

SYRACUSE ARCHITECTURE

Syracuse University School of Architecture

Panel Discussion

Contemporary Reuse in the Mediterranean Basin

Syracuse University Florence: Villa Rossa, Piazza Savonarola, 15

Thursday January 29, 2015, 17:00—19:00



Image: Panorama Of The Cold War Gjirokastrë Panormes/Porto Palermo Museum Project, Albania, courtesy of Elisabetta Terragni; D. Michalakis, Burnout, 2012, courtesy of Panos Dragonas; Manzanares Lineal Park, courtesy of Madrid Río

Contemporary Reuse in the Mediterranean Basin gathers leading experts from design and real estate development to discuss concepts and strategies for the reuse of buildings, landscapes, and infrastructure in this culturally rich, socially diverse, yet politically and economically challenged bio-geographical region. Reuse is predicated on obsolescence—whether as a result of age (from material or system failures), outmoded or unfashionable function (due to technological inefficiencies or cultural disinterest), economic impracticality (driven by globalization and deindustrialization with attendant disinvestment and deregulation), ecologic failure (through polluted natural systems, exhausted resources, and negligent industrial practices), or the social and spatial implications of political crisis. Each of these factors calls into question how to revalue elements of the built environment.

Contemporary Reuse expands the range of what is otherwise called *Adaptive Reuse*, which commonly refers to repurposing cultural or historically significant buildings. *Adaptive Reuse* promises a myriad of benefits: economic and environmental (lower material costs, extended life-cycles, conserved land, reduction of urban sprawl, energy savings (from both labor and its instruments), decreased carbon emissions, and material waste) as well as cultural (conserving and reframing the socio-political heritages of that which is being reused). *Contemporary Reuse* thus expands this conversation to include the rehabilitation and transformation of underutilized land, obsolete infrastructure, and incomplete everyday buildings and landscapes—all of which challenge demolition as the end game for even the most prosaic of artefacts and environments.

Contemporary Reuse is not simply a compromise between historic preservation and demolition. Rather it fully embraces this ‘between’ status and invites speculation on how design professionals (and by extension developers, policy makers, and political decision makers) can contribute to the ambition to reuse, not just build, our way out of contemporary economic, ecologic, and political challenges, all the while producing a culturally rich and socially just built environment.

Panelists will present creative adaptations of infrastructure, landscapes, and buildings from cities and regions in Albania, Greece, Italy, and Spain followed by a thoughtful and lively discussion that foregrounds the questions: what are 21st century construals, scales, and practices of “reuse” and what is at stake in their appropriation?

Special thanks to Sasha Perugini, Director, Syracuse University Florence and Dean Michael Speaks, Syracuse University School of Architecture, for their support of this event.

Participants

Moderator

Julia Czerniak is Associate Dean and Professor of Architecture at Syracuse University. Educated both as an architect (Princeton University) and landscape architect (Pennsylvania State University) her work focuses on the physical and cultural potentials of urban landscapes. Czerniak’s work as a designer is complemented by her work as educator and writer, which in all cases advances design as a way to enable new ways of seeing and being. *Large Parks* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2007) and *Case: Downsvievw Park Toronto* (Prestel and Harvard Design School, 2001) focus on contemporary design approaches to public parks and the relationship between landscape and cities. *Formerly Urban: Projecting Rust Belt Futures* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2013) examines potential futures for shrinking cities. Czerniak lectures and teaches internationally.

Panelists

Panos Dragonas is an architect and associate professor at the University of Patras, Greece. In 2001, he established dragonas christopoulou architects in Athens in collaboration with Varvara Christopoulou. The studio's projects have been distinguished in 10 architectural competitions. He has published extensively on Greek architecture and contemporary urban issues in architectural reviews such as *Archithese*, *Domes*, *MASContext*, *Monu*. From 2001 to 2013, he was consultant editor of the annual reviews *Architecture in Greece* and *Design + Art in Greece*. In 2012 he was joint commissioner / curator of "Made in Athens," the Greek participation at the 13th International Architecture Exhibition -la biennale di Venezia. His current research and design activities focus on the transformations of Greek cities during the economic and social crisis, the investigation of post-consumerist housing typologies, and the development of new architectural narratives.

