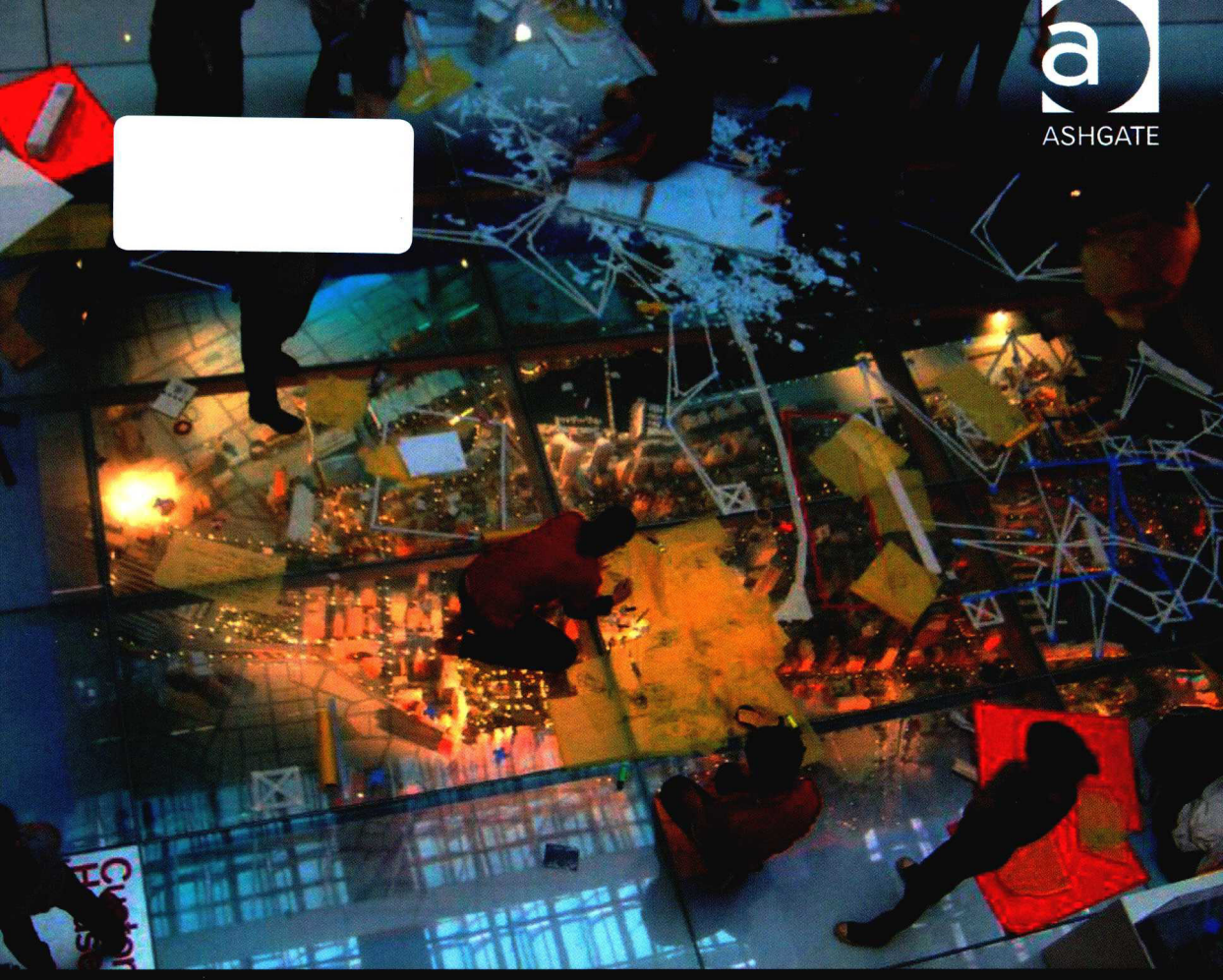

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Spatial Design Education

New Directions for Pedagogy in Architecture and Beyond

ASHRAF M. SALAMA

Spatial Design Education

New Directions for Pedagogy in Architecture and Beyond

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常州大学山书馆
藏书章

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Published by
Ashgate Publishing Limited
Wey Court East
Union Road
Farnham
Surrey, GU9 7PT
England

