

# EDITORIAL

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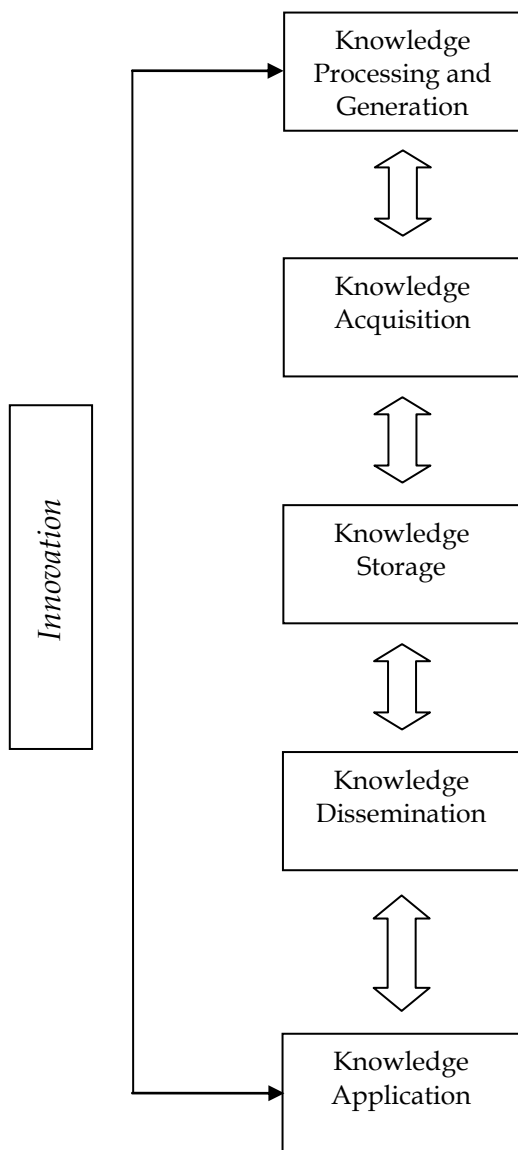
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## Completing the Knowledge Value Chain

Attuned with the age of the information economy, MUHON is the UP College of Architecture’s vehicle for completing the knowledge value chain in the designed environment field. Bodies of knowledge generated through research and professional practice go through the cyclical and iterative process involving value adding activities that lead to innovation.



*Research team working on a project funded by the UP Diliman Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Research and Development.*



*Adapted from: Wang, Ahmed, 2005.*

⟨ In UPCA, this falls within the domain of the studio laboratories, which represent specialized fields of research undertakings. The Research Program directs these collaborative works by formulating the research thrusts of the college.

⟨ The teaching function of the college is administered by the Academic Programs through in-class and out-of-class learning activities. The undergraduate and graduate program curricula are constantly assessed in terms of relevance to the current and projected social contexts.

⟨ The knowledge database consisting of creative and research outputs by faculty and staff are organized for easy access and updating. The collection of thesis works, documented design projects and seminar/conference proceedings are managed through the physical and virtual libraries of the college.

⟨ MUHON and other designed environment-related publications come in as the conduits through which knowledge generated in the academe flow out to the industry and the public at large. These printed information sources are coupled with seminars and workshops that are geared at sharing new ideas that could potentially make a difference in the existing state of things.

⟨ The Extension Program of the college is the arm that further extends the academe beyond the conventional role of a knowledge repository. Knowledge gained becomes meaningful if it is made to seep through the operational systems of industries, the governance structures of public agencies and the daily challenges and coping mechanisms of the common people.

Such is the complete chain that is key to the realization of UPCA's vision to be "a moving force in the improvement of the quality of life..." New bodies of knowledge ideally translate to changes in what is and what have been or what people are accustomed to. These changes are supposed to be documented and fed back to the knowledge chain. It is this constant coming in and out of new realizations that result in innovation.

**As world economies are continuously restructured in favor of the services sector and as global competition becomes more intense, innovations will always command high premiums.** Creative processes and outputs that challenge the status quo, rather than cost competitiveness-based strategies are the forces that catapult cities and nations to progress. Building forms, outdoor spaces, details and finishes are constantly being redefined with the increasing sophistication of the clients' needs and wants. Coded knowledge then need to be revisited and constantly recoded to respond to, as well as stimulate desired responses from the social structures that they should match with.

