



## Becoming Istanbul: An Opportune Moment in the Making of a City Museum of Istanbul

Suay Aksoy with Afşin Altaylı

The recently revamped SALT Beyoğlu hosted *Becoming Istanbul* as its second major exhibition in the last quarter of 2011. The project as a whole has been an inspiring attempt at participative practice in collecting the present in urban environments.

SALT which opened in April 2011 is a centre for exhibitions, conferences and public programmes. It is also involved in interdisciplinary research projects and maintains SALT Research, a library and archive of contemporary art, architecture, design and urbanism, together with social and economic histories, all of which are available for both research and public use. SALT's activities are based in two landmark buildings, SALT Beyoğlu and SALT Galata. From September 13 to December 31 2011 SALT Beyoğlu hosted *Becoming Istanbul* as its second major exhibition. Two parallel programmes accompanied the exhibition: *90* was a programme of 90 events comprising lectures, tours, presentations and performances focusing on contemporary issues in the city. →



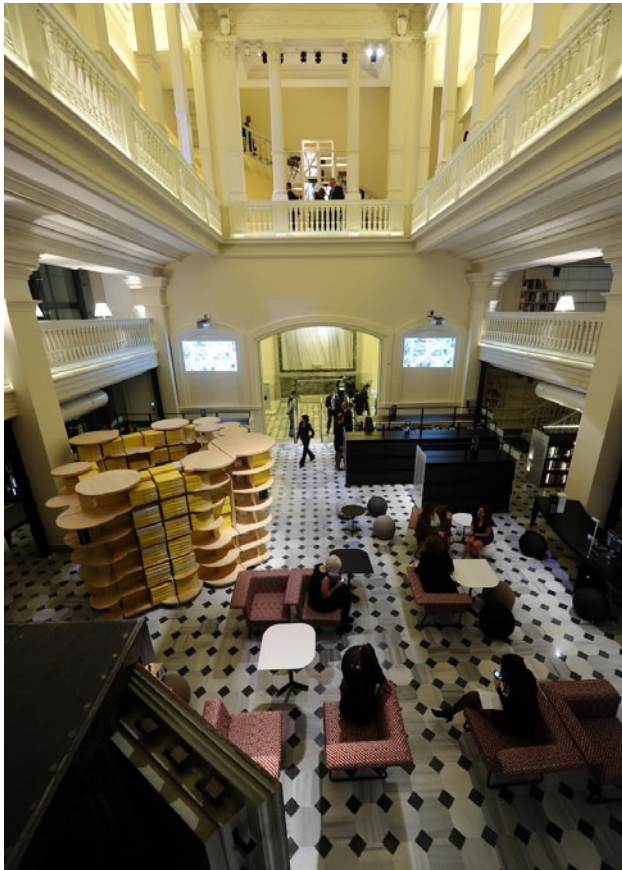
Visitors interacting.

Photo: Serkan Taycan

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SALT Research.

Photo: Tolga Pakar

*The Making of Beyoğlu*, was a series of workshops examining case studies in Beyoğlu a district at the heart of Istanbul. (SALT: <http://saltonline.org/en/home>) The project as a whole has been an inspiring attempt at participative practice in collecting the present in urban environments, an issue much discussed in city museums. Vasif Kortun, the Director of Research and Programmes and the leading SALT person, emphasised that they “positioned SALT as a research institution, though in the same breath he added, “we tackle the city”. Pelin Derviş, curator and current consultant to SALT described the institution as “a collective discussion and collection platform”.

**SALT EXPLORES  
CRITICAL AND TIMELY  
ISSUES IN VISUAL AND  
MATERIAL CULTURE, AND  
CULTIVATES INNOVATIVE  
PROGRAMS FOR RESEARCH  
AND EXPERIMENTAL  
THINKING.**

Projects Project designed this first version of SALT's 'Kraliçe' fonts.

## An original experience for every visitor

The exhibition had a non-linear structure. Each viewer could chart his/her own course through the database (<http://database.becomingistanbul.org>), making each experience of *Becoming Istanbul* original, watching videos, exhibitions and taking part in discussions. One could start from “preservation” and perhaps go to “governance” and then to “abandonment”, or select a totally different route and experience such as “Walls”, an authored photographic exhibition, then go to “monitoring”, and then to “ephemera” or to another concept of his or her choice from the data base.

The conceptual framework of *Becoming Istanbul* was set by architects Pelin Derviş and Bülent Tanju and the architectural historian Uğur Tanyeli in the autumn of 2008 when Turkey was the Guest of the Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair, which offered an opportunity for architectural shows alongside an extensive programme of literary events and readings. The German Architecture Museum (DAM), after its successful experience with Korea and Barcelona as guests, this time approached Turkey’s Garanti Galeri (one of the three constituent parts of the present SALT) and its curator, Pelin Derviş, an encounter that resulted in the making of *Becoming Istanbul*.



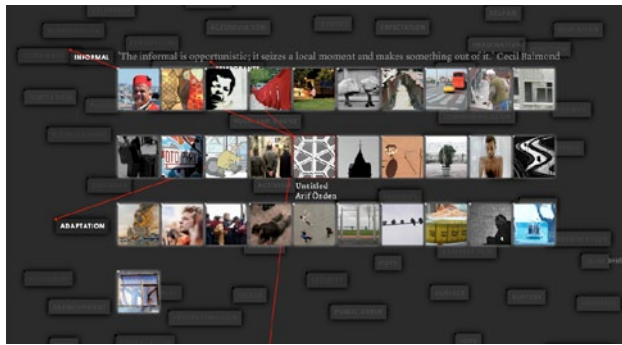
*The collecting point at Becoming Istanbul.*

In the foreword to the book *Becoming Istanbul*, Peter Cachola Schmal, the Director of the DAM, relates that the curators told him about their views on overlapping and even contradictory layers of history of their city, a city that had so many coexisting facades and levels that it has never been possible to clearly identify it as a homogenous entity. They wrote to him: “... the city forgot its countless old names, it generalized the name Istanbul, which was the least political, least religious and least ethnic among the names in use. It simply became Istanbul.” So *Becoming Istanbul* finally became the title of the show.”

