THE TROPICAL FALLACY
Discrepancies in Tropical Architecture

by

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Abstract

In recent years, ideas in tropical design have become more popular and accepted in our region. However, as “Tropicalism” is essentially a loose term and almost everyone designing in the region seems to claim to have adequately designed for the region, designers have often overlooked certain important aspects of our region in the designing process. Misinformation, misguidance and misconceptions with what seems to be appropriate for the region may also have resulted in design which are ineffective and sometimes inappropriate. These often come in the form of pastiche or kitsch architecture. By looking back to the determinants and key issues within tropical design especially in the areas of biology and climate, this paper attempts to point out discrepancies and reprioritize the importance of human comfort as a major component within tropical design today. A method of counter-checking was also formulated to systematically bring out important concerns which may not be properly addressed in the provisions for human comfort in the design of buildings.

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