**Designed environment professions have the unique role of being able to tackle both the software and the hardware components of the knowledge-based economy.** What starts as an abstract concept eventually gets translated into tangible elements that concretize processed pieces of information. These fields of practice, therefore, provide immense opportunities for meaningful interventions

The college may be seen as a knowledge base that can fuel productive pursuits in the same way a city does for a country or the world. The city is a milieu that accommodates the concentration of human capital that make up interrelated social systems. The confluence of specialized skills and information set off a process of knowledge transmutation. In the academic setting, the provision of this city-like venue for convergence enhances the process of creation. Convergence implies access and proximity, which are both addressed physically and virtually. While the physical meetings and face-to-face exchanges of ideas are aided by college infrastructure such as classrooms and studios, virtual exchanges are facilitated by electronic and printed media. MUHON serves to sustain this knowledge ecosystem by pooling together modeled, processed and coded information.

Free flow of information that is an essential attribute of the knowledge economy is allowed as MUHON features academic papers that embody the crossing of specializations represented by the different studio laboratories. Multi-directional knowledge transmutations across these specialized fields lead to technological advancement, which is yet another key ingredient of the information-based economy. **Technology, which is a component of the supply side of the knowledge value chain, is also a potential output that may be applied and translated into new spatial experiences.**

## Muhon 4

**MUHON** is a Filipino word derived from the Spanish word *Mojón*, which signifies the physical definition of spaces referred to as landmark, boundary, place and territory. This fourth issue of the journal of the UP College of Architecture aptly embodies all these denotations. This is a **landmark** issue that features seven academic papers that have undergone review by an international group of referees. Academics from universities in Asia, Europe, North America and Latin America shortlisted these papers from a total of seventeen. Referees include academics and professionals in the fields of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, City Planning, Engineering, Architectural Science, Heritage Conservation and Education. This MUHON issue sets the **boundary** between perception and theoretically and methodologically-grounded arguments about spaces ranging from interior spaces in buildings to urban and communal spaces. It also clarifies the boundary between the randomly disposed built areas and the rationally designed environments

Thirdly, this issue is all about **places** in their most fully-encompassing sense. MUHON is a cornerstone that seals the existence of space on the ground. The papers included in this issue bring the concept of space to a higher level as they tackle it as a multi-dimensional entity that has socio-cultural components. And lastly, the papers confirm the concept of **territory**. Definition of territories connotes ownership- a one-to-one correspondence between space and an individual or a group of people. This claimed space is, over time, defined and constantly redefined by its dialectic relationship with the claimants.

**Three key themes** are prevalent in these papers: (1) the need to contextualize the decision-making leading to design processes; (2) recognition of places as very specific and unique confluences of a wide range of realities; and (3) the existence of a two-way correlation between spaces and the social and temporal milieus where they are located.

*JV Chua* and *RF Bernardo's* simulation study highlights the need for a designed learning environment to respond to local climate and other site realities. With daylighting as an end goal, building envelope, materials and architectural form are among the design elements that may be manipulated to make the interior space perform at par with the parameters for energy efficiency and user comfort. *MS Gilles'* quantitative investigation on the amenity values of green open spaces rationalizes the allotment of significantly large areas of real property for what are conventionally categorized as non-revenue generating uses. Parks and green spaces in shopping centers actually translate to monetary returns while capitalizing on the tropical settings of these establishments.

*CD Nadal's* triangulation-based research illustrates how a heritage site and structure can remain as such while adapting to modern urban development trends. The Malate Church and grounds serve as a transition space where activities represent the convergence of the historical and current contexts that this religious complex embodies.

*RL Mata's* phenomenological research ends with the recognition of the value of community involvement in the formulation of municipal plans that are anchored on the cultural heritage of Sta. Catalina, Carcar, Cebu. Participation of the stakeholders in the documentation and design formulation stages yielded planning inputs that would account for the sustainability of the heritage preservation efforts. *PS Marahatta and JR Pokharel's* analysis and conclusions stress the importance of social attributes in establishing the level of resiliency of communities against natural disasters. The paper also presents the capability of indigenous communities in Kathmandu Valley to respond to calamity situations. Disaster-resilience principles may, therefore, be drawn from these experiences to make communities in the contemporary setting better equipped in addressing natural disaster issues.

*EU Ozaeta's* qualitative analysis brought to fore the strength of spatial qualities in influencing behavior. The paper, which relates architecture with the learning process argues that the designed space can be a teaching aid particularly for pre-school level where the ability to perceive space is developed. The space then where learning happens can be thought of as more than just an inanimate entity. *GT Orbon's* survey-based research reinforces the notion of space as an active participant rather than a passive container of people and events. The UP Diliman Shopping Center has features that interplay with other factors such as transport facilities and distance which all collectively influence the level of patronage of this commercial center.

Also featured in this issue of Muhon are the project abstracts of two undergraduate theses. The Bachelor of Science in Architecture Thesis by *LL Celestial* is an animal rehabilitation facility that draws on theories in the fields of Psychology and the natural sciences. The Bachelor of Landscape Architecture Thesis by *JG Amar* infuses city planning and environmental science principles into the design of a waterfront park.

