

OPENING NEW GROUNDS

This year, our greetings card expresses the "mode mineur" of culture in the World in this period of crisis and uncertainties even though its role and importance in the well-being and development of societies and individuals keeps growing. While pharaonic museums and art centres projects are reducing in numbers after a inflation of signature architectures and of budgets, the culture sector at large is returning to basics: simple, functional architecture and rational allocation of resources set again the pace.

Artistic creation is being more checked and filtered by the market and the public. GAIA-heritage has always advocated the importance of looking at what lies beyond the architectural performance and of integrating culture projects and the arts in their environment so they bring benefits to the people. We firmly believe that limited and adapted resources, rigor in the conception and implementation, contribute to increased effectiveness and efficiency and to a better role of culture in societies.

We are proud to continue on this path while at the same time opening new grounds for our involvement as you may read in this short newsletter.

House of Arts and Culture

In spite of delays, the House of Arts and Culture is entering the second phase of the project. The revision of the architectural preliminary drawings is being completed, opening the door to the preparation of the detailed drawings and building permit. As the client representative, we have been active in harmonizing the roles and detailed terms of reference of the engineering company, the architectural team and the other intervening specialists. A meeting has taken place in Florence with the architects and the engineering company that was followed by several others in Beirut. A concluding coordination meeting will take place in January in Paris.

Contacts with international specialists for the equipment of the House and with contemporary arts centers and curators to pave the way for future cooperation between the House of Arts and Culture and similar centers abroad have been increased.

A 3D presentation of the House of Arts and Culture was projected at the Shanghai Expo in June 2010, at the Lebanese Pavilion. This event represented an important exposure to the future House of Arts and Culture. The Ministry of Tourism is organizing a similar presentation for the Madrid Tourism Expo (FITUR).

Investing in the creative industries

On the 25th of November, the British Council and the Lebanese Creative Cluster, in partnership with Cisco and Gaia-heritage, organized a seminar at the Riviera Hotel in Beirut, on the creative industries in Lebanon.

British and Lebanese experts participated in this seminar. "Investing in creative economy" gathered researchers, investors, entrepreneurs and creative people with one same goal: distinguish the economical advantages of investing in the creative industries and the difficulties that each of the parties concerned had to deal with, in order to find common interests. The event was the opportunity to elaborate a real thinking and communicate more on the role that Lebanon could play at national and international levels. We have been deeply involved in the preparation of the contents of the seminar and in its organization.

Georges S. Zouain took part in the Panel about Space. He presented an analysis of the physical space and the role it could play as an incubator to artistic and creative practices. A survey of the creative industry in Mar Mikhayel, a neighborhood in Beirut, was specially prepared by Gaia-heritage in October 2010 as part of the seminar; it allowed to explain the clustering phenomenon taking place in Mar Mikhayel and has shown the difficulties

encountered by these actors of creativity in the development of their work. This study was the result of a series of field visits and interviews with creative people from the neighborhood, individuals, groups, owners or tenants.

The seminar was followed on the 26th of November by a closed session that gathered a selected group of decision makers from the public and private sectors as well as creative people. Georges moderated the session that concluded with three main recommendations:

- Gathering quantitative & qualitative data and reporting them on an interactive map in a continuous upgrading, with data sheets on each creative actor. The gathered information will be about the environment as well as the different actors;
- Establishing a cultural creative entrepreneurship fund, with a portfolio approach;
- Crystallizing creative ideas through reinforcing & developing a high level education in Lebanon.

Euromed Heritage 4

Within the European Union Programme "Euromed-Heritage 4", GAIA-Heritage through Georges' involvement in the Regional Monitoring and Support Unit of the Programme, continued to provide support to the implementation of projects. Georges visited the projects on several occasions and took part in regional seminars and training workshops.

Nature Conservation

Gaia-heritage has entered the magic circle of the Walk of the Emperor. This film, which received an Oscar in 2006, offers the audience a fantastic journey; the recreation of a piece of the Antarctic in the interior of an itinerant theatre the "Tempêtarium" © conceived by its partner, the French CREATIME, whereby the public is invited to live an Antarctic storm all the while tracing the lives of the emperor penguins during austral winter.