## An on-going collecting project

*Becoming Istanbul* explored contemporary Istanbul through an interactive database of over 400 media. The database, an up-to-date collection of artists’ videos, photography series, documentaries, news reports, cartoons and architectural projects produced between 1999-2011, was organized according to 80 concepts that deployed typical discourses relating to the city and suggested new points of view. Meriç Öner, urban →





The Database: <http://database.becomingistanbul.org/>

planner and the coordinator of the project, underlines that the process was advanced by the simultaneous, not consecutive, introduction of concepts and materials. Its media included the visual productions of artists and researchers who have highlighted actors and phenomena typically disregarded in urban discourse, as well as the declarations of decision makers involved in Istanbul's current transformations. One example was the ousted Roma residents of Sulukule, a district that recently fell a prey to urban regeneration schemes, who were there to relate episodes from their story.

The contents of the *Becoming Istanbul* database were collected from 2008 by Garanti Galeri and over the last year by SALT. During the exhibition the database was open for the further input of photographs and videos. People were invited to share their research materials (in CD or DVD format) on Istanbul by depositing them at the collections point on the third floor of SALT Beyoğlu.

### An issue about collecting practice

Öner asserts that the collection did not grow fast at the beginning. The main collecting medium was the relationship with the immediate environment. This was the reason for setting up a website, the inauguration of which coincided with the opening of the exhibition, whereupon the task of collecting was assumed by the exhibition. A "collection" corner made up of boxes was allotted in the exhibition space for this purpose. However, until this day the bulk of the collections have come from their own research on documentaries, TV programmes, and the like. One interesting event that served the database was the photography contest entitled "What makes a city?" that was organised among high schools. (<http://saltonline.org/en/128/istanbullasmak-bir-kent-nelerden-olusur-yarismasi>). Whether participative collecting could be a turning point in this respect is yet to be seen. In general individuals have been more reluctant in bringing in materials. This was probably because collecting in general does not have a long history in this country. Contributions are yet to be evaluated by SALT Research and Programmes, and those selected will be added to the database in 2012. The database remains online after the exhibition, although for an uncertain period, according to Öner.

There is, however, a by-product definitely designed for longevity, namely the book bearing the same title as the exhibition and designed in a dictionary-like A-Z format. The editors/curators asked around a hundred personalities

from all walks of life including architects, musicians, urban planners, orchestral conductors, activists, sociologists, economists, film critics, authors, museum directors, geographers, reporters, anthropologists and historians, to share their views on the urban worlds of Istanbul. The output was 152 entries and a wonderful read that invite the reader to question and critique popular discourses.

### SALT: a sum larger than the total of a museum, a gallery and a platform?

What would make a better city museum in the 21<sup>st</sup> century than SALT? Among the three institutions that make up SALT are the former Ottoman Bank Museum specialising in the economic and social history of Turkey in the last two centuries, the former Garanti Platform, a contemporary art centre, and the Garanti Galeri, a platform for urban and architectural issues. All three, supported by Garanti, one of Turkey's leading private banks, were joined together as SALT in 2006. After a period of restoration work and reconceptualization, SALT opened its doors in two premises, SALT Beyoğlu and SALT Galata in 2010 and 2011.

Sima Benoraya, the Communications and Management Director, says, "SALT having started out from the memory of these three institutions, explores critical and timely issues in visual and material culture, and cultivates innovative programs for research and experimental thinking. Assuming an open attitude and establishing itself as a site of learning and debate SALT aims to challenge, excite and provoke its visitors by encouraging them to offer critique and response."



Visitors observing the *Making of Beyoğlu*. Photo: Serkan Taycan

This description does not fall far from the current attempts at defining the city museum. Neither does Kortun's interpretation of the merger. He sees it as the transformation of the accumulations of the three institutions into "an interdisciplinary new entity that regards itself as a medium of communication and of story telling, distancing itself from art while becoming more object-based. It is a medium that enables the object, the art piece and the artist to create common languages".

With the pivotal SALT Research comprising an extensive library and archive of physical and digital documents and SALT Interpretation developing interpretation packs (<http://www.saltonline.org/img/343.pdf>), something not many museums in this country do, there is something quite city museum-like about this "innovative and experimental artistic institution" as they define it. ■

## ■ From the CAMOC President

Before the Berlin stories fade from our memories, we have started to get organised for our next annual conference this coming autumn in Vancouver. Although this gives one an initially pleasant feeling of moving ahead of time, what happens in reality is a steady marathon as we all have so many other errands to make and so many deadlines to meet. The more CAMOC members get involved, the easier and more fun the marathon becomes. So we would love to have many more of you getting involved with CAMOC.

Having said that let me tell you that two CAMOC projects have just taken off. One of them is about the online publication of the proceedings from our last three conferences in Istanbul, Shanghai and Berlin. Ian Jones will be working on it with Eric Sandweiss, Chet Orloff and Marlen Mouliou.

The other project, which is arguably our most inspiring undertaking, is about developing a city museums database, which we envisage not only as a resource for reference but also and mainly as a means of networking to benefit city museums around the world with collaboration and partnerships. The questionnaire template is now ready and a pilot group of museums will be contacted for the first round.

We would like to form other working groups to move

ahead quickly and effectively. One of the two that immediately come to mind is the quarterly Newsletter. Marlen and I have been quite lonely working on the issues! However Joana Sousa, our colleague from Portugal, has fortunately agreed to step in and manage us. She will probably contact some of you soon. I will nevertheless take this occasion to invite you once again to submit feature articles, news and reviews on books, conferences, websites and exhibitions for our Newsletter.

