

mAAN ISTANBUL DECLARATION 2005

Today, in Istanbul, at the western end of the ancient silk route, we look east once again and see a vast continent with a wealth of architectures and a wondrous mélange of cultures and lifestyles, where the ancient and the modern, the Asian and the non-Asian, have mingled and merged for centuries.

At the end of our fifth international conference, we affirm and expand the spirit of the Macau Declaration 2001. mAAN is committed to the evaluation, preservation and revitalization of modern architecture in Asia. For the last five years we have explored the extremities of our continent and documented myriad varieties of modernity and architecture. Faced with a vast, living, archive of Asia's modern architecture, which in many cases represents the sole connection with our past, we recognize the need for rigorous research, careful analysis and resolute action to protect our heritage and to replace it at the centre of our daily life.

mAAN has maintained a public presence—with newsletters, exhibitions, workshops and conferences—while occasionally withdrawing into spaces of reflection, to write books, to make films, and to design interventions. With the emerging technologies brought into the service of humanity, the network has dematerialized, thus distributing power to regional and local initiatives. Our communications are speeding up, boundaries are dissolving, and we are embracing cooperation with other organizations worldwide that are interested and invested in modern architecture in Asia.

Memory is a prerequisite for all thinking. Knowing our pasts gives us confidence and momentum, and the stability to engage with the challenges of the future. Revitalization of the modern built environment demands the resurrection of lost crafts and techniques and the preservation of an irrecoverable native knowledge that passes away with every generation. The fulfillment of mAAN's objectives presents the real possibility that modern architecture can be the genesis of a modern lifestyle and ethos for the people of Asia. Through our revitalization efforts, we can enhance the wealth of our societies.

We are creating a decentralized and distributed repository of local knowledge. Sharing this instantly and globally has become vital to our future and direction. We are advocating changes in policy and revisions in process in order to make modern architecture a concern, an issue and a debate for every individual, every community and every government. We are nurturing new generations of architects, planners and administrators and cultivating new and sustainable approaches to heritage management. We are empowering our students today so they may become leaders tomorrow. Committed engagement with the fertile field of modern Asian architecture addresses the vital needs of shelter, identity and beauty for the growing populations of Asia. In an urban century, contemplating a metropolitan future, we promote and practice the revitalization of ageing heritages through the infusion of creative capital.

mAAN will bridge the divide between research and practice by creating partnerships with local communities, academics, design professionals, administrators and developers. We dedicate ourselves to improving the lives of millions of Asians who have faith in modernity, by restoring the vital presence of modern architecture. mAAN pledges that modern architectural heritage will become the manifest wealth of our people.

(Declared in Istanbul, 30 June 2005)