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Class of 2018

Majoring in Architecture

Attending the INTBAU 2015 World Congress

London, England

I would like to thank CUSE for partially funding my attendance at the INTBAU 2015 World Congress.

All of the lectures were very informative and it was nice to attend talks that are directed not at students, but practitioners. While the following doesn't cover every talk that happened, it represents those that most caught my attention.

The lectures were split into three groups, the first theme was 'People'. It explored how architecture can reflect and enhance a place's identity. The opening lecture was given by Robert Adam, who spoke about traditions, new and old, and how the conception of home can be on a sliding scale, from our actual houses, our villages, to our national identity. He spoke about how by definition, identity requires variety, if every place was the same nothing would have identity, however despite the need for variety, there must be similarities that are shared across culture, if not for commonalities within the variety, there would be chaos at all levels. As said before, identity needs to operate on many different scales. I thought this was intriguing when applied to a city such as Seattle, where I call home. This city's existing built history only goes back a little more than one hundred years, and there is very little sign of a regional vernacular. Lacking a coherent built identity, I wonder if one could be discovered by exploring places of similar climate and culture, and, as Mr. Adam said, perhaps a tradition could be fabricated by referencing other relevant examples.

Two very inspirational speakers followed Adam's lecture. Dr. Thomas Wide and Professor Alejandro Garcia Hermida spoke about different projects with similar goals and impacts. Both men were involved with communities of disadvantaged people, Dr. Wide in Afghanistan and Prof. Hermida in Morocco. Using local craft as a catalyst for economic and community development, both projects have been wildly successful. Dr. Wide especially impressed me when he pointed out that much of the international community does its best to remind countries like Afghanistan of what they lack, peace, economic prosperity, women's rights, and religious freedom. Rather than continue in a tradition of belittlement and condemnation, Dr. Wide focused on what the culture *does* have. By restoring a nearly destroyed historic center in Afghanistan, he gave the residents and workers hope for their future and pride in their history.

The second lecture series was entitled 'Education'. Christine Franck spoke about the state of architectural education in the United States. I knew other architecture schools were different, even radically so, but the ideologically entrenched nature of architectural academia was new to me. After the lecture, I was able to speak with Hugh Petter, a partner at ADAM architecture. I

asked him about his education and how, since it was difficult to find schools that offered a classical education in Briton, he learned to do so. He said he was mainly self-taught, although he was able to find one or two professors sympathetic to traditional architecture. Later, I spoke with two younger employees of the same firm, and having been educated in England, their experience was much the same. All of this made me realize how essential Notre Dame is to my own education and that of many others.

Finally, the third theme of the congress was ‘Sustainability’, it focused on how we can learn from the past to create a more sustainable future. Steve Mouzon, the author of *The Original Green* gave a short lecture on the basic principles of his formula for sustainable building. In addition he spoke about the ‘Caribbean Rim’ vernacular which was essentially created to withstand the hurricanes that regularly ravage the area. This was especially interesting to me because it related to my question regarding the fabrication of a regional building type in a place that lacks one.

My attendance at the conference was valuable and interesting, and the fact that it was held in London was a fantastic experience unto itself. From my all too brief stay, I see London as a city endowed with great history and culture yet flooded with diversity which truly creates an international community. I was interested in how the traditional nature of the city is enriched rather than overtaken by the more recent international character. It is an inspiring city to study and walk around and I am glad I was given such an opportunity.

Thank you very much for your support, the experience answered many questions I had, and offered an opportunity to speak with professionals in the field. Having visited London and been exposed to INTBAU, I hope to experience the city more and perhaps become involved with INTBAU as well. Without your help I would not have been able to attend.

Sincerely,

Parker Hansen