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WORLD NEWS OF ARCHITECTURE

AUGUST 2016

**JOTUN ARCHITECT SERIES**



**SHAHID ABDULLA SPEAKS ABOUT ARCHITECTURE & OTHER ISSUES**

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**ARCHI TIMES**

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**WORKSHOP**

Socio-Cultural-Architectural Workshop held in Azad Kashmir

## BRITAIN'S NEW i360 TOWER A "PIER IN THE SKY"



The world's tallest moving observation tower, the i360, opens to the public, a futuristic landmark that has transformed the historic seafront in the English tourist resort of Brighton.

A 162-metre (530-foot) high steel tower is ringed by a doughnut-shaped glass observation pod that gently glides up and down.

The design is meant to be a 21st Century take on the Victorian pleasure piers that characterise

British seaside towns: this time, a vertical pier in the sky, according to project chiefs.

It is hoped that the attraction will further boost tourism in the southeastern resort of Brighton, a gem of 1700s and 1800s architectural grandeur.

Designed by David Marks and Julia Barfield, the tower is the sequel to their London Eye observation wheel, which opened in the British capital in

2000 and is one of its most popular visitor attractions.

Several places wanted a copy of the giant wheel, but the husband-and-wife team felt the concept wasn't viable in smaller cities. Instead they took the chance to recalibrate it for Brighton, already Britain's most popular seaside destination for foreign tourists, in this project that has taken 13 years of work to come to fruition.

'The key ingredient, as with the London Eye, is moving very slowly to a great height for a fantastic view,' said Barfield.

'The architecture of pleasure' The i360 sits at the entrance to the 1866-built West Pier, which burnt down in 2003.

With a height to diameter ratio of 40 to one, it is the world's slenderest tall tower, according to Guinness World Records.

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## LAND PRICES TO REMAIN UNDERSTATED

By KHURRAM HUSAIN

What began as a massive effort to take on the property mafia has ended with a whimper. The ordinance issued recently gives the FBR power to determine fair market values of property prices across the country and update its information every year. But the fair market values that the FBR will be relying on are provided by real estate stakeholders and builders, not by an independent panel of valuers selected by the State Bank, as originally stated in the

Finance Act.

Aqeel Karim Dhedhi, also known as AKD and widely considered to be an important player in the country's real estate and property development sector, claims that with the new property tables the declared value of a 500 sqyards plot in DHA Phase 8, Karachi, will become Rs10 million. It used to be Rs1.5m under the old system.

The new system will undoubtedly generate more revenue for the government, through stamp duties and the Capital Gains Tax

(CGT), but the stated intention behind the measure to tackle the property market as a favoured destination for black money has been defeated with the compromise. With the new valuation tables announced by the FBR and the elimination of the role of independent valuers, the government has won little more than a sliver in additional revenue.

Property developers argue there are good reasons to not resort to independent valuers though. 'We told the government that whenever outside valuers

have been used, it has opened the door to corruption,' AKD says, mentioning some high-profile corruption investigations over the past few years in which misdeclaration of property values played a key role. In all of them, he adds, it was the judgement of outside valuers that was instrumental in creating a scam.

Members of the Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD), who were involved in negotiating the new property valuation tables with the government, that with the

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## MILESTONE IN THE HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE

THIS BOOK IS THE FIRST OF ITS KIND EVER PUBLISHED IN THE HISTORY OF PAKISTAN

THIS BOOK FEATURES

55 PAKISTANI ARCHITECTS' WORK AFTER INDEPENDENCE



For the first time, the unique architectural history of Pakistani architects' work is explored in full color and detail. Also for the first time architects and young generation of architects, students will have the chance to see the work of Pakistani architects.