Ashgate Publishing Company
110 Cherry Street
Suite 3-1
Burlington, VT 05401-3818
USA

www.ashgate.com

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 9781472422873 (hbk)
ISBN: 9781472422880 (ebk – PDF)
ISBN: 9781472422897 (ebk – ePUB)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Salama, Ashraf M. A.
Spatial design education : new directions for pedagogy in architecture and beyond / By Ashraf M. Salama.
pages cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-1-4724-2287-3 (hardback) -- ISBN 978-1-4724-2288-0 (ebook) -- ISBN 978-1-4724-2289-7 (epub) 1. Architecture--Study and teaching--Philosophy. I. Title.
NA2000.S25 2015
720.71--dc23

2014036123

MIX
Paper from responsible sources
FSC® C013985
FSC www.fsc.org

Printed in the United Kingdom by Henry Ling Limited, at the Dorset Press, Dorchester, DT1 1HD

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About the Author

Ashraf M. Salama is Professor of Architecture and Head of the Department of Architecture, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. Since 2009 and until recently he was Chair of Architecture and the founding Head, Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, College of Engineering, Qatar University. He holds B. Arch., M. Arch., and Ph.D. from the Al Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt and North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC, USA (1987, 1991, 1996). He has held permanent, tenured, and visiting positions in Egypt (Misr International University and Al-Azhar University), Italy (University of Naples Federico II), Saudi Arabia (King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals), and the United Kingdom (Queen's University, Belfast). With extensive experience in academic research, teaching, design and research-based consultancy, Professor Salama bridges theory and design and pedagogy and practice in his professional activities. He was the Director of Consulting at Adam Group Architects in Charlotte, North Carolina. He is the chief editor of International Journal of Architectural Research-IJAR and associate editor of Open House International-OHI. Professor Salama serves on the scientific and review boards of several international organisations, including IAPS-the international association of people-environment studies, and international association of human habitat. In various capacities he also serves on the boards of numerous international journals. Professor Salama has authored and co-edited seven books in the fields of architectural and urban pedagogy, human-environment interaction, and architecture and urbanism of emerging cities in the Middle East. His latest authored book is entitled '*Demystifying Doha: One Architecture and Urbanism in an Emerging City*' (with F. Wiedmann), Ashgate 2013 and his latest co-edited book is entitled '*Architecture Beyond Criticism: Expert Judgment and Performance Evaluation*' (with W. Preiser, A. Davis, and A. Hardy), Routledge 2015. Professor Salama has published over 130 articles in the refereed international press, academic and professional conferences, and architecture and design magazines on architecture, urban design, and the socio-spatial aspects of the built environment. While he continues to conceptualise and implement diverse approaches to design teaching,

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his current work places emphasis on urbanism in emerging regional metropolises in the Middle East with a focus on urban qualities, urban identity and liveability, and assessing designed environments.

Preface

Design education in architecture and its allied disciplines is the cornerstone of the design professions that make major contributions to shaping the built environment of today and of the future. Thousands of design educators worldwide are involved in teaching activities on a daily and routine basis and have chosen their careers to nurture future designers and budding professionals; however, despite this dedication, there has been, most unfortunately, a glaring lack of awareness of the changing focus of design pedagogy and the scholastic endeavours involved in remedying this. Additionally, there has been insufficient articulated knowledge on the evolutionary nature of design pedagogy and its contemporary condition. Recent concerns about outmoded, stagnant and static pedagogy in higher education thus present new opportunities for design educators to revitalise and strengthen their programmes, to enhance their role in shaping education, and to recuperate the quality of that education. In today's rapidly changing academia, critical thinking and inquiry, creativity and innovation, research and investigation, collaboration and civic engagement, and environmental awareness and technical competence, are increasingly valued and are now being viewed as salient and integral qualities of contemporary design pedagogy.

