

Ignacio Galán.

HERITAGE REFORMULATED

Innovative Occupation Practices by New Users in Vacant Vernacular Spaces at the Spanish Pyrenees.



In the frame of **Rehabilitation of Urban Heritage in the Cities of Iraq** Project funded by the DAAD, part of the joint activities between the Middle East Cooperation Unit- in Brandenburg University of Technology (BTU), The University Baghdad, and the University of Sulaimani, we are pleased to invite you to this online lecture.

The Lecture: The abandonment of mountainous rural settlements is one of the spatial impacts of the ongoing urban concentration processes. These force local communities to leave their villages searching for better living conditions, generating different issues for the remaining inhabitants. However, in the last decades, different novel experiences of reoccupation of formerly depopulated settlements by very diverse types of users and for new functions have been identified in the Spanish Central Pyrenees. Each kind of engaged user(s) has a specific interest in these places, triggering a very different transformation of the settlements according to their needs and available resources, recovering the genuine meaning of the “vernacular”. This phenomenon indicates that vernacular heritage buildings, often overlooked by local authorities, still possess different intrinsic qualities that attract new settlers allowing them to adapt these existing spaces to generate new activities. However, the vacancy of these rural settlements, though perceived as a problem, can provide new opportunities to re-think the future of these areas.

The close investigation of these diverse cases enables us to identify the undisclosed value that vacant heritage spaces have for the new inhabitants, whose spatial reactivation of these settlements contribute to support the remaining

members of the local community. The identified spatial qualities and the adaptation interventions developed in each case facilitate the (re)generation of new strategies to deal with the ongoing challenges that the rural territories face.

Ignacio Galán (MSc. - PhD Candidate) (Huesca, 1991) is a Spanish architect and researcher at KULeuven, currently based in Belgium. Passionate about architectural heritage and cultural landscapes, he initiated his research on rural mountain areas moved by his interest in the phenomenon of depopulation of villages, whose striking effects are especially present in his home region.

His current PhD research “(Re)Thinking the ruin: Adaptation strategies for vacant vernacular heritage in rural depopulated territories under transformation” investigates the transformation of Pyrenean cultural landscapes under the effects of population decline and urbanising pressure.

His investigation is developed within the Research Group “Urban Project, Collective Spaces & Local Identities”, and supported by FWO Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen.

Ignacio's academic and professional work has been awarded, published, and exhibited in the last years on different international media platforms.

