

Architecture of the 1980s-1990s in Tel Aviv-Jaffa

Researchers

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Research Summary

Dr. Yael Allweil's ongoing research aims to identify and classify buildings from the postmodern period in the Tel Aviv municipality, in order to create an analytical survey of the city's postmodern heritage.

Research Description

In the 1980s-1990s, a period of resurgence and expansion brought great political, economic, and social changes. Postmodern architectural theory, which had developed abroad as a reaction to modernism since the 1960s, arrived in Tel Aviv in 1980-1990. Postmodernism's new ideas on urban architecture, design, and heritage preservation rejected the previous modernist values of minimalism and functionality. The construction of new, whimsical postmodern buildings and preservation of others in the 80s and 90s transformed Tel Aviv into a city of 100,000 new constructions, built additions, and preserved historical structures.

The ongoing research aims to identify and classify buildings from the postmodern period in Tel Aviv, in order to create an analytical survey of the city's postmodern heritage. Seeking to read Tel Aviv's postmodernism as a Historical Urban Landscape (HUL), it will examine components beyond stylistic elements characteristic of preservation praxis and follow the postmodern architectural theory engagement with the communicative capacity of the building and urban facade. The research analyzes building facades as a reflection of historical and ideological transformation in both architectural design theory and the relationship between architecture and the city. It will use historical archival research, formal analysis, and GIS mapping to document and analyze Tel Aviv's postmodern built heritage.

The study's methodology acknowledges the shortcoming of "style" when defining the legacy of the period architecture of the city. Instead, it uses a historical and formal study of the city's facades, as an accumulation of built characteristics that reflect historical processes. A vocabulary of such characteristics developed to define the period, such as staggered balconies, built additions on the roofs, and mock facades. The research analyzes the city's built environment through the identified

features and cross-references with historical and formal data. In order to map the complex data, four main themes were selected to constitute the four chapters of the study:

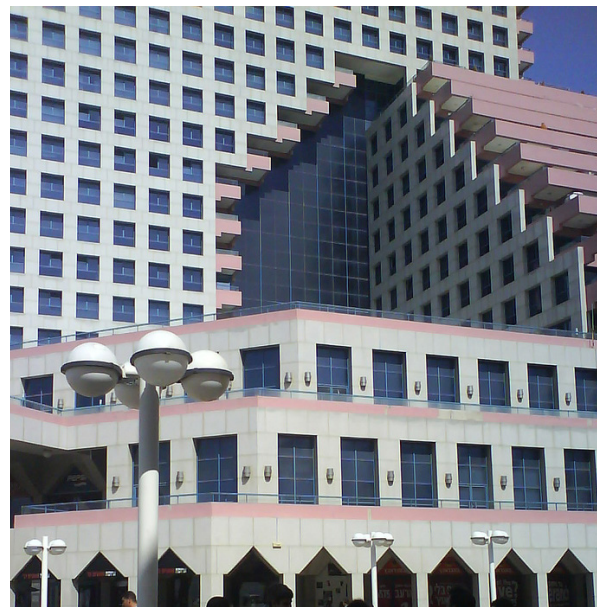
- a. Iconic Structures. The study identified approximately 200 iconic structures, including buildings that were preserved within the framework of the conservation plan during the period.
- b. Postmodern Structures Embedded in the Fabric. Thousands of such structures reside within the city, comprising a significant layer of the city's fabric. The structures require a typological analysis of stylistic characterization groups.
- c. Public Spaces. During the 1980s and 1990s, the acceptance of urban design in Tel Aviv's urban planning system sparked the creation and redesign of dozens of open public spaces and buildings.
- d. Postmodern Neighborhoods and Compounds. The research identified dozens of complete neighborhoods and compounds developed during the period.

The study identified a number of analytical themes and structural characteristics in the architecture of the 1980s-1990s, among which included:

1. Additions. The architecture of the 1980s and 1990s influenced the pre-existing urban fabric of the White City in the form of postmodern structures added onto the modernist cityscape, as well as postmodern additions to existing preservation buildings.
2. Facade. The research identified the building front as the main signifier of the character and architectural expression of Tel Aviv's postmodernism.
3. Self-Referential Architecture. References to the architectural past of cities and their heritage characterizes postmodern architecture and theory. In Tel Aviv, postmodern architecture was highly influenced by the city's modernist heritage.
4. Color, material, and detail. The use of color, materials, and complex details both differentiates and connects the architecture of the period from previous periods.
5. Entry of Architecture into Urban Planning. The entry of the architectural discipline into the

urban planning mechanism defined the post-modern period.

Based on new innovations, the research will create a documentation of Tel Aviv's postmodern heritage that can be implemented into the city's data and GIS resources. The findings will ultimately enable the assessment and preservation of Tel Aviv's post-modern heritage.



The Opra House. Photo: Dror Levin