Another desirable working group would be one that focuses on developing ideas and practices for publicising the CAMOC vision and recruiting new members. We are looking for CAMOC activists as it takes more than just serendipitous occasions to attract new members. We count on your willingness and creativity. By the way, our Berlin Conference did bring in new recruits.

In 2012, we will concentrate our efforts on our Annual Conference in Vancouver (October 24-26, 2012), where the award winning Museum of Vancouver will be our partner and host. Catherine C. Cole is the “architect” designing this most exciting cooperation, which will also provide a platform for discussing the role of the city museum in the 21st century. As to our proposed Lisbon Workshop, this will be postponed to a later date.

Suay Aksoy

## ■ CAMOC CALL FOR PAPERS

### CAMOC Conference 2012

#### CAMOC / Museum of Vancouver

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, October 24-26, 2012

#### “CITY MUSEUMS: COLLISIONS I CONNECTIONS”

CAMOC, the International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), in collaboration with the Museum of Vancouver, invites papers for “**City Museums: Collisions I Connections**”, a conference on city museums and their engagement in city life to be held at the Museum of Vancouver, October 24-26, 2012. We are soliciting panels, presentations (15 minutes in length), virtual exhibitions/apps, films, and other presentations about city museums. There will be a poster competition for delegates to present case studies of projects from their museums addressing one of the conference themes. We would be happy to consider and accommodate other sorts of presentation methods as well.

CAMOC is “a forum for people who work in or are interested in museums about cities, urban planners, historians, economists, architects or geographers, all of whom together can share knowledge and experience, exchange ideas and explore partnerships across

international boundaries.” (<http://camoc.icom.museum/index2.php>) The Museum of Vancouver is Canada’s largest urban history museum focusing on the life of a city.

(<http://www.museumofvancouver.ca/>)

The conference will bring people together to talk about how city museums are reconsidering their role in civic life due to the enormous pressure cities face in terms of aging infrastructure, the need for urban regeneration, economic and environmental crises, and social issues such demographic shifts, global diasporas, increasing immigrant and urban Aboriginal populations. The conference will look at city museums under development, urban/suburban city museums, and city museums in large and small cities. Under the wider rubric of the conference theme, suggested sub-topics include:

- Defining the 21<sup>st</sup> century city museum: the changing role of the city museum today
  - City museum as urban forum and dialogue centre
  - City museum as agency for urban development →



*Museum of Vancouver.*

- City museums and city branding
- **Cities and museums: collisions | connections | contemporary expectations**
  - Measuring the social value of city museums: inspirations and challenges. In times of financial instability, museums need to prove their social value as collection repositories, as contact zones between people and communities, as educational resources for society at large, as boosters for the cultural and tourist industry, as generators of powerful multi-sensory experiences, as agents of social harmony and stability
  - Furthering understanding and fostering social cohesion and connections among people (immigrants/migrants, long-term residents & Aboriginal communities)
  - Changing demographics in today's cities, ensuring the present and future relevance of city museums by changing whose stories are collected and told, and how museums work with communities
  - Contributing to community development and well-being: engaging in issues such as literacy, poverty, youth at risk, etc.
  - Reducing isolation in communities: creating a sense of place & identity
  - Providing economic impact: how effective are city museums becoming destinations and revitalizing downtown cores?
  - Understanding the impact of new museum roles on museum staff
  - Inviting museum professional to consider how city museums either learn from, or offer a model for, other

urban museums in their changing relationships to their urban setting.

The conference will have several components: 1) formal papers; 2) site visits to urban and suburban museums; 3) poster competition (details to follow) and exhibit area for museums to share their work; 4) a roundtable discussion by invitation for museologists and urbanists to share and elaborate on the definitions of the 21<sup>st</sup> century City Museums and the interim results of the "City Museums Database" project. Keynote speakers and social events will be announced as they are confirmed. If there is sufficient interest, a post-conference tour will be arranged. Interested participants, whether panel chairs or authors of individual papers, should send a proposal of 300–500 words accompanied by a 200-word biography by **April 15, 2012** to:

**Email:** [CatherineC.Cole@telus.net](mailto:CatherineC.Cole@telus.net) or

**Mail to:** Catherine C. Cole

Principal Consultant, Catherine C. Cole & Associates  
Conference Co-Chair/Member CAMOC Board

10023 93 Street

Edmonton, Alberta CANADA, T5H 1W6

Phone/Fax: 1-780-424-2229

Funding of up to €500 may be available from CAMOC to assist one or two young (under 35) participants from developing countries. Please advise whether funding is required. Canadians may apply to the Canadian Museums Association for up to \$1,200 (50% matched funding); Albertans may apply to the Alberta Museums Association for up to \$5,000 (75% matched funding) to attend. ■



## From Moscow with Love

The challenge of a visually engaging and impactful small exhibition helps find an answer to getting the visitors to stop and look in what is essentially a thoroughfare.



*Statue of Sherlock Holmes, Smolenskaya Naberezhnaya.*

A photographic display, *From Moscow with Love*, was an inter-cultural collaboration between Moscow City Museum (MCM) and the Museum of London. The partnership began with the signing of a memorandum of understanding, setting out how the two institutions would work together to produce two exhibitions: one about London to be shown at MCM and one about Moscow to be shown at Museum of London. Each exhibition would reflect the character and content of the respective city. *From Moscow with Love* showcased historic photographs of Moscow and hung in the Museum of London foyer from September to November 2011. The challenge was to create a small exhibition, which was visually engaging and impactful, in a busy and relatively cavernous space. We had to ask, how do we get visitors to stop and look in what is essentially a thoroughfare?

