

Preface

FARROKH DERAKHSHANI

A large part of the world's population, including increasing numbers of people in the Muslim world, spend a majority of their time in places of production, such as factories, workshops, and industrial facilities. In most cases, industrial facilities are built with only economic performance in mind; the welfare of those who work in these buildings has not been a major concern.

The human aspects of the built environment, in parallel to innovative intelligent solutions for the functional and aesthetic aspects of projects, were a principal concern for His Highness the Aga Khan when he first established the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in the late 1970s. In the past thirty years, the Award has strived to find exemplary works of architecture and to share their unique qualities with those who are responsible for shaping our built environment. The Award's mandate is not only to recognize outstanding projects by permeating them, but it also plays a broader role in the dissemination of ideas and information of concern to architects and clients through its regular program of seminars, meetings, and exhibitions.

Addressing the issue of industrial facilities and places of production has been on the Award's agenda for many years. The fact that there was not a single industrial facility among the more than 100 projects that had received the Award since 1980 was an issue that, it was felt, deserved further investigation. An international seminar to explore this subject

was therefore organized during the eleventh Award cycle. Turkey was chosen for the seminar venue since it is the Islamic world's most industrialized country, and Istanbul Bilgi University, which itself is located on an old industrial site, was a natural partner for this venture. At the seminar, architects, engineers, and academics from around the world joined their Turkish counterparts to explore subjects such as the relatively little-known history of industrial buildings in Muslim societies, the contemporary design of industrial buildings, agro-industrial projects, and the adaptive re-use of industrial facilities.

One of the numerous themes that the seminar, which was entitled "Workplaces: The Transformation of Places of Production," explored, was the rapidly-changing nature of many industries and their modes of production. The old sheds that contained traditional production lines are becoming obsolete, and at the same time, the overwhelming growth of cities in many Muslim countries has meant that what were peripheral industrial sites are now located within dense urban areas. The transformation of these sites to accommodate new urban realities has become a major challenge for authorities. Many old industrial spaces were considered liabilities for their surroundings, but, with imaginative programming, some of them have been transformed into assets that support a healthy urban life. Also, while older industrial facilities are being reconfigured to accommodate new functions,

new construction techniques and materials have given architects additional tools to design industrial facilities at scales that some decades ago were not possible.

The seminar helped focus attention on the importance of industrial facilities in the Muslim world. In fact, for the 2010 cycle of the Aga Khan Award, the Master Jury selected the Ipekyol Textile Factory in Edirne, Turkey, designed by Istanbul-based Emre Arolat Architects, as one of the five Award recipients. The message that the jury wanted to convey in selecting the Ipekyol Factory was that a visionary client who allows an architect to design a space of quality not only serves the well-being of his employees, but also ultimately helps increase productivity.

The basis for the seminar was set by the Award Steering Committee, and Mohammad al-Asad developed the concept on their behalf. Suha Özkan, former Secretary General of the Award, Han Tümertekin, member of the Award Steering Committee, and İhsan Bilgin, Director of the Graduate Program in Architectural Design at Istanbul Bilgi University were instru-

mental in the organization of the event since its inception. Sefik Onat and Tolga Turgal, along with their team, coordinated the logistics for the seminar with assistance from Francesca Cantien at the Award.

Mohammad al-Asad undertook the task of editing the publication of the seminar proceedings. The proceedings include a selection of papers presented at the seminar or prepared afterwards. The texts were copyedited by Cyrus Samii. Sibel Bozdoğan, one of the contributors to the proceedings, oversaw its publication in coordination with Belgin Cinar at Bilgi University Press. The main photographic essay of this volume is by Cemal Emden, who was commissioned to photograph contemporary industrial sites in Turkey for the seminar.

It is hoped that this first publication on the topic of industrial facilities in the Muslim World will trigger discussions and draw the attention of both industrialists and designers to consider the quality of space and the welfare of users as prime objectives in creating the workplaces of the future.