

Principles of Hassan Fathy's architecture; Doctrines for Today



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ABSTRACT

Hassan Fathy started to his architectural practice at a time when modernism was becoming increasingly popular and widespread all over the world, and drew attention with his attitude towards this 'new' global style, which does not pay attention to concepts such as history, culture, tradition and locality. To locate Fathy in his era, he was 31 years younger than Frank Lloyd Wright, 13 years younger than Le Corbusier, and 2 years younger than Louis Kahn. Although he started his architecture practice relatively after the famous pioneers of the modern movement, he opposed the general discourses of the period and gave importance to an architectural approach that was fed by traditions, local culture and history. Use of local natural materials and sustainability have been at the forefront both in the techniques and methods used in Fathy's architecture. Although Fathy's architecture was not widely accepted in his early periods, later on, his work and philosophy made quite an impact around the world. Especially with the publication of his book "Architecture for the Poor, an Experiment in Rural Egypt", was published in Cairo in 1969 and USA in 1973, the whole world got to know Fathy and his doctrines. In his designs and discourses, he sought answers to how the experience and knowledge from the past would illuminate present day's expectations and the requirements.

When Fathy's discourse and doctrines are examined in his pursuit, it is seen that three basic principles are at the forefront; the affordability of the buildings, the involvement of the local folk in the production process and energy efficiency. Fathy's architecture stands out with its traditionalist, ecological and sustainable features that benefit from vernacular culture and experience. Although ecology and sustainability have been the fields that have been studied intensively in recent years, the fact that Fathy became aware of these concepts at a time when the whole world focused on modernism and did not care about these concepts shows that he developed an innovative and original approach besides his traditional character.

Within the scope of the study, Fathy's architecture was tried to be analyzed, especially through the buildings he designed in Egypt, within the concepts of ecology, sustainability and energy efficiency. Along with physical analysis and evaluations through his buildings, his teachings and philosophy were also examined with a critical view, especially through the texts he produced, and tried to be interpreted in the context of the dynamics of today's architectural environment. Afterwards, projections for the future were expressed, considering that Fathy's farsighted teachings were not actually a periodic attitude and approach.

Keywords: Hassan Fathy, Ecological Architecture, Vernacular Architecture