The project kicked off with an exchange of emails between the Deputy Director of MCM and I. We established the key messages, which MCM and Museum of London wished to convey through the exhibition, in terms of their respective cultural roles, and an overview of the required content. This was followed by a visit to Moscow to gain a greater understanding of MCM and its photographic collection, and to discuss the process of creating the exhibition content.



*Interior of the Old English Court, Kitai Gorod.*

One of the key messages that the Museum of London wished to convey were references to London, both historical and contemporary, found in Moscow. To achieve this I photographed additional images during my visit, specifically for use in the exhibition. Working with the staff at MCM, we were able to pinpoint a variety of London-reference spots in the city. I also took a photograph for the exhibition of the statue of Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space and an iconic Muscovite, which was unveiled in July 2011 at the Mall in London marking the 50th anniversary of the historic event.

*From Moscow with Love* included around 30 photographs reproduced as prints mounted on the wall and a larger body of images shown as a digital slideshow on an adjacent screen. The Head of Exhibitions at MCM made a shortlist of photographs in the Museum's collection from which I and the Museum of London's Head of Design and Exhibitions selected the images to display. We did this on the understanding that our choice would be governed by visual impact as much as descriptive content and that our aim was to create a striking and informative display rather than a comprehensive history of Moscow.



*"From Moscow with Love" display.*

The photographs covered the entire period from the last years of the Tsar, at the end of the 19th century, to the present day. We felt that we should show some of the lesser-known aspects of Moscow's past and present, rather than those already covered by the tourist industry, and so the process leading to the final selection of images involved frequent consultations and the exchange of ideas with MCM.

The content for the digital slideshow was created under the control of MCM, with the Museum of London taking responsibility for production. With a larger number of images available (around 50), this enabled MCM to tell a more detailed story of the history of Moscow and to illustrate aspects not covered in the display of prints. As a linear slideshow the narrative lent itself to be more chronologically orientated - with more emphasis on the descriptive content of the images than their pure visual quality. →

The accompanying text, both for the prints and the slideshow, was also a collaborative effort. The Museum of London's rules governing the word length of introductory panels and captions differed from those of MCM and so descriptive text provided by the Museum had to be revised in conjunction with MCM. We worked well together and enjoyed weaving our different perspectives and creating text that expressed both Museums' viewpoints. Additional text drew attention to some of the parallels that exist between the life experiences of Muscovites, past and present, and those of Londoners.

The exhibition was a great success and hopefully inspired some of our visitors to explore the history of Moscow and the similarities between these two great cities. The Museum of London's visitors are truly international, including many non-Europeans. International collaborations, like this, can be a very effective way of promoting mutual understanding of different cultures. City museums take notice! International collaboration is the future.

**Mike Seaborne**  
Curator Emeritus, Photographs, Museum of London ■

## ■ Berlin Conference 2011 Report

**Two perspectives from the audience provide insight into the CAMOC-COMCOL-ICOM Europe Berlin Joint Conference 2011 themed "Participative Strategies in Capturing the Changing Urban World".**

Our young participant Agnes Aljas from Estonia and our Board Member Catherine C. Cole from Canada wrote separate reports from their far corners telling about their common experience in Berlin. Was it really so common?

### Participation: Past, Present and Future

Our joint conference brought together practitioners and academics from different museums and institutions. Ideas, and questions to which answers were sought, were presented over the four days: Whose truth are museums presenting? Who in museums makes choices about what to preserve for the future? Who has the right to decide what to include or exclude from participatory collecting? How has it changed curatorial roles? Is the community always right? How do museums maintain sustainable relationships with communities? Over 30 presentations shared a common focus on cooperation with communities and the inclusion of communities and groups in contemporary museum work. The purpose of participatory strategies is to develop the social abilities of museums and send peoples' voices to the wider world; museums should see themselves more as the facilitators of different ideas, rather than as the sole owners of knowledge.

### Methods

Participatory collecting is based largely on ethnographic methods and is centred on oral history interviews and participatory observation, which requires strong community involvement. Many presentations included case studies of how these methods have been used by museum professionals or artists. Speakers presented stimulating examples of how community members have been involved in collecting. Their access to the community helps to ensure authenticity and ownership is not questioned. However, questions which are evident to community members are not always asked, or community members do not necessarily raise them, so this method needs from museum professionals a similar commitment and community members need training.

### Subjects

All the presentations were focused on research and exhibitions in a city environment. Naturally speakers were asking how to define city, what subjects should be followed by museums, and what subjects have not gained the attention of museums. Many examples were of personal cities, capturing changes in city centres or in different areas. Less attention is paid by museums to social processes in cities, such as the aging of cities and families moving to suburbs. Similarly, it was pointed out that city museums should help people change the future of their city.



*Lunch at urban regeneration site Uferhallen.*

### Collecting

In contemporary museums objects are facilitators and negotiators, symbols of social relations. Their historical and cultural context has decreased compared to the importance of personal interpretation. Museums are questioning the different ways that people are connected to objects. Many speakers asked how and who should make choices about which objects should be acquired for museum collections. Multiple approaches were discussed: some museums are waiting two years to accept an acquisition; some make acquisition decisions by museum experts or community members; others are borrowing objects for exhibition purposes, rather than acquiring them for the permanent collection. →

### New Curatorial Skills

Participatory collecting and exhibition activities have changed the role of the museum curator and of the museum itself. Several presentations discussed these changes and the necessary new curatorial skills. Curators are no longer just researchers, but communication specialists and project managers whose main duty is to influence people and communities, to be responsible to their collections and include them in museum work. A curator is organizing exhibition production and is assisting a community to moderate its ideas to achieve professional exposition, also sometimes helping in decision-making. Many examples were brought, where traditional museum specialists' work is now shared or given to community members and there are not many duties that museum professionals cannot share with community members or volunteers - like examples from community members who keep up with communication from web pages or Facebook or Twitter to working with collections management and acquisitions.