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**Book Review By: Mehrdad Hadighi**  
**Professor and Head - Department of Architecture**  
**Stuckeman Chair of Integrative Design, The Pennsylvania State University**

Architecture After Independence, 55 Architects of Pakistan was published by Arch Press in 2016. It is a hard cover book of 336 pages, 29 X 26cm in full color, documenting the architectural productions of fifty-five architects in Pakistan, practicing since the Independence. The book is edited by Murtuza Shikoh & Zain Mankani, and has four substantial essays to launch the critical conversation. Kamil Khan Mumtaz provides a thorough documentation of the architects since independence, and follows their education and professional training in detail. He brings much personal knowledge of the individuals involved and the histories that developed around them. His essay should, in fact, be expanded into a new book, following his two earlier books of 1985 and 1999, documenting the sources of the contemporary architecture of Pakistan. Arif Hassan's "Architecture Then and Now" provides the most critical view of the architecture in its ignorance of the socio-political realities that surround it. Even in cases where architects are building for the poor, he documents that architects are unfamiliar with materials, and techniques of construction that are inevitably used in those contexts, resulting in a discord between the built and the methods of building. Hasan-Uddin Khan provides a bibliography of books that cover recent architecture in Pakistan, most valuable for those interested in researching this arena. He continues by analyzing the development of possible architectural agendas since "independence", from post-colonial to modern to Islamic identity to regionally appropriate and finally to hyper-modern. Jawaid Haider traces the history of an integrative model of studio instruction, developed at the Dawood College Department of Architecture, and follows its trajectory to contemporary instruction and provides a critique of the instruction of architecture both in Pakistan and abroad. He also points to important figures between education and practice. Each essay concentrates on a particular angle of analysis, and collectively, they provide a great introduction to the issues at stake, both in the work presented and in the larger architectural context of Pakistan, the region and the globe.

Before I set out to examine the material in the book, it is important to mention how significant it is to collect a body of work under a "banner". It is the necessary step towards any serious examination of any topic. To that end, the book is a commendable effort in collecting, collat-



# ARCHITECTURE AFTER INDEPENDENCE: 55 ARCHITECTS OF PAKISTAN

ing, and documenting a particular history. Without documents of this nature, any serious study will not exist. So, at the outset, the book has accomplished a remarkable feat of producing an archive of architectural work in Pakistan of the last approximately sixty-five years. The four essays in the book open avenues of research and critique for future researchers. In addition, the essays, through providing a thorough document, pave the way for new research, even those that may not have been called upon by the essays themselves.

The title of the book: Architecture After Independence, 55 Architects of Pakistan gives us a glimpse of the complexities within. The title of the book presents two worlds, one, "Architecture After Independence" that involves history, politics, religion, and points to architecture that is, and perhaps, must be, engaged historically, socially and politically. The other, "55 Architects of Pakistan", presents a more neutral stance where architecture may be viewed and studied within its own formal and tectonic realm. The two appear in the book under the same cover, but almost independently, one following the other. This very duality between interdependence and independence is the critical edge of the book and the issues that it puts forth.

"Architecture After Independence", already in the title, suggests a breaking point, a historical fissure that may be recognized and detected in its architectural forms. In 1946, just after World War II, the British government was convinced that the Indian sub-continent was to be independent, and in 1947, it announced its agreement with the principal of independence and also of the division of "British India" into two independent states, those of India and Pakistan. There is, however, further nuance in this independence and division. Pakistan was originally formed as the Islamic republic of Pakistan. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Pakistan movement, in his first broadcast to the nation as Pakistan's first governor general stated: "August 14 is the birthday of the independent and sovereign state of Pakistan. It marks the fulfillment of the destiny of the Muslim nation which made great sacrifices in the past few years to have its homeland." The "Independence" that appears in the title of the book is both an independence from the British, and from India. Although not in the title of the book, independence, in this case, also means the beginning of the Islamic Republic, with all of the socio-cultural, and architectural contexts of Islam. The simple title of "Architecture After Independence" already has pointed to the nuanced complexities that exist within the book, both in its temporal bracketing of "after independence",

and in its engagement of architecture within a country whose main religion is Islam. This plays a major role in much of the discussions in the book, and bears further attention.