The papers and design projects included in Muhon 4 were prepared under the auspices of the eight (8) Studio Laboratories of the UP College of Architecture. These are the following: Architectural Design; Architectural Communication; History, Theory and Criticism; Building Science; Urban Design; Practice and Governance; Environmental Architecture; and Landscape Architecture Studio Laboratories. It is the goal of the college to engage students and faculty in the graduate and undergraduate levels in research that would entail the crossing of these different fields. Inter-disciplinary approaches that interweave architecture and landscape architecture with economics, sociology, geography and other social science fields are highly encouraged. It is hoped that through this window, the quality of research outputs especially in the Master of Architecture and Master of Tropical Landscape Architecture programs will constantly be upgraded. This publication also paves the way for the offering a future Doctor of Philosophy program in the college. The envisioned Ph.D. program is largely studio-based, requiring collaborative research works with faculty.

## The Research Program

UPCA's Research Program is geared at generating research projects that are aimed at upgrading quality of life through better designed environments. The research undertakings of the college are directed towards these general thrusts:

- Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness
- Sustainable Design and Building Materials
- Cities and Economic Development
- Cities and Global Networks
- Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Heritage Conservation
- Landscape and Environmental Design
- Contextual Design/ Tropical Design
- Innovative Materials and Building Technology
- Global Practice and the Design Professions

Knowledge-generation in the designed environment realm can fall under any of three categories, which are defined as follows:

**Creative Design:** New space and form concepts can emerge out of design studies for a known building type or landscape setting. The proposed design can be illustrative of the use of new technology or novel ways of addressing user needs. These design studies can also lead to new building types, landscape designs or interior spaces that are called for by emergent social organizations that correspond to new forms of interaction. New design programs could also reflect evolving principles, philosophies or ways of thinking.

**Advancing New Principles or Systems:** The output of investigations can be new theories involving the behavior of elements in the physical or social environment that could potentially redefine architecture and landscape architecture- their practice and their products. Propositions could be in the form of models representing sets of relationships among variables that translate to new architectural products. Studies generating principles for disaster-resilience, tropical climate adaptations, workplace efficiency, and urban renewal are a few examples of these outputs. The application of these principles can be innovative building systems, landscape design features, new construction materials, or new concepts for lighting, ventilation, acoustics or fire safety features.

**Formulation of Guidelines:** Research in the designed environment fields could yield sets of prescriptions on how to address issues or how to get something done. These guidelines are aimed at systematizing procedures and implementation strategies. Establishing a set of criteria for post-occupancy evaluation, formulating guidelines for energy conservation in buildings, prescribing procedures for heritage conservation, are examples of research outputs that could impact design.

Thesis projects and faculty research that have been completed over the years can be categorized under one or a combination of these three types.

## Going Places

MUHON continues to negotiate and mark places...

The college journal was launched in year 2000 to serve as a forum for discussion of ideas on the designed environment. This publication seeks original work and welcomes contributions related to a variety of issues. It considers for publication research, technical and philosophical papers. The journal encourages prospective contributors to view their efforts as exercises on critical inquiry. Great emphasis is placed on the idea content of the work, its scholarly depth, and on the development of arguments.

The maiden issue covered a wide array of design issues. It tackled the economic costs of housing regulations, cases of environmental misfits in public outdoor spaces, sick building syndrome and the socio-cultural dimensions of public markets. Landscape architecture themes were discussed in papers on parking for the tropics and constructed wetland systems. This first issue also induced critical thinking as it featured non-traditional themes such as "*mala-baklang espasyo*" or gay spaces.

MUHON is also a venue for publishing creative and professional works of architects in the academe. These documented works must highlight new bodies of knowledge applied to or generated by the projects. Hence, the second issue mainly featured three papers that illustrated how new design principles lead to innovative space conceptualization strategies. Muhon 2 is a recognition of the parallelisms between research and design. It is an acknowledgment of design as a process of knowledge generation and research as a valuable requisite to design.

The third issue was the first to be published online. As such, this issue covered themes that brought to fore Filipino and universal design issues. Paper included various topics on semi-urban development guidelines, comprehensive development planning processes, landscape design, heritage conservation, tourism, housing for the urban poor, billboard industry structure, alternative teaching techniques, and urban heat phenomenon. MUHON 3 reached a wider sphere as new ideas flowed out through cyberspace. The online publication also opened opportunities to receive feedback on the papers from local and international readers.

The fourth issue treaded another previously unexplored frontier while going back to the basic essence of research. Logically drawn conclusions that were formulated through a clear research design and a set of reliable and valid data are the features of these published papers that went through the rigors of international review. This fourth installment takes off with a mission to instigate yet another round of inquiry as it hopes to inspire more creative and knowledge seeking pursuits.

Where MUHON will take us next will depend heavily on how we value and welcome CHANGE.