Elisabetta Terragni is an architect (Como and New York) and an associate professor at the Spitzer School of Architecture at City College, New York. She has crafted a number of exhibition sites from abandoned infrastructures, such as the Trento Tunnels (2008-09) for the exhibitions *Trentino e la Grande Guerra* and the *ABC del Trentino*, and a proposal for a Museum of the Cold War in the submarine base of Porto Panorama (Albania). Several exhibition installations in historic structures or in industrial venues have stimulated experimentation and helped form a team of collaborators. The focus of the team’s work is on projects that involve the repurposing of abandoned pieces of industrial infrastructure and on innovative public uses of degraded and neglected sites. Based in Italy and the USA, the team consists of Elisabetta Terragni, Studio Terragni Architetti (Como/New York; installation design and architecture), Jeffrey T. Schnapp, (Cambridge, Mass., USA; metaLAB (at) Harvard; concept-development, curation and scientific coordination); Daniele Ledda, xy comm (Milan; graphics and communication). The team’s international character and experience in devising innovative solutions to unconventional problems place it at the forefront of contemporary work in emerging domains of transdisciplinary design practice.

Daniel Andres De Riva holds a Bachelor of Architecture from Cornell University and a Master of Science in Real Estate Development from Columbia University. He is currently a real estate advisor at Knight Frank Spain, leading the strategic proposals for large urban development projects in Spain which integrate issues pertaining to planning, policy, and finance. Previously de Riva was a faculty member at the Syracuse University School of Architecture, teaching at the Florence Program, home campus, and leading various travel programs throughout Europe and Latin America. His research agenda explores the complex relationships between real estate and the built domain while seeking ways in which design can enhance the social and economic development of cities.

Respondents

Alberto Iacovoni (Roma 1966), architect, founded the architecture firm ma0 (www.ma0.it) in 1996. The practice embraces an open field in between media and architecture, city and landscape, research and profession, focusing on the key issues of relations, interactions, and appropriations in space. From 1999 until 2004, he was part of the urban art laboratory Stalker/Osservatorio Nomade (www.stalkerlab.it). Publications include *Game Zone, playgrounds between virtual scenarios and reality* (Birkhauser 2003), *Playscape* (Libria 2010), and the book about ma0's practice, *Borderlines* (Damdi 2008). He has been a visiting professor and lecturer in various universities and dean of the Roman seat of IED–Istituto Europeo di Design from 2009 to 2013, the international educational Network in Design, Fashion and Visual Communication, and Cultural Coordinator until 2014.

Gianandrea Barreca (Genoa 1969), architect, has collaborated with the Domus Academy School postgraduate level II since 2004. From 2006 to 2012, he was Director of the Master in Urban Vision and Architectural Design at Domus Academy. Since January 2013, he has been the Scientific Advisor for architecture and urbanism. As part of the master's program he has developed projects and research on the contemporary condition of urbanism and architecture, with particular attention to the relationship between the different scales of the project. The work focuses on issues of public space and the architectural composition, intended as an integral part of the overall design of the city. Some important research projects were carried out with national and international partners, real estate investors, and associations of research and technological innovation. He was Professor of Architectural Design at the Faculty of Architecture in Genoa in the years 2000/2001 and 2001/2003, and from 1998 to 2004 was responsible for the itinerant seminar Villard. Since 2009 he teaches Architectural Design at the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture in Genoa. He began his professional career in 1996 and in 1999 with Giovanni La Varra and Stefano Boeri based Boeri Studio with which develops important projects in Italy and abroad. He is one of the founding members of Group A12, with which promotes and organizes seminars, research, exhibitions, installations on contemporary urban condition and in particular on the relationship between the urban and public art. Since January 2008, along with Giovanni La Varra, he has been part of Barreca & La Varra based in Milan which develops projects in synergy with the educational activities carried out by the two partners, respectively, at the Domus Academy and the Polytechnic of Milan.