The essays in the book are concerned with the issue of "tradition" in the context of "Architecture after Independence". The use of tradition is also nuanced. On the one hand, if we take 1947 as the start date for architecture presented in this book, we would be looking essentially at modernity as the tradition. However, there is, I believe, a different sense of what constitutes tradition within the four essays of the book. It is a combination of building traditions of the people who occupied the land that became Pakistan, independent from "independence", and the traditions of architecture within countries whose main religion is Islam. The strength of the essays and the book lies in outlining the relationship between modernity and tradition as the struggle and the complexity of practicing architecture in Pakistan. I will suggest that this complexity is, and has been, the foundational complexity of architecture around the world. Of course, the tradition changes, and so does our definition of modernity, but the complexity remains for all architects to explore. Modernity, as one of the poles to which the architecture in the book gravitates, is approached most often, though not always, as a fixed and stable entity, incapable of nuance and change. Modernity grew out of the industrial revolution, new materials and technologies of construction, and new social agendas, long before it was labeled a style. In fact, I would argue that modern architecture was very much in line with traditions of construction and building that served as the foundations of architecture for centuries. Modern architecture grew out of traditions of construction in the West. In this light, it must be considered an evolutionary practice, one that has evolved from inception, and will keep evolving. Its adherence to certain formal ideologies and ignorance of certain other programmatic and urban issues are a part of its evolution, and it is up to us as architects to evolve it in directions that are sustainable urbanistically, programmatically, socio-politically, but also formally and aesthetically, and yet progressive and challenging.

The vernacular building traditions of the land that became Pakistan served and still serve buildings of modest scale (although Arif Hassan's point about the discord between contemporary architecture and vernacular building traditions need to be contemplated). However, in today's heavily urbanized world we cannot rely on low-rise building as the pre-dominant source of housing, governmental and commer-

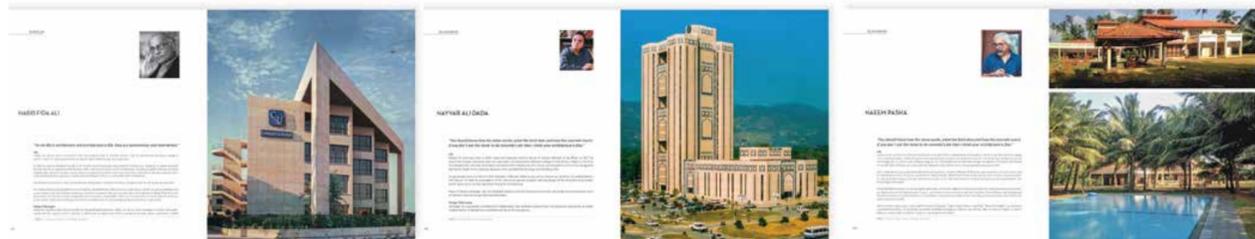
cial buildings, without embarking on irresponsible and un-sustainable sprawl. Large-scale buildings, such as those imagined for the new capital of Islamabad, buildings such as monumental mosques, town halls, and memorials would need to be conceived, at least structurally, using modern technologies. What, then, becomes of these buildings, if they cannot be expressions of traditional materials and modes of structuring and construction, in the way their traditional counter-parts were. In this context, we must examine, at least structurally, modern building technologies. What should these buildings look like? Should they derive their appearances from their materials and methods of structuring and construction, or should they serve as symbols of ideologies, whatever those ideologies may be? We see examples of where building traditions and construction technologies went hand-in-hand with the appearance of buildings in centuries-old mosques, and bazaars. We also see the same inter-dependence between buildings and materials and methods of construction in modern architecture, though resulting in different architectural sensibilities than those earlier traditions. This is the question that is raised by the book: Given the necessity of modern technologies and techniques of construction in large buildings, what gives expression to the building, if not their modern materials and methods.

There is clear delineation of what the answer is not. More than once, the careful balance of history and tradition with innovation and the "new" is mentioned in the book. It re-appears in the four essays from different perspectives, and documents an astute reading of the socio-economic and architectural context. Arif Hasan refers to it as "draftsman-designed"<sup>31</sup>, and Jawaid Haider as "Dubalization". We know from the book that the complete independence of the architectural expression from its materials and methods of construction is not desired. The extreme of this case is made by all four citing examples of buildings that are cloaked in an expression of wealth. Arif Hasan's essay provides a powerful analysis of the client as one of the possible sources of this discord. He documents the international shift from the "elite" and public clients to the "rich", and developer clients, and its effects on the architectural landscape of the world, specially the poorer parts of the developing world. Hasan-Uddin Khan refers to this as a "display of wealth in an essentially poor country"<sup>42</sup>. We recognize from the essays that this model of expression is not one to be followed. However, it is much more difficult to find a model that addresses the larger question stated earlier: Given the necessity of modern tech-

nologies and techniques of construction in large buildings, what gives expression to the building, if not their modern materials and methods.