### Participation as Museums' Core

It is relatively easy to engage communities in the development of exhibitions compared to sustaining the connection with the community after the exhibition opens. Museums must be dedicated to the concept of participation beyond specific projects. Berlin's Kreuzberg Museum was a good example of community involvement; the museum is a gathering place where people come to exhibitions and to eat, drink and talk about issues in the area. Our visits to Bookshop Pro qm to learn about its community interaction, to Ex-Rotaprint, a result of civic initiatives, and to the architectural company IFAU where situations for conflicts were created in space to be negotiated with users were refreshing concrete examples. Many conference presentations called on participants to abandon conventions and systems, and concentrate on the past to present questions with purpose in the future.

**Agnes Aljas ■**

### Collaborating with Geographic Communities

From my perspective, three underlying notions resonated throughout the conference: first, the Euro/EU-centric perspective of sponsors and speakers, compared to my experience with North American, Commonwealth or Asia/Pacific conferences, as they redefine the boundaries of Europe and address current economic and political crises; second, very different perspectives on contemporary collecting and working with community groups, issues Canadian museums have been dealing with for years; and finally the focus on neighbourhoods and geographic communities, as subjects of research and places for exhibitions and artistic interventions. Whereas Agnes Aljas provided a fairly comprehensive overview of the conference, my comments are focused on the latter, the presentations and field trips most relevant to my own practice.

Keynote speaker Renée Kistemaker of the Amsterdam Museum spoke about a collaborative project she's been working on with a number of European museums,



*Kreuzberg Museum, Berlin.*

considering the role of what she called entrepreneurs (what we would call shopkeepers) in various cities. For example, the Liverpool Museum's project was called *The Secret Life of Smithdown Road* and community members were invited to post photographs and memories of their experiences on Smithdown Road. The Liverpool Museum also has an ongoing gallery called *Our City, Our Stories* that has been developed through extensive community consultation – with 200 stories contributed to date.

Crawford McGugan, from the Glasgow Museum's Open Museum, spoke about the *Red Road Flats Project*. The Red Road project, with its community engagement, research, travelling displays and handling kits is a great model for neighbourhood projects. The resource kit called Red Road in a Box includes objects, images, documents, and stories from former residents.

Another neighbourhood project was about District 6, in Cape Town. Keynote speaker Chrischené Julius described the social justice mandate of this project; the area was cleared out over many years, beginning with relocating black residents in the early 20th century, and is now being gentrified. Organizers do not want the original residents to be forgotten. The collection is primarily photographs, recordings, and works of art, not 3-dimensional artifacts.

Many of these case studies focused on collaborations between the museum and the community. For example, Kylea Little of the Discovery Museum in Tyne & Wear, UK described a project whereby 200 residents were invited to donate five items that represented their lives. They developed an exhibition and initiated a blog called *What's Your Story?* and are hoping to eventually have its management completely taken over by volunteers. The exhibition has a family, rather than neighbourhood, history focus but demonstrates a means of connecting with the community. →





Presenting at the Kreuzberg Museum.

Another interesting approach to cultural geography discussed by Rainey Tisdale, an independent urban historian from the United States, was the relationship between mapping and people, personal history and personal locations. For example History Pin places historical photographs on google map. With the growing interest in municipal cultural mapping, we can learn from the field of psychogeography, the effect of the environment on emotions and behaviour. People are mapping all sorts of things in different ways.

Site visits concretized ideas raised by speakers. For example, the Kreuzberg Museum, one of twelve district museums (Berlin also has a city museum) is focused on a district that was a hotbed of left-wing protest and a home to immigrants from Turkey and elsewhere. The museum has involved a lot of very well qualified volunteers from the neighbourhood – up to 120 working on various projects, including a local weightlifting club brought in to move a wrecking ball that was symbolic of the destruction of the neighbourhood! They focus on the diversity rather than the homogeneity of the neighbourhood. Their first exhibition was of the first generation of immigrants; they are now

## Berlin Conference Evaluation

Following on from our conference in Berlin in November our CAMOC Secretary, Marlen Mouliou, organised a questionnaire-based post-conference evaluation. She collected 20 responses from delegates from 14 different countries (Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK, Uruguay, the USA). The overall impression has been very positive and most delegates voted the session at the Kreuzberg Museum the highlight of the conference. Naturally, there have been some constructively critical comments, which CAMOC will take into account when organising subsequent meetings. Below are some of these comments:

- The conference programme must not be overloaded: too many presentations in too short a time. Although it is important to involve as many speakers as possible, it is desirable that more time is set aside for discussions. Thought should also be given to exploring more participative ways of discussing the conference themes: for example in workshops, or questions posted on walls during breaks, or in

working on an exhibition about the second generation. They did a project where people were asked to bring in a meaningful artefact; objects were photographed and the stories recorded, but they didn't collect the objects. Interestingly, with funders, the museum emphasises the social work aspect of their work, the fact that the museum contributes to inclusion and residents' sense of identity, not the cultural aspect.

Some of the sites we visited were not museums but were related to urban regeneration. The most interesting of which was Uferhallen. There were several interesting things about it – a former municipal bus barn; the space is ideal for artists. Artists rent spaces for next to nothing and get a long-term lease (25 years), but they have to pay for the upgrades to the space. A group of visual artists decided to turn shareholders' certificates into works of art – you buy an 11 m2 share for 2,500 Euros and receive a work of art with purchase. This way a lot of small owners buy into the project, reducing the risk that a developer will purchase the building and they'll be evicted. The work of art is a freebie but also an investment. Municipalities are always looking for creative solutions to the adaptive re-use of heritage buildings; this was a different approach.