'*Spatial Design Education: New Directions for Pedagogy in Architecture and Beyond*' examines the concerns raised by current endeavours for change by focusing on crucial issues that strategically position themselves on the map of academic and professional interests. It addresses topical concerns that pertain to the goals, objectives, outcomes, structures and content, as well as the instructional characteristics and delivery methods and techniques required for responsive and responsible design education. This is the type of education that should be made accessible and available to all student designers in order to imbue them with the knowledge, capabilities and skills necessary to design and create better built environments. The models and cases analysed and presented epitomise honest and sometimes daring attempts to introduce pedagogical change, and to tame and respond to the ever-changing demands placed on design professions by societal, cultural and environmental needs.

Discourse on design education typically focuses on fragmented or disconnected issues and is often dealt with either by subjective criticism or by undeveloped and even untried solutions. Instead, educators should focus on investigating the larger context of such issues, including a study of the historical roots, examining contemporary professional and educational milieus, and exploring the fundamental particularities of design pedagogy. Therefore, '*Spatial Design Education: New Directions for Pedagogy in Architecture and Beyond*' is intended to fill a crucial gap in the contemporary literature on design theories as experienced in design pedagogy. It examines and provides extensive commentary on the unique nature and multiple possibilities to reform and reinvigorate the education of future designers. The historical roots of education are briefly summarised so that design educators worldwide gain insight into traditional learning practice and its flaws. Additionally, they will discover new methodologies and practices to facilitate the development of more innovative, responsive, and collaborative teaching strategies that will foster students' abilities and skills and enhance their roles as competent, committed and caring designers who will shape, in a positive way, the future built environment. Coupled with a new theory, 'trans-critical' pedagogy, in addition to the methods, processes, mechanisms, and tools employed by alternative models and groundbreaking practices may prove of great benefit to the academic community including professionals, educators, researchers, practitioners, and graduate students in architecture and those who work in allied disciplines.

This book represents design education as a series of paradigms whose evolutionary processes, underpinning theories, content, methods, and tools, are critically probed, examined and evaluated. Design education provides a rich and fertile field for research, one that can help provide a discerning insight into aspects of theoretical and practical discourse. The book features a comprehensive discussion on design education, readily acknowledging the design studio as the principal pillar of that education and the main forum not only for creative exploration and interaction, but also for knowledge acquisition, assimilation, reflection, production, and reproduction. International and regional surveys and studio cases, from more than 25 universities in five continents, reveal the strikingly complex qualities of good design pedagogy and identify contemporary professional challenges and the concomitant socio-cultural and environmental needs. It offers a critical analysis of a continuously evolving profession and its associated societal processes; further it discusses how the new pedagogy can more effectively respond to user needs and demands and the way in which design educators react to these needs. Matters that pertain to traditional pedagogy, its characteristics, the responses to and reactions against it, and pioneering alternative studio teaching practices in addition to advances in design approaches and methods and innovative teaching practices in lecture-based and introductory design courses are examined in detail in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of contemporary design education in architecture and allied disciplines. A wide spectrum of teaching approaches and methods describe how a theory of a 'trans-critical' pedagogy can be employed to revitalise design education and help shape a multi-layered design pedagogy that is ready to provide students with the skills and competencies necessary to be

significant innovators and drivers of the ever more challenging built environment of the future. Scenarios for enabling the accommodation and implementation of a 'trans-critical' pedagogy demonstrate how a new student-centred, evidence-based design culture sheltered in a wide variety of learning settings can profoundly change the thrust and teaching of architecture and beyond.

