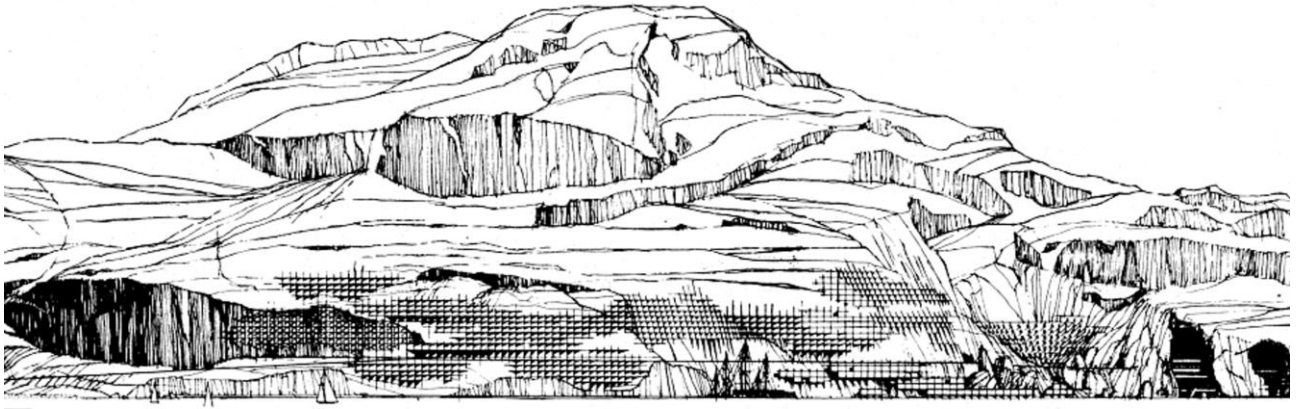


Columbia GSAPP

Advanced Architectural Design Studio, Summer 2015

Yannis Aesopos

Post-crisis Tourism Inhabitation



The studio draws its inspiration from *Tourism Landscapes: Remaking Greece*, the Greek participation at the 14th Venice Architecture Biennale 2014.

The exhibition explored the role of tourism as a vehicle for the modernization of Greece through the incessant remaking of the built landscape and the production of constructed tourism landscapes — archaeological sites and museums, public spaces, traditional settlements-turned-tourism-ensembles, infrastructures and, of course, hotels, resorts and organized beaches.

It also examined the (re)configuration of (national) identity brought about by the continuous contact with the 'other', the 'foreign', and the adjustment to the 'new', that tourism — by definition an extrovert industry— presupposes.

Within this perspective, tourism landscapes can be perceived as modernization landscapes.

In the first post-War decades of the 1950s and 1960s, hotels and organized beaches adopted the Modern architectural language, assimilating into a single entity with their surrounding natural landscape: building and nature becoming one.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the rising number of tourists led to the production of larger, object-like, buildings of the International Style detached from the landscape. The dominance of a uniform, global aesthetic brought about, as a reaction, the look backwards towards tradition and the forms of the past. Increasing legal constraints regarding the design of buildings' exteriors in numerous

tourist locations —that seemed to ‘assign’ them to tradition— defined a clear ‘split’ with their interiors — that remained a field for architectural experimentation and fantasy. Exteriors and interiors continued to co-exist while belonging to different worlds.

In the 2000s, the decade of opulence and excess, many elements of the international (minimalist) life-style and accessories of the wellness culture were incorporated in the design of the hotels' interiors in a process of an increasing ‘interiorization’ that eclipsed the buildings’ exteriors.

The economic crisis at the end of the 2000s led to the fading of glamour and the need for a new paradigm for tourism inhabitation.

Studio

The studio will deal with the design of a tourism inhabitation —not necessarily a hotel structure— placed in the landscape. It will research the (often forgotten) relationship between architecture and its surrounding landscape, land and sea.

It will consider the possibility of re-occupation and re-programming of the existing, ‘inactive’ tourism building stock with which architecture could re-engage.

It will attempt to identify and question well-established clichés of tourism inhabitation — such as the ‘unobstructed view’.

The tourism inhabitation structure should be able to accommodate at least 100 people.

Time frame

The time frame is the post-crisis era; an era of limited natural and economic resources that calls for a reassessment of priorities, a reestablishment of values, a reconsideration of human imposition on nature (the building’s footprint), the need for a spiritual restructuring.

Experience

The project seeks for a ‘sober’, ‘basic’, ‘self-restrained’, even ‘ascetic’ tourism inhabitation that has to do with ‘less’ (leaving home in search of less and not of more) — less not in an aestheticized or a purely structural manner. It is based on a spiritual reappraisal of architecture’s role.