

# VIRTUAL TRADITIONS

THE TRANSIENCE OF TRADITION IN CHANGING GEOGRAPHIES AND GLOBAL LANDSCAPES

SEPTEMBER 3–6, 2020

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY | NOTTINGHAM, UNITED KINGDOM

## CONFERENCE THEME

Tradition has multiple forms, manifestations, and influences that shape the processes used to produce, transform, preserve, and consume built environments in synch with socio-cultural and economic change. Over the past 30 years, IASTE has helped shape the discourse around the political, cultural, economic, and legal frameworks of tradition. As successive generations hand down building traditions, the endurance of these traditions typically relies on the continuing significance of the built environment to the everyday life of communities, societies, and nations. Yet contemporary societies are increasingly confronted with new forms of communication that are mobile, digital and remote, and hence the very notion of tradition is undergoing a rhetorical transition according to the new global economy and boundary-less conditions of citizenship that are influencing, mobilizing, and manipulating built environments.

With the predominance of mobile communication, social media, and online interaction, the terms “virtual” and “tradition” are no longer at opposite ends of cultural discourse, as they seemed to be a decade ago. Virtual space is developing socio-cultural norms that dictate everyday life, while built environments adapt to virtual events, spaces, and gatherings. **IASTE 2020 Nottingham** will explore how the mutual influences between the *virtual* and the *traditional* reconfigure new structures of communities, societies, and cities — extending and connecting built spaces. In an era defined by social media and online interaction, new agents manipulate traditions, values, myths, borders, and even the legitimacy of the built environment in virtual space. Scientific innovation, data-mining, algorithms, and spatial and digital modeling have thus led to new methods of interpretation and mechanisms of decision-making that force a reconsideration of the link between buildings and people, culture and its consumers.

The organizers of **IASTE 2020 Nottingham** invite participants to revisit the notion, concepts and practices of tradition at a time when virtual and mobile interaction is increasingly dictating the terms of everyday life, at home, at work, and in the public sphere. Participants will investigate the intellectual dialogue and reciprocal influences at the intersection of physical and virtual landscapes, and reflect on how new methodologies, practices, policies, information technologies, and even the parallel presence of virtual space and cloud communications inform the meaning of tradition in the built environment. By examining alternative futures of tradition, the conference organizers anticipate a progressive inquiry and dialogue regarding the epistemological and philosophical basis of tradition. As in past IASTE conferences, we invite scholars, professionals, and practitioners from architecture, architectural history, urban design, art history, anthropology, archaeology, folklore, geography, history, planning, sociology, political science, urban studies, conservation, design, digital technologies, and related disciplines to submit papers that address one of the following tracks.

## TRACK I: THEORIZING THE VIRTUAL AND THE TRADITIONAL IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Papers in this track will address the engagement with and reproduction of tradition and heritage in contemporary, digitally driven societies and smart cities, highlighting ethical, technological, social, and intellectual concerns. Scientific and technological approaches to the study, analysis, interpretation, and design of the built environment increasingly influence cities. Papers in this track need to examine how big data, spatial analytics, digital humanities, online consultation, display and public campaigns influence traditional practices of architecture, planning, urban design, and decision-making. These papers may examine how building typologies — like schools, universities, museums, housing, markets, care facilities, or urban spaces and infrastructure — are nowadays encompassing new traditions and systems of communication based on digital, online, and virtual interaction. Questions to address may include the following. How are architects, planners, conservators, economists and cultural

professionals changing their methods to cope with smart and intelligent built environments? How is neoliberal economic doctrine and its associated policies driving the creation of so-called smart cities? How are cultural and political institutions responding to the opportunities and challenges offered by big data and data analytics in decision-making related to the future of cities? How are digital tools and the digital economy changing the way people live, socialize, and interact in the city? How have notions of digital space and virtual engagement altered understanding and perception of physical and spatial qualities of built environments? How are growing digital systems connected to neoliberal policies and how do they drive new practices of policing, surveillance, influencing public opinion, as well as analyzing and governing public space, in both democratic and autocratic regimes?

## TRACK II: THE SOCIO-SPATIAL TRADITIONS OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN CHANGING LANDSCAPES

Papers in this track may explore how cultures, societies, and institutions reshape their identities through varying interpretations of tradition in the natural, built, and ecological landscapes. They will examine every day socio-cultural practices of production and consumption of space by addressing physical modes of living, work, and recreation in contemporary urban and rural contexts. This track is also open to papers addressing peculiar conditions of traditions, such as the planning and governance of space and built fabric in colonial, migrant, and refugee settlements across space and time. Papers may thus analyze intellectual debates on the acceptance of new traditions and the appreciation of alternative heritage in contemporary societies. Questions to address may include the following. How

are migrants and refugees challenging traditions of governance, encouraging new forms of inclusive building, and demanding that urban space both support tolerance and contest oppression and discrimination? How does the apparatus of state control struggle to restrain the fluidity of informal urban traditions? Papers may also explore the means by which tradition and heritage emerge in new settlements and foreign landscapes, especially in recipient counties, cities and societies. Papers are particularly welcome that highlight intellectual dialogue on the future of traditions in new or evolving forms, such as migrant communities, post conflict cities, or under new systems of neoliberal capitalism in historic landscapes.