The CAMOC, COMCOL and ICOM Europe joint conference, and the CAMOC meetings that followed, provided an opportunity to hear about recent neighbourhood projects that will be very helpful to me in my new research on the history of a specific neighbourhood in Edmonton, Alberta that was created in the late 1970s by the City in response to a shortage of housing caused by an economic boom. Although the theme was participative strategies, I've been working closely with communities of interest, culturally diverse and Aboriginal communities for many years so chose to focus my attention on the engagement of geographic communities.

**Catherine C. Cole** ■

breakout group discussion.

- There is need to balance academic sessions with more creative experiments in alternative venues, to give a more practical museum focus to the papers presented. To this end more city museum visits should be built into the programme, with convenient transport between venues (especially when venues are distant from each other). Venues also should be chosen which are not only creative in what they do, but also provide basic facilities for delegates.

Increasing attendance at future CAMOC meetings is of course an important priority for our Board. The respondents indicated some basic factors for making this possible, such as the choice of attractive and creative conference topics, the choice of great capital city locations and accessible conference venues as well as affordable places to travel to, let alone the balance of theory with practice by building a conference format that combines academic sessions with workshops and round table panel discussions.

# Conference Alert

## Conference theme

### **The Future of Cities 2012: Investment for Urban Growth**

**Dates & Place** 6-7 February 2012, London (UK)

## Information on-line at

<http://www.chathamhouse.org/cities2012>

## Description

Cities are the engines of economic growth, but what do they need to do to secure and maintain this growth over the long term?

Cities are under pressure to meet the multiple demands of growing populations, economic change and climate shocks. In a fast-changing world economy, and facing increased international competition, many cities are reviewing their economic strategies and how they can leverage investment. At the same time, investors are seeking new assets offering higher returns than the 'safe havens' affected by sovereign debt or economic stagnation.

This conference will ask how cities can attract investment for their development and what innovative financing solutions are emerging in response to the multi-layered challenges that they face. City leaders, business heads, and expert commentators will discuss practical solutions to funding problems and identify key elements for success.

- Can the established major world cities compete with the rapidly emerging cities in Asia, Latin America and the Middle East?
- Can investments in major urban areas offer secure and attractive returns that other assets do not? What new instruments and funding models are emerging?
- What respective approaches to investment are succeeding for major urban hubs in developing, developed and emerging economies?
- What are the key roles of the city leader in attracting urban investment?

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## Conference theme

### **1<sup>st</sup> Pan-Hellenic Conference on Place**

### **Organised by the Department of Planning and Regional Development, University of Thessaly & The Imagine the City Marketing and Branding**

**Dates & Place** 30 March-1 April 2012, Volos (Greece)

## Information on-line at

<http://www.placemarketing.gr/index.php/the-conference>

## Description

The Department of Planning and Regional Development of the University of Thessaly and the "Imagine the City" initiative are organizing a conference with an interdisciplinary approach and parallel actions such as exhibitions, workshops, debates and urban interventions. We welcome anyone who is interested to participate as speaker, exhibitor or as part of the audience (please notice that the conference language is Greek).

Place identity is increasingly becoming a subject of marketing and branding strategies. The image and the reputation of a place is related to its ability to attract new inhabitants, visitors and investors and create a sense of civic pride and belonging to the existing inhabitants. The increased interest in the fields of place marketing and branding at its different spatial levels - neighbourhood, city, region, country- creates the need for a scientific approach. In Greece the field is developing at a rather slower pace than in other countries and there is still need to trigger a debate. The conference aims to provide a forum for researchers, local government officials, professionals, designers and planners to exchange findings and review knowledge and understanding on a variety of contemporary themes related to place marketing and branding in Greece.

The Conference includes different sub-themes:

- Place marketing and branding as development instruments for urban and regional development. Developing a Local Identity Strategy.
- The role of the community in place marketing and branding: Participatory planning, stakeholder management and conflict solving.
- Local culture and festivals as elements in promoting the identity of a place.
- Connecting sustainable tourism development to destination marketing.
- Place Marketing and Branding strategies for investments and enterprises.
- Implementing and evaluating the results of place marketing and branding strategies.
- The image of a place (architecture, urban design, communication design, logo design).
- Research methods and tools for place marketing and branding.
- Nation branding: the international promotion of Greece.
- Place e-marketing and social networks.

### Conference theme

#### 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Architecture and Urban Design (1-ICAUD)

Organised by Epoka University, Department of Architecture & Polytechnic University of Tirana,  
Department of Architecture and Urban Planning

**Dates & Place** 19-21 April 2012, Tirana (Albania)

### Information on-line at

<http://www.icaud.epoka.edu.al/>

### Description

Over the past twenty years, Tirana, the capital of Albania, has evolved into a dense, compact, and vibrant city of almost one million people, full of shops, cafes, restaurants, music, colourful buildings, and street life. At the same time, it is choked with traffic, its older façades are crumbling down, and the traditional housing stock is being eroded to make room for apartment buildings. Sustainable construction technologies are in their infancy. High-tech high-rise architecture is juxtaposed with small-scale informal additions to communist-era housing units and pre-communist oriental and Western neoclassic homes. While there is much private wealth in the country, the public sector has limited resources. This set of circumstances makes Tirana a very interesting laboratory for architects and urban designers & planners, and an enjoyable place to visit.

Conference themes: Architectural history & historic preservation | Green building technologies & materials | User-friendly public spaces | Architecture & urban design education | Construction management | Information technology in design.

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### Conference theme

#### Building the Renewable City - Architecture, Property and Infrastructure

Organised by the University of Liechtenstein

**Dates & Place** 3 May 2012, Liechtenstein

### Information on-line at

<http://www.lisdar.li>

### Description

The architecture of our cities and regions faces a great transformation, worldwide. In many cities and communities this change is already manifest in the search for buildings and property investments fit for future generations. New projects thrive without coal or nuclear power, conserve water and resources, respond to local history, culture and social aspirations. Such qualities ensure the highest expectations for efficiency, profitability and investment security.