Another nuance that appears in the essays and requires much deeper analysis is the relationship of culture to colonial discourse. The word colonial is used often, always in the context of the British colonial power. Here, like the use of the word "modern", it is assumed to be unified, fixed and stable. A narrower definition of "colonial" would limit its use to a country or empire controlling another. A more nuanced reading would include ways of life. There is much written history of the recent colonization of the entire world by western media. So, we know that colonization is not limited to a government or empire. In this context, religion would also fall within the definition of colonization. I believe this very issue is another avenue of research to which the book points, but towards which it does not venture. How can we be, wholesale, against one kind of colonization, and support another? The issue, it appears to me, is not so much tied to colonization, but much more to a critical and nuanced reading of colonization. It is clear from the book that Islam, although not native to Pakistan, and not born there, appears as the tradition, and modernity, also not born in Pakistan, as the outsider, the foreign agenda that has been imposed on the country.

I will suggest that the division between tradition and modernity is not clear-cut and is embedded with much more complexity and nuance. Tradition, in the book, splits into local building traditions-whose expressions are appreciated-and the traditions of older buildings within the Islamic culture found elsewhere in the world. Tradition, assumed to be vernacular and local, is, in fact, a mixture of local and colonial. Modernity, on the other hand, appears as the outsider, although its practices have been the norm everywhere around the world for almost a century. That, which may be local by now, we consider to be "foreign" and colonial. When we mention the world colonial, we use it in the context of practices with which we do not have affinity. Those practices with which we do have affinity, regardless of their source, we consider "tradition". This is the gift of the book, opening this door into an in-depth discussion of what constitutes tradition, what constitutes modernity, and how architects practice in the space opened by the nuance of the definitions of tradition and modernity.



Mehrdad Hadighi is Professor and Head of the Department of Architecture at Pennsylvania State University and Stuckeman Chair of Integrative Design. Most recently, he served two terms as chair of the Department of Architecture at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Hadighi is an Iranian-born, US educated architect, and has been an academic for the past twenty-eight years, teaching in the United States and abroad.

Hadighi completed his post-professional graduate studies at Cornell University and holds a professional degree in architecture and a degree in studio art from the University of Maryland. A licensed architect, he is founding principal of the Studio for Architecture, a design practice that is engaged in research and experimentation through building projects of different scales and scopes, site-specific gallery installations, and design competitions.

Hadighi's premiated design competition entries include the Student enheim + Bauernmarkt, Glockengasse, Public Space in the New American City, Atlanta, Berlin Alexanderplatz Design Competition, Austrian Cultural Institute in Manhattan, and the Peace Garden Design Competition. Hadighi has been selected as one of "25 most intriguing, innovative and intrepid architects, from all over the world" by Wallpaper\* magazine; and as one of "10 Young Firms Reshaping the Globe" by the Architectural Record magazine in their Design Vanguard issue. The Architectural League of New York selected Hadighi as one of the six notable "Young Architects" in their "Young Architects Forum" series. His work is the subject of a monograph by SHARESTAN, and his most recent work has been featured in the following books: Architecture Today, Conversions; Small Structures, Green Architecture; Xs Green: Big Ideas, Small Buildings; Extensions and Renovations; Up, Down, Across; Domestic Extensions; House Plus, New House Design; and Architecture In Detail. He is the author of *Tschumi's Architectural Manifestoes*, a dual language book in English and Parsi, and *I/AAW of WALL*. His building for Lafayette 148, a New York-based fashion design company is the subject of a new book by ACTAR, to be published in 2016.

His scholarly work focuses on drawing parallels between 20th century art, critical theory and the constructive principles of architecture. This work has been celebrated with prestigious research awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York Foundation for the Arts.