## TRACK III: TRADITION, SPACE, AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AT TIMES OF TRANSITION

Participants in this track may address challenges and processes of projects, plans, actions and methodologies in response to aspects, perceptions, or limitations of tradition in the contemporary city, be they contextual, cultural, or professional. Papers may investigate the way tradition informs the paradigm shifts in professions such as architecture, design, planning, culture, and conservation. Or they may focus on how the professional imagination can introduce creative responses that could support, impact, or alter enduring practices and visions of the urban. Questions may include the following. How can the professional perceive, study, and respond to the peculiarities of tradition? How can policy forge systems of

support and inquiry regarding tradition in the built environment through training, professional associations, educational institutions, or case studies? Papers in this track will engage tradition in real-life challenges of practice and decision-making. They may challenge the perception of tradition as embodied in historic settings, or introduce case studies that highlight the role of tradition in contemporary professional practice and education. Participants should question the agency of architectural and design practice in the making and governance of the built environment at a time of transition.

### Special Sessions/Panels

Over the past few years IASTE conferences have included special sessions and panels related to conference themes, which have been collectively organized or sponsored by specific groups or institutions. Such proposals are again welcome in 2020. The intent of such panels may be to facilitate outreach to researchers from disciplines not normally engaged with IASTE, or to introduce new topics or debates. We include here a call for such special sessions/panels.

### CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Deadline for Abstract Submission: . . . . . **October 18, 2019**  
 Finalize Abstract Reviews: . . . . . **December 31, 2019**  
 Notification of Acceptance of Abstracts: . . . . . **January 17, 2020**  
 Deadline for Conference Registration by Presenters: . . . . . **April 3, 2020**  
 Deadline for Revised Paper Submission: . . . . . **April 24, 2020**  
 Notification of Acceptance in Working Paper Series: . . . . . **July 1, 2020**  
 Conference Program: . . . . . **September 3–6, 2020**  
 Post-Conference Tours: . . . . . **September 7, 2020**

### Post-Conference Tours

Nottingham Caves and Robin Hood: **September 7, 2020**  
 London Architecture (in association with RIBA): **September 7, 2020**

### CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

**Local Conference Director:**  
 Prof. Mohamed Gamal Abdelmonem  
**IASTE President and Conference Director:**  
 Prof. Mark Gillem  
**IASTE Vice President:** Ms. Montira Horayangura  
**IASTE Secretary/Treasurer:** Dr. Hesham Issa  
**IASTE and Conference Coordinator:** Ms. Amy Strieter  
**Local Conference Venue and Event Coordinator:**  
 Mrs. Miriam Marsden  
**NTU Conference Organizing Committee Team**  
**Chair:** Dr. Andrew Knight, Dean, School of Architecture, Design & Built Environment ADBE  
 Prof. Ming Sun, Associate Dean for Research  
 Prof. Michael White, ADBE  
 Mr. Gavin Richards, Head of Department of Architecture  
 Dr. Marisela Mendoza, Senior Lecturer, Department of Architecture  
 Dr. Ana Souto, PG Tutor, Department of Architecture.  
 Dr. Diane Wren, Research Fellow, CAUGH

### Day-to-Day Coordination

Dr. Diane Wren, Research Fellow, CAUGH, ADBE  
 Ms. Farida Waheed, CAUGH, ADBE  
 Mr. Yousef al-Daffaie, CAUGH, ADBE

### Sessions Committee

Heba Ahmed, Howayda al-Harithy, Mohamad al-Jassar, Nezar ALSayyad, Anne-Marie Broudehoux, Flavia Brito do-Nascimento, Cecilia Chu, Howard Davis, Lyndsey Deaton, Jonathan Hale, Chee-Kien Lai, Duanfang Lu, Hajo Neis, Andrzej Piotrowski, Gehan Selim, Ipek Tureli

### Conference Sponsors

Centre for Architecture, Urbanism and Global Heritage, The School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment of Nottingham Trent University; the University of Oregon Urban Design Lab

### Mailing Address and Inquiries:

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**IASTE 2020  
CALL FOR ABSTRACTS**