

This issue of Architectural Papers brings together material about the contemporary practice of architecture in the Middle East.

The Middle East, a central place due to its history and geographical position, formalizes some of today's tensions. Here, the **DESTRUCTION-CONSTRUCTION** dialectic appears without metaphors alongside the tensions between **IDENTITY AND COSMOPOLITANISM** that have always accompanied modernism and which, in times of globalization, must be regarded in a new light.

In our globalized world, any claim to exoticism becomes meaningless, so looking at and understanding the "Other" is simply a means of finding out more about ourselves. **THE OTHER MERGES WITH US.** Our role here, to a large extent, is to find interlocutors and scenarios that allow our arguments to expand and transform.

Our viewpoint is at once distant and close. **DISTANT**, because sometimes architecture disappears into the landscape, or behind words; but also **CLOSE**, where detail, material, texture, shadow and light affect us. And where the singular experience, sometimes, comes to the fore.

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