'*Spatial Design Education: New Directions for Pedagogy in Architecture and Beyond*' has thrown down the gauntlet for design educators and schools of architecture to meet the challenges posed by new educational trends, re-emerging learning philosophies and the new digital technology. Thoroughly, it has outlined the need for contemporary pedagogues to embark on a concerted effort toward implementing educational reform in architecture and design education and to invest in a learner-centred dialogic teaching practice which will engender an in-depth understanding of the various concepts, theories, and methods related to the evolving paradigms in design pedagogy. It is further hoped that this book will be regarded as an empowering manuscript and resource for every design educator, for education policy makers, for architecture students, and for design professionals worldwide to take a significant leap toward realising this aim to take architecture and design beyond the classroom and studio boundaries and into the real world.

Ashraf M. Salama
November 2014
Glasgow, UK

Acknowledgements

My experience in design pedagogy comes principally from founding and leading two departments of architecture for a total of 12 years, and from being academic, studio educator, and researcher on architectural and urban education and on design studio teaching practices since the late eighties. Over more than two decades, there were many people who influenced my work and shaped my interest in architectural education and design pedagogy. I am thankful to those authors from whose valuable knowledge, theories, and applications I was able to commit myself to explore their ideas and study their pedagogical experiments. My appreciation goes to Henry Sanoff, Salah Z. Said, and Mostafa Baghdadi who have offered advice in my early career in risking the exploration of design education. I owe a great debt to Henry Sanoff for his creative insights and invaluable support. My work with the Community Development Group – CDG of the College of Design at North Carolina State University under his guidance in the early nineties and my continuous interaction with him and with many advocates and supporters were important determinants in moulding many of my ideas and pedagogical and theoretical positions.

Engaging with colleagues from different parts of the world through various channels including electronic communication, joint work, and various academic gatherings worldwide contributed to sharpening my focus on key learning theories and pedagogical approaches. Thanks are due to Akhtar Chauhan, Aleya Abdel-Hadi, Beatriz Maturana, Halina Dunin-Woyseth, Julia Robinson, Lindy Osborne, Michael Crosbie, Nicholas Wilkinson, and Nikos A. Salingaros. My interaction with these scholars and practitioners motivated me to venture writing this book that capitalises on 25 years of academic work and research on design education.

This book would not have been possible without the support of many fellow academics whose positive and swift reactions to my request to include and analyse their teaching approaches were indispensable. Thanks and gratitude are due to Anna Grichting, Attilio Petruccioli, Elçin Tezel, Florian Kossak, Harriet Harriss, Hatem Ibrahim, Hernan Casakin, Hussam Salama, Jeff Haase, Jeffrey Hou, Karen Keddy,

Keith McAllister, Kevin Mitchell, Lizmol Mathew, Louise Wallis, Malika Bose, Min-Jay Kang, Mirjana Devetakovic Radojevic, Nisha Fernando, Peter Holgate, Ruth Morrow, Ryan E. Smith, Stephen Verderber, Stephanie Watson Zollinger, Tammy Gaber, and Tasoulla Hadjiyanni. In fact, I am quite fortunate to have their support and pleased to cover their pedagogical endeavours that represent powerful glimpses from more than 25 universities in Australia, North America, Europe, and the Middle East.

I am especially grateful to Elisabeth Szewczyk-Méziane of Qatar University for her excellent editorial assistance and insightful comments, not to mention her long late-night hours in a massive effort to meet tight deadlines. My appreciation goes to Raghda Salama for her assistance and thoughtful interventions. Thanks are due to my research assistants Simona Azzali and Basma Eissa for their keen technical support. I am also indebted to Valerie Rose, who believed in the value of the initial commission of the book, for her thoughts, perceptive feedback, and for an excellent review process. I gratefully acknowledge the Ashgate team who kindly advised and assisted in the production process. Last but not least, special thanks go to many of my staunch students who continue to be a vital source of inspiration and to all students, the budding professionals whose work is covered in various sections of this book.

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