Tomorrow's property and wider development investments literally come alive: they are resource minimising and bio-climatic, generate renewable energy locally and secure both income and value. Biodiversity and local food security are a priority in today's search for sustainable settlement design and development. The aesthetics of our architectural and urban projects follows these principles - articulating the true meaning of a New Modern. The conference is dedicated to successful international initiatives in sustainable urban and regional design, from Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland to the United States.

Session themes:

- Building the renewable city - today
- Responsible buildings as sustainable assets
- Cities and landscapes as productive natural systems

Workshop themes

- Building the renewable city - today
  - Responsible buildings as sustainable assets
  - Regions, cities and landscapes as productive natural systems
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### Conference theme

#### The Media of the Metapolis

Reflecting the knowledge base of urban research

Organised by

- Bauhaus-Universität Weimar
- Institut Français d'Urbanisme
- Institut für Europäische Urbanistik

**Dates & Place** 24-26 May 2012, Bauhaus-Universität Weimar (Germany)

### Information on-line at

<http://www.mediacityproject.org> & <http://www.future-bauhaus.de>

### Description

The emergence of the new information and communication technologies has an enormous impact on urban life. The →



wide spread use of the mobile phone and internet communication are just the spearhead of more exciting technological innovations which are apparently lying ahead.

While we are witnessing this information revolution, a more substantial analysis of the changes implied is obviously a practical and intellectual endeavour. This conference will attempt in bringing together different perspectives, projects, and ideas on the recent and future development of urban life, local politics, architectural and planning practices, as well as theoretical interpretations of the media city. The main assumption of the conference is that in the light of the work of Francois Ascher and his understanding of the predominating construction of the so-called metapolis, understood as a description of contemporary cities.

The four main fields of interest are:

**1. Communicating the city** How do we understand the impact of the new technologies on the perception, reproduction, marketing, and identity? This workshop will enable a deeper discussion on what has changed with regard to the communication about the city and its political and societal understanding.

**2. The New Public of the City** How has the appearance of social media changed planning and political perspectives on the city? This workshop is dedicated to the discussion of urban planning as a communicative process where the role of the media needs to be reviewed under the conditions of the new opportunities of the internet.

**3. Projecting Urban Future** The main question of this workshop is related to the new concepts developed with regard to future urban development on the basis of technological innovations. The focus will lie on the subject of political, social and planning concepts that are looking at the emerging opportunities deriving from the information revolution for addressing the most important urban problems.

**4. Enhancing the Urban** This workshop seeks project which are practice based, or related reflections on on-going projects trying to translate the new urban themes into artistic, architectural and planning experiments. It is especially calling for artists and media experimentalists to present recent projects.

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#### Conference theme

**Resilience Cities 2012, 3<sup>rd</sup> World Congress on Cities and Adaptation to Climate Change**

**Dates & Place** 3-5 June 2012, Bonn (Germany)

#### Information on-line at

<http://resilient-cities.iclei.org/bonn2011/about/>

#### Description

Resilience Cities 2012, 3<sup>rd</sup> World Congress on Cities and Adaptation to Climate Change is already on its way to provide you with the keys to smarter infrastructure, better urban planning and state-of-the-art tools that will improve the future of cities. While cities make efforts to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and increase urban energy-efficiency, they are at the same time vulnerable. Climate change is already leading to an increased frequency of extreme weather events bringing floods, landslides and droughts while melting glaciers threaten the drinking water supply of large cities and sea-level rise imperils many coastal communities.

Many of these climate change impacts will be - and in some cases already have been - felt directly at the local level. Local governments have a responsibility to protect their people, property, and resources. With the economies, livelihoods, safety and character of their communities at stake, cities are harnessing their visionary leadership and policy tools to increase resilience as they prepare for the future.

Resilient Cities is the global platform for learning, cooperation and networking on all aspects of urban resilience and adaptation to climate change. Resilient Cities is the place to be if you wish to:

- Secure the latest and most groundbreaking information on strategies carried out worldwide, presented by leading and authoritative experts
- Showcase innovative solutions developed at the local level by your company / organisation
- Interact directly with leading international organizations, local governments leaders and representatives of the private sector in order to strengthen your network of prospective partners

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#### Conference theme

**International Urban Parks Conference**

**Dates & Place** 14-17 July 2012, New York (USA)

#### Information on-line at

[www.urbanparks2012.org](http://www.urbanparks2012.org)

#### Description

As our planet becomes more urban, new and revitalized parks are critical to making our cities greater and greener - places that thrive economically, environmentally and socially.

City Parks Alliance presents an international urban parks conference, Greater & Greener: Re-Imagining Parks for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cities, the premier forum for urban park innovation, offering high-profile topics and speakers, interactive mobile →

workshops and tours, a volunteer-led service project and a dynamic, diverse audience of city park and recreation professionals, advocates and urban thought leaders from around the world.

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#### **Conference theme**

**6<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Urban Forum**

**Organised by UN-HABITAT**

**Dates & Place** 1-7 September 2012, Naples (Italy)

#### **Information on-line at**

<http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=9740&catid=672&typeid=6&subMenuId=0>

#### **Description**

The World Urban Forum was established by the United Nations to examine one of the most pressing problems facing the world today: rapid urbanization and its impact on communities, cities, economies, climate change and policies.

In the space of a few short years, the Forum has turned into the world's premier conference on cities. Since the first meeting in Nairobi, Kenya in 2002, the Forum has grown in size and stature as it travelled to Barcelona in 2004, Vancouver 2006, Nanjing in 2008 and Rio de Janeiro in 2010.

The Forum is one of the most open and inclusive gatherings of its kind on the international stage. It brings together government leaders, ministers, mayors, diplomats, members of national, regional and international associations of local governments, non-governmental and community organisations, professionals, academics, grassroots women's organisations, youth and slum dwellers groups as partners working for better cities.

