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K A M R A T A L - P E R I T I

*To support members of the profession in achieving excellence in their practice of architecture and engineering in the interest of the community*

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## LOCALITY – INTERLOCALITY: TOOLS FOR ARCHITECTURAL CREATION

### *Top Greek architect for next Architecture Nights debate*

Last month the *Kamra tal-Periti* kicked off the third edition of **Architecture Nights** with Architect John Bushell, London Director of world-renowned leading international architectural firm Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates. KPF is one of the most respected architectural design firms in the world, and this was clearly evident from the amount of architects, architecture students and enthusiasts that packed the Aula Magna hall.



The next debate will feature Greece's most prominent and respected female architect, **Agnes Couvelas** and will be held at the Aula Magna in Valletta on Saturday 19th April at 7.30pm. Entrance to this debate is free. Architecture Nights 08 is sponsored by HSBC and Steel Structures.

Born in Athens in 1943, Agnes Couvelas received a diploma in architecture from the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) and has over 40 years experience as an architect. She opened her own architecture firm in 1969 in Athens, operating in the field of architectural projects in a wide area of applications such as museums, archaeological parks and private residences and also lectures in numerous architecture faculties in Greece.

Agnes Couvelas is most renowned for her residential projects, which have featured widely in architecture publications, including a summerhouse on Andros Island, a one-family house in the suburbs of Athens and the celebrated 'House of the Winds' on Santorini Island. Her portfolio also includes the famous in-situ museum of Naxos and the master planning of the archaeological park of the Marathon Tumulus.

Her work has featured in a number of major publications, among which include *Old Buildings Looking for New Use: 61 Examples of Regional Architecture Between Tradition & Modernity* (Pierre Thiébaud, 2007), *Greek Architecture Now* (Karin Skousbøll, 2006), *1000x European Architecture* (brand affairs, 2006), *Best of Europe: Color* (Intelligente architektur, 2005), *The Phaidon Atlas of Contemporary Architecture* (Phaidon Press, 2004) and *20th Century Architecture, Greece* (Deutsches Architektur 1999-2000). Her work has also featured in numerous international architectural journals including *The Architectural Review* and *Domus*.

She has also participated in a number of major exhibitions, including Landscapes of Modernisation, Greek Architecture 1960s - 1990s, at the Netherlands Architecture Institute in 1999, the 10th International Exhibition of Architecture Venice Biennale in 2006 (on the dispersed urbanity of the Aegean Archipelago), and was the main exponent of the 20th Century Architecture Greece international travelling exhibition, at prominent venues including the Deutsches Architektur-Museum, Frankfurt in 1999, the Pavillion de l' Arsenal, Paris in 2000 and the ex Mattatoio, Rome in 2001. Her most recent participation has been at the conference and exhibitions entitled ON: the Modern and the Contemporary in European and Japanese Culture in Tokyo. The event addressed the concept of modernity in various contemporary art practices, ranging from architecture and photography to art-fashion and video. Awarded projects of Agnes Couvelas were featured in this exhibition.



Agnes Couvelas' work is characterised by a sensitivity that is hard to find in contemporary architecture. Her architecture is mature and proper, very fitting to the context in which it is situated and responsive to environmental and climatic conditions. Most of her work is based in Greece which, given its Mediterranean context and similar climatic condition to our country, makes her architecture very apt for Malta too. Her sensitivity is particularly evident in the judicious choice and use of materials (particularly in the use of local materials) and the careful and sensible control of detail. This makes her buildings harmonious with and respectful to the surrounding environment – a calm and gentle approach to architecture that is carried out without extra fuss but that can still provide strong architectural statements where required. Her celebrated and award-winning museum in Naxos (Greece) is particularly interesting for the deployment of an almost anonymous modern backdrop that was purposely created to provide a sensitive backdrop against which craftsmanship (the artefacts within the structure) can speak.



The Kamra tal-Periti is affiliated to the International Union of Architects (UIA), the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE), the Commonwealth Architects' Association (CAA), Union of Mediterranean Architects (UMAR) and European Forum for Architectural Policies (EFAP).



Agnes Couvelas has chosen to structure her presentation around a theme, entitled 'Locality – Interlocality: tools for architectural creation'.

By locality, Couvelas means the quality that renders a product of architecture part of its surroundings (locus) both natural and cultural. Locality derives dynamically from the locus and includes the existing social relations at a particular time. Consequently, it is a specific time-space phenomenon. In her work she often refers to the necessity to search for and reinterpret the strong elements of our cultural identity. Locality, contrary to what one may think, creates diversity, a quality that today, more than ever before, we need to preserve and enhance.

Interlocality refers to widely accepted design principles opposed to the concept of design globalization. Contrary to impersonal universality, it penetrates localities and derives from their qualities. It may create new localities and may constitute a means of symbolism of present time. Reference to the environment, natural or man made, as a principle of architecture runs through Agnes Couvelas' whole work. This genius loci approach to design makes each new project distinct from its preceding one. The presentation of some of her recent projects will be focused on the implementation of the above principles.