



Transforming the [re]public

An Urban Laboratory on Public Space 19 - 25 November 2017, Athens, Greece

From a small provincial town of no more than ten thousand people in the 1830s, Athens has transformed itself into one of the largest and most densely urbanised metropolises in Europe, now home to nearly five million people. In this process, fuelled by the timely accumulations of a multitude of small-scale private interventions, **public space has often been the principal casualty of individual aspiration.**

In the contemporary cityscape of Athens public space appears as a **mis-matched collection of fragments**: the squeezed out pavements, mostly taken over by parked motorbikes and cars; the odd square functionally unconnected to its local neighbourhood; cycling paths that fail to form a route network at a significant urban scale; isolated islands of pedestrian areas and green infrastructure, almost exclusive in the city centre, that embrace neither the expanse nor the diversity of the metropolis; a coastal zone that struggles to re-connect with the city, itself partitioned to suit private profit rather than public benefit. Contested by economic interests and in the lack of clearly defined policies, it is paradoxically the neglect of 'public-ness' that characterises these spaces, where the very qualities which make space truly public are disregarded.

Beyond the provision of a serviceable public amenity, public space is a **catalyst for a city's development and quality of life.** Public space interventions acquire in this sense a multiplier effect in the delivery of economic, social, and environmental objectives for the city. Yet in Athens these are an amalgam of

projects that far too often compete with rather than complement the city's attempts towards more global-scale strategies. One struggles to define the city's public image. Within an atmosphere of 'a beautiful chaos' the middle-classes escape the fall of the (re)public moving outwards into the invisible suburbia that steadily ravishes the hills of Attica while artwashing gentrification prepares the run-down areas of the inner city for urban entrepreneurialism dislocating vulnerable and low-income populations along the way. In this climate, **revaluing public space and the 'public-ness' of the Athenian landscape is an opportunity to revitalise large parts of its rundown urban areas in a socially just way, contain its suburban expansion, and integrate its diverse localities, currently subordinate to a dominant centre, into a more equitable and cohesive metropolis.**

This Urban Laboratory delves into the contemporary culture and nature of public space in the Athenian metropolis. It investigates how public space functions a) as a set of conditions in local areas b) as continuous networks at a city-wide scale, and c) as an agent within the city's socio-economic processes. **Transforming the (re)public aims towards the generation of both local and city-scale public space strategies focusing on opportunities for low-cost and high-impact interventions—a public space acupuncture as a catalyst for urban regeneration.** Key objectives include: sustainable urban mobility, the right to the city, public health and well-being, social cohesion, spatial justice, improved access to public amenities and environmental sustainability.

Using **the city as a resource for learning**, Urban Transcripts workshops immerse participants into **an intensive 7-day programme consisting of site visits, studio teamwork, fieldwork research, and lectures**, complemented with parallel public and social events. Each workshop unit welcomes 7-9 participants; it is lead by one guest and one host tutor, pairing international expertise and methodological approaches with local knowledge and lived experiences of the city. The selected sites in each of the 7 units of the workshop function as a lens through which an exploration of broader issues can be embarked upon and brought to a productive design-oriented conclusion. Final proposals are presented and debated in public in the presence of a jury composed of key representatives from industry, academia, and local authorities.

ELIGIBILITY

The workshop is open to undergraduate students near the end of their studies, postgraduates, and professionals, in architecture, urban design, planning, and fields related to place-making and urban development.

APPLICATIONS

Please email us at transformingtherepublic@urbantranscripts.org with a short bio, an example of your work in pdf (one project), and the units you are interested in, in order of preference.

ACCREDITATION

With the completion of the workshop participants receive the UT International Urban Design Workshop certificate accrediting **10 hours of lectures, 12 hours of fieldwork research and 36 hours of studio design work.**

FEES

Early registrations by 20 October 2017

€ 270

Registrations past 20 October 2017

€ 400

Payment by credit/debit card or bank transfer following acceptance of your application. Fees do not cover accommodation, travel, or food expenses.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE

Registration lasts until places are booked out. Apply by 20 October to ensure early registration fee discount and unit availability.

VISA

If you will be travelling from outside the EU and will require VISA please include a copy of your passport with your application and contact your nearest Greek embassy as early as possible for details on the VISA application procedure.

WEBSITE

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#UTAthens

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Transforming the (re)public is a project by **Urban Transcripts** in partnership with **Urban Environment Lab, School of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens** and with the support of **Vryssaki, Living space of Art and Action**

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