

ECOWEEK 2010

... habits change ... climate change

YOUNG ARCHITECTS' FORUM :: مسابقتی :: ΦΟΡΟΥΜ :: פורום
GREEN ARCHITECTURE :: COMMUNITY :: SUSTAINABILITY



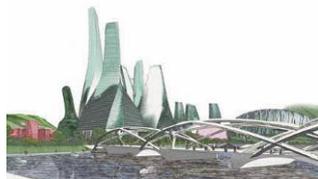
Israel & West Bank: July 25 – August 1, 2010

ECOWEEK 2010: from Aegina island to the Middle East & from Ecology to Peace

NGO ECOWEEK was born on the island of Aegina, Greece, in 2005. Its activity included local events at the Folklore Museum and the historic medieval tower of Markellos; visits to passive solar houses by award-winning architect Alexandros Tombazis and renowned architect Kostas Tspiras. In 2007 ECOWEEK invited **Al Gore** (photo) to present his slide show at the Athens Concert Hall with Megaron Plus, in 2008 ECOWEEK started activity in Cyprus with the Municipality of Larnaka and MKC City College and in 2009 ECOWEEK co-organized the conference “Green Civil Engineering” with SCE College of Engineering and the partial support of the Ministry of Environment of Israel. Last year, ECOWEEK brought to Athens the guru of modern Architecture **Shigeru Ban** and this year ECOWEEK hosted a lecture and workshop with legendary **Rural Studio** and **WHITE Architects**.



This week something different took place. ECOWEEK successfully completed its first large scale conference in the Middle East titled “Green Architecture : Community : Sustainability”. A unique initiative that combined ecology with peace, cooperation and ‘green’ buildings for non-profit community organizations.



Palestinian architect **Omar Yousef**, who lectured and led a workshop at ECOWEEK, put it very poetically. He compared ECOWEEK 2010 to a healthy forest: ‘ECOWEEK is like a healthy forest,’ he said. It contains the ingredients of a forest, such as biodiversity, mutual support and cooperation. Indeed, the participating young architects and students were Greek, Israeli, Palestinian, Italian, French and British, forming a group very rich in texture, ideas, backgrounds, and beliefs. Nevertheless, for one week this group worked harmonically and creatively together producing exceptional designs, under the guidance of leading architects from around the world. ECOWEEK 2010 speakers were award-winning architects **Bjarke Ingels (BIG)** (photo), **Michael**



Sorkin (Sorkin Studio) (photo), and **Thomas Rau (Rau Architects)**. The 4-day long ECOWEEK workshops were led by leading architects such as architect and urban planner from New York **Michael Sorkin (Sorkin studio)**, the Greek award-winning landscape architect **Thomas Doxiadis (doxiadis+)**, and the leading Palestinian architect **Omar Yousef**. The workshops produced ecological buildings for the Shorouq Palestinian Women Society in Al-Izaryia, a community center for the Ethiopian community in Kiryat Gat, a building to house IPCRI and other peace organizations in Jerusalem, urban interventions for the environmental awareness of the local communities within the 2nd Bat Yam Biennale, the first ecological pedestrian street in the old city of Beersheva, and other assignments.



The ECOWEEK team also met with the planners of the first modern and highly sophisticated Palestinian city **Rawabi** currently under construction, in the outskirts of Ramallah.



Of course, it is not the first time that an NGO brings together Israelis and Palestinians,' says ECOWEEK founder and Chairman architect Elias Messinas. 'What was unique about ECOWEEK in the Middle East, was the combination of ingredients, some of which have been implemented in the past, but never in that combination, and in such extend and scope. The binding element of the conference was cooperation: between young and established architects, designers and landscape architects, and graduate students; between Israelis and Palestinians. Israelis and Greeks. Israelis that designed community buildings for Palestinians and Palestinians for Israelis. Education was another very important ingredient, together with the implementation of the principles of 'green' buildings, and community projects for real communities some of which will be built. This rich texture of cooperation was not only in the content, but it also run through the organization of the conference. ECOWEEK 2010 in the Middle East was the result of cooperation between a number of exceptional and leading organizations, groups and people.



E COWEEK 2010 in the Middle East took place under the auspices of the European Institute for Law, Science and Technology. It was made possible thanks to the cooperation of ECOWEEK with the Municipality of Beersheva, the 2nd Bat Yam Biennale, the Royal Embassy of Denmark in Tel Aviv, the Ministry of Culture of Denmark, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, the Danish Arts Agency, the Dutch Green Building Council, the American Cultural Center in Jerusalem, the US Embassy and US Consulate, the Bruno Zevi Foundation, the Porter School of Environmental Studies at Tel Aviv University, Friends of the Earth Middle East, Architecture for Humanity Tel Aviv Chapter, IPCRI, Palestine Peace Society, Brigham Young University Center in Jerusalem, the David Azrieli School of Architecture at Tel Aviv University, the Interior Design Depart at Holon Institute of Technology, the Technion Faculty of Architecture, Shenkar School of Design, College of Management, architectural firm SAYA, the Shorouq Palestine Women Society. ECOWEEK had the participation of students from the Palestinian Polytechnic of Hebron, and Bir Zeit University. ECOWEEK acknowledges the cooperation of the Consul General of Greece Mr. Sotirios Athanasiou and the Consulate General of Greece in Jerusalem. Communication partners of ECOWEEK were CSRWire, DETAIL, ECOLOGIK and EuroCharity.

Organizer and coordinator of ECOWEEK 2010 in the Middle East is the founder and Chairman of ECOWEEK **Elias Messinas** an architect and environmental consultant.

- > To find more details on ECOWEEK in the Middle East: www.ecoweeek.org.il.
- > Photographs and videos of ECOWEEK 2010 in the Middle East at: http://ecoweeek.netfirms.com/ecoweeek/press_room_photo_album_ecoweeek_ENG.htm

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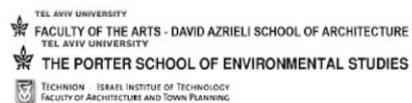
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