

John Peponis, Sep 4, 2016
friends - knowledge - place - self

It is a strange feeling: I decide to switch to studio for all sorts of contextual reasons, that you mostly know. At the age of 61, I find this switch both difficult and pleasant. With the advent of all these years, I surprise myself by knowing how to define problems, how to guide design, how to get the students to do sensible work. I can never do the avant-garde studio that a school of architecture would want, one showing new technologies and one paying lip service to the pressures of the day. But doing studio is exciting because it tests the implications of theoretical intuitions that have been cultivated over many years.

I could never have embarked on this process without the support of friends. Superficially, it is technical and critical support: their 'know how' and 'experience' and 'critical judgment of students' work'. But fundamentally, it is critical support to myself, based on common ideas and common wave lengths that are not all easy to pin down in words. 'Friends' in this contexts are those one deeply trusts, relative to the matter at hand. I increasingly come to understand why the Greek word 'Philosophia' brings together 'friend' and 'wisdom'. It is not just being 'friends of wisdom', it is also being 'friends in wisdom'. There is a deep connection between 'dialogue aimed at truth' and the human basis of such dialogue in friendship.

So last Spring it was Andreas and Maria, and now it is you. Last Spring it was Greek landscape where I grew up, now it is a Korean City I hardly know. How deeply interesting, and how deeply reassuring at the human level, that both settings feel equally my own, because both Andreas and Maria and you are 'friends in wisdom', whatever wisdom we have managed, whatever different facets of a common pool of understanding we represent.

PS: The students were truly very appreciative of your presentation and found it most helpful. They were genuine. They left happy.

John Peponis (Ph.D.)
Professor
School of Architecture
College of Design
Georgia Institute of Technology
247 Fourth Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30332-0155

t: +1 404 894 7667

e: john.peponis@design.gatech.edu

w: <http://www.arch.gatech.edu/people/john-peponis>