidst relentless modernisation.

In contrast, Khushi Kakkad & Shweta Suhane examine the adaptive reuse of traditional Himalayan Houses for tourism. They examine the expansions and transformations of dwellings into sustainable homestays in India. They conclude that adaptive reuse is a sustainable alternative to indiscriminate new constructions, and could preserve the existing built fabric, reduce environmental impacts and enhance community resilience.

Finally, Nguyễn Thị Bích Vân shares the same sentiments about the impact of tourism on the vernacular traditional villages in Vietnam. She examines the manifestations of spatial practices in living heritage and sustaining them amidst the pressures of tourism, offering insights from Lộc Yên Ancient Village in rural Vietnam. She argues that any efforts to sustain authenticity of this place should focus not only on protecting buildings by conservation, but also on supporting the everyday life that makes living heritage meaningful.

Undeniably, these papers divulge the nuances of the manifestations of culture, traditions and the unique practices that exist in the human settlements bringing out insights hitherto not available. We are grateful to the authors for the insights shared. We look forward to others active contributions in the future to add to them.

Dr. Ranjith Dayaratne
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