

Conference Announcement – URBAN CULTURES AT THE CROSSROADS

We are happy to announce the opening of a new venue for urban culture studies in Europe. Since 1972 the Interuniversity Center in the Croatian city of Dubrovnik has served as a hub for advanced studies in Southeastern Europe organizing co-operative conferences and courses for 169 participating universities world wide. The first of a series of annual conferences will this year take place on September 14 -17, 2015 on the theme "Cities at the Crossroads". We kindly invite our readers to consult the Call for papers and register for a unique meeting in a unique city. Participation dues are 40 Euros.

The Editor in Chief

See online at [Programme - Conference details](#)

URBAN CULTURES AT THE CROSSROADS

14 – 15 September 2015

Conference Organizers

Kjell Skyllstad, Chiulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

Zuzana Jurkova, Charles University Prague, Czech Republic

Celine Motzfeldt Loades, University of Oslo, Norway

Sandra Uskoković, University of Dubrovnik, Croatia

Boris Bakal, Shadow Casters, Zagreb, Croatia

Conference Description

Urban cultures are increasingly constituted at the crossroads of cultures, religions, and ideologies at the local, regional, national and global levels. Intensified global interconnectedness can potentially open up and enrich the diversification of urban cultures. However, researchers, activists and artists, amongst others, have increasingly observed how conflicting agendas of development, conservation and urban planning amongst different interest groups are contributing towards growing dissatisfaction of urban life and culture across the globe. This brings attention to the importance of broadening the understanding of the complex socio-cultural, political, economic and environmental interrelationships and challenges we are faced with today.

The challenges of rapidly increasing urbanization make it necessary to rethink and develop more sustainable ways of planning our city spaces. Researchers and urban activists frequently observe the growth of a developmental agenda which myopically focus on cities' marketability. This agenda is often equally shared and driven by city municipalities and corporate players alike. The consequences of this type of developmental agenda on urban life, and the effects in which the commodification of cultural representations, expressions and cultural memories has on culture and identities, needs to be further explored by inter-disciplinary collaboration.

Responding to the tendency of excluding democratic, grass-roots participation in urban planning and development, many recent case-studies indicate that citizenship groups and NGO's seeking common ground have succeeded in exploring and finding alternative and creative solutions to urban challenges. Some ideas and projects initiated at the grass-roots level have furthermore found resonance and support amongst city managers and have met the aspirations of the general public. In some research environments in cities like Bangkok, Osaka, Zagreb and Dubrovnik the cultural sectors of art and music have furthermore been able to contribute to such explorations in fruitful ways.

There are many conceivable ways and media in which one can approach urban culture research and tangible and intangible spheres of intervention and cultural forms.

From an arts perspective it is fruitful to explore topics such as;

'What does a soundscape of a concrete city reveal about its social reality and about different dimensions of image construction?'

'What can a city's soundscape reveal about the activities of various social groups?'

Which artistic practices and initiatives can contribute to a re-examination of cultural memory in urban spaces, and how do they relate to other living cultural expressions?’

‘How can art counteract the dominant urban trend of aesthetisation and the function of culture in urban contexts that has become ‘image-based’ and commodified?’

From a social sciences perspective it is fruitful to explore topics such as;

‘To what extent and in which ways can urban grass-roots initiatives contribute towards a paradigmatic change away from the dominant neo-liberal, capitalistic logic which govern most urban habitats?’

‘Where and how can individuals and groups find the spaces for adopting sustainable and alternative livelihoods and life-styles within contemporary urban contexts?’

‘Is it feasible for researchers, through ethnographic - and case-studies based research and grass-roots collaboration, to contribute towards sustainable social change and to inform political decisions?’

Although there are a numerous perspectives on how to accommodate for sustainable futures of urban life and cultures, there seems to be a large degree of consensus about what are the necessary goