
EDITOR'S DESK

SYNTHESIS

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Welcome to the sixth special issue of the contemporary international journal *Ekistics and the New Habitat: The problems and science of human settlements*. On behalf of the international board of editors, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce this special issue: 'The Global Pacific: Coastal and Human Habitats'.

The cover image for the present issue is an adaptation of a map of the world's oceans. Developed in 1942 and subsequently published in 1979 by then Senior research fellow at the Institute for Marine and Coastal Studies at the University of Southern California, Athelstan Spilhaus, the map presents a striking image of a blue planet. This unusual projection was made possible by cutting along coastal boundaries to generate minimal distortion to the world's oceans. In this context, it serves as an example of what happens when familiar projections of our world are reimagined: In an instant new relationships become apparent, while old ways of seeing suddenly seem outdated.

Such an image is timely for a special issue produced during a COVID-19 pandemic that caused the world's nations to reassess the effectiveness of their governance, their health systems, as well as a raft of other social and economic aspects of their communities. Not only was the resilience of institutions and those involved with them revealed, but the values on which they were constructed and maintained were tested. This global challenge was (and continues to be) lived in diverse ways throughout the world, leading to an ongoing call to reconsider and improve the way political, economic, and social systems operate. The contributions to this special issue are part of this reflection.

One feature of the issue is that it begins with a clarification of its use of the term 'Global' in the title. This interrogation aims to situate the journal in relation to the emerging discipline of global studies on one hand, and ekistics on the other. 'The Global Pacific: Coastal and Human Habitats' thus begins by asking readers to think through the role that ekistic theory and practice can play in relation to other academic fields and professional practices relating to human settlements. Another feature of the issue is that, by virtue of its range of contributions, it seeks to highlight the importance of thinking through the problems of human settlements from a broad mix of perspectives. Ekistics is characterised by a comprehensive, transdisciplinary, and somewhat eclectic approach which allows for ekisticians to synthesize ideas and to consider settlements 'globally', that is, in the sense of working from a holistic standpoint.

Accordingly, the contributions encompass an mix of texts - an imaginative proposal for a future oceanic city by architect and academic Norman Wei, Ricardo Arribas' study of Caribbean and Oceanic aesthetic engagements with colonial spaces, a literature review by political scientists Stephen Noakes and Anna Powles who evaluate recent accounts of Chinese involvement in the Pacific, studies that adopt Pacific ways of knowing as their epistemological framework pioneered by Patrick Thomsen and his colleagues Tiyanji Luo and Bangguo Du, a personal account by Daisy Bentley-Grey

detailing educational experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand, a case study by Glenda Tibe Bonifacio focusing on post-disaster impacts in the Philippines, as well as Ian Fookes' analysis of Yuki Kihara's politically engaged artworks. This range is intended to enable readers to recontextualise their understanding of familiar issues relating to the Pacific / Moana.

It is also hoped that readers will appreciate Fiona Chivers Sherriff's poetic vision of Tahiti, which was penned between time zones at 10,000 feet. It offers a sense of unity through a poetic impulse not unlike Spilhaus' desire to reveal the connectedness of our world's oceans. This poem, though occupying only a single page, serves as a transition to a literary and philosophical section of the issue. Beau Miles, an off-beat filmmaker, writer and philosopher reconceptualises the everyday and has kindly shared an extract from an early version of his book *The Backyard Adventurer* (2021). Finally, Peggy Lauer's book review introduces the lifetime effort and exemplary strategic nous of Huey D. Johnson, a land conservationist whose memoir, *Something of the Marvelous: Lessons learned from sixty years as an environmentalist* (2020), serves as a practical guide for anyone wishing to solve environmental problems.

In closing, I would like to thank all the contributors for their patience and perseverance in putting together this special issue that will help us to think in 'global' terms about the Pacific / Moana, to synthesize our ideas, and to improve our world through the study of human settlements in all their dimensions.



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