This is then followed by the opportunity to sign a petition for the preservation of the Antarctic through the renegotiation of the existing treaty that is expected to take place in 2048. Gaia-heritage accompanies Luc Jacquet, the filmmaker of the Walk of the Emperor, in this extraordinary journey in favor of nature conservation.

Contemporary Architecture in Historic Settings

Gaia-heritage is organizing a conference on modern architecture in historic urban spaces foreseen to take place in early 2012 in Beirut. This conference bring together international specialists in arts and neurosciences, architects, town-planners and heritage management specialists in an attempt to explore new processes and tools to better understand and manage the insertion of contemporary elements in historic places.

While there is more and more advocacy for the introduction of modern architectural elements in historic cities and while

London, Paris and other important cities are launching large-scale high-rise constructions, many are questioning this trend and look for hardened protective measures of historic cities and of heritage places. A debate that could reminds us of the "querelle des anciens et des modernes" is starting and the tone of the discussions is sometimes getting heated and emotional.

In organizing this conference, we are trying to bring another angle of vision to the debate and to the management of historic urban settings. We believe we have much to learn from art historians and critics and from the recent discoveries on the vision and the brain. By bringing together these specialists, reputed architects and town planners and heritage managers, we hope to contribute to devising new tools for the analysis of the visual impacts and the management of historic urban settings.

Internships at Gaia-heritage



Yasmine Chemali has joined us for an internship of six months in October and has actively participated in the organization of the Seminar on the creative industries. Yasmine has a diploma from the Ecole du Louvre where she has studied Islamic arts & architecture and museology. She is now developing project proposals for the mapping of cultural industries in Lebanon and takes an active role in our other operations

NEWS FROM OUR PARTERS

Alberto Catalano & Partners

Alberto Catalano & Partners has just opened its doors in Milan. The new firm is currently focusing on a variety of projects, both in Italy and abroad. Its current projects include 109 social housing dwellings in Milan and 180 social housing dwellings in Garbagnate (the former Alfa Romeo area).

The team is also working on the renovation of a hotel, located in the center of Reggio Calabria, which holds a pristine view overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. A further project includes a residential building in Selva Gardena by the Dolomites.

Abroad, the firm has recently participated in a competition for the design of a World War II museum based in Danzig, Poland while it continues its work on the House of Arts and Culture of Beirut.

At present, the firm is working on the updates of one of the projects it won recently : the international competition for the design of Beirut's House of Arts and Culture.

The firm's latest works have been published in several architectural and design publications, including 'Progetti e concorsi', 'il giornale dell'architettura', 'Area', and 'Cuadernos'.

CREATIME

Terra Botanica, the theme park in Angers which offers on 11 hectares the fantastic history of the encounter of men and plants, officially opened its doors on the 10th April this year. In addition to the incredible landscape creation realized

by landscapist Thierry Huau, this park also offers 4 main attractions; a playground for kids, robot shows, pedagogical workshops, reconstitution of places with settings, as well as all kinds of animation. The most surprising element of the park is a storm theatre called "Tempêtarium" ©. The design of the set was created by Fredreric Ravatin. Already this year, the park has received more than 260,000 visitors, and is regarded as a success across the region in which it is located: Anjou and Loire.



Next year, it will be open to the whole French territory.

The open-air museum project "Made of Bamboo", which is 40 km north from Saigon, received the Ecuador initiative prize from the United Nations; a prize granted every two years to 25 projects that focus on sustainable development and the battle against poverty in the equatorial zone.

From 2002 to 2008, Creatime produced the architectural, landscape and museographic programme of this outstanding project. This was done with the aid of the village inhabitants, a Vietnamese province, the Ho Chi Min University of Sciences, the Rhone-Alpes region and the Natural Regional Park of Pilat under the patronage of the Professor Diep My Hanh.

MAGOPRODUCTION

On January 15 will be the première of the Dr:W animation series on Club Super 3 TV. This co-production by Mago Production and TVC will be screened every Saturday and Sunday at 6 pm.

After the end of the series production, in late 2010, Mago began the development of the first book of the first collection of Dr. W. The year 2011 not only announces the release of the series in Catalonia but also in Finland, France and Germany.

More info:

www.thedoctorw.com

www.magoproduction.com