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#### **Conference theme**

**5<sup>th</sup> International Urban Design Conference**

**Dates & Place** 10-12 September 2012, Melbourne (Australia)

#### **Information on-line at**

<http://www.urbandesignaustralia.com.au/>

#### **Description**

The International Urban Design Conference was established in 2007. Since then over 390 presenters have shared their knowledge in developing a range of themes including, Resilience in Urban Design 2011, Designing the Future 2010, Waves of Change - Cities at Crossroads 2009 and Survival: implementing tomorrow's city 2007.

#### **Opportunistic Urban Design, 2012**

If the act of planning is to legitimise 'what should be done', opportunistic design thinking seeks to action 'what can be done'. Indeed, the focus of planning may enable it to be read as one form of catalyst for thinking opportunistically. That is, a process of creative thinking leading to more flexible, more inventive and more contextually responsive strategies of intervention into the urban environment.

City leaders in Australia and internationally are, to varying degrees, endeavouring to respond to the aftermath of the GFC, effects of climate change, dramatic population movements, peak oil speculation, emerging social media and the influences on how we socialise and connect with each other, and a search for meaning (to name a few!).

Growth, flux, and decay are inherent aspects of urban systems. As changing financial, political, environmental, technical and social conditions influence urban life, it is apparent that urban design will have to become increasingly opportunistic and creative in approach, formulation and delivery.

This trend is manifesting itself across a broad range of disciplines, scales and intents. It is most popularly evident in innovative place making projects and strategies such as the High Line in NYC, tactical urbanism, a multiplicity of fluid uses of public spaces (eg pop ups).

The conference will focus on ideas and projects that are visionary despite, or maybe because of, the current context.

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#### **Conference theme**

**Child in the City 2012, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition**

**Dates & Place** 26-28 September 2012, Zagreb (Croatia)

#### **Information on-line at**

<http://www.childinthecity.com/>

#### **Description**

While playing, the street becomes their street, the square their square, the district their district, the city becomes their city and their domain. The children do not take over the city, they just become part of it. If we are concerned about the future of the city, we must consider how to involve children in its network, and in its economic and social life. And the best way to involve children is through play - children are really experts at playing. The city must create space for them →

to stimulate their expertise and it can then also profit from this expertise.

The programme committee of Child in the City 2012 has identified four themes for the 6th international conference.

The themes are as follows:

**Play**  
How to plan for the child's right to play in the child friendly city? Specifically, we want to stress even more the influence of city planning and the need for children to have enough time to play.

**Children's rights**  
How to implement and communicate children's rights in the child friendly city? The UN-Convention on Children's Rights is another challenge for child friendly cities. Every citizen should be aware of the importance of this convention and its impact on the local policies.

**Health**  
How to ensure children's physical, social, intellectual and emotional health in the child friendly city? The challenge of this theme is the integration of these different aspects of health. Besides physical health, there has to be attention for the mental health and even more globally for the social health of children

**Intergenerational development**  
How to ensure true intergenerational interaction in our child friendly cities? Children don't want to be an isolated group of citizens as well as other groups (e.g. older people). Therefore the intergenerational theme is more than a decoration, it's an essential quality of the society.

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### Conference theme

**City Museums: Collisions | Connections**

**Organised by CAMOC/Museum of Vancouver**

**Dates & Place** 24-26 October 2012, Vancouver (Canada)

### Information on-line at

<http://www.camoc.icom.museum>

### Description

CAMOC, in collaboration with the Museum of Vancouver, invites papers for "City Museums: Collisions | Connections", a conference on city museums and their engagement in city life. The conference will bring people together to talk about how city museums are reconsidering their role in civic life due to the enormous pressure cities face in terms of aging infrastructure, the need for urban regeneration, economic and environmental crises, and social issues such as demographic shifts, global diasporas, increasing immigrant and urban Aboriginal populations. The conference will look at city museums under development, urban/suburban city museums, and city museums in large and small cities. For more information, see the detailed Call for Papers published in this issue.

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### Conference theme

**Urban Network Panels of the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Social Science History Association**

**Dates & Place** 1-4 November 2012, Vancouver

### Information on-line at

<http://www.ssha.org>

### Description

The members of the Social Science History Association share a common interest in interdisciplinary and systematic approaches to historical research (including, but by no means limited to, sociology, urban planning, geography, demography, economics, and political science). Given that this year's meeting will be in Canada, the organisers are particularly interested in including new and exciting scholarship on Canadian cities.

The thematic topic of the 2012 annual meeting is "Histories of Capitalism".

However, organisers welcome papers and panels on all urban topics. Proposed panel topics include:

- The Occupy Movement as an urban phenomenon
- Financial Crises and Cities
- Capital and the Rise and Fall of Cities
- Urban Economies
- Vancouver's History and Development
- Cities of the Pacific Rim
- Olympic Games and Host Cities
- Migration and Immigration
- Cities and the Environment
- Urban Governance
- Crime and Justice in the City
- The Ancient City →



To propose a paper or panel please submit: Paper Title, Brief Abstract, and Contact Information at <http://conference.ssha.org/>. The deadline for paper and/or panel submissions is March, 1, 2012

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## ■ Announcements from CAMOC

### **Send us news about your museums, new exhibitions and projects!**

We wish to publish them in our newsletters and put on our website to inform our members about the activities of city museums all around the world. The deadline for submissions is March 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Send us photographs of your museums!**

We need visuals of your museums (outside and inside) to use on our website. Images that can be used horizontally would be easier to adjust to the narrow rectangular space that our graphic artist reserved for this purpose.

Please send your emails to Marlen Mouliou, the CAMOC Secretary, at [secretary@camoc.icom.museum](mailto:secretary@camoc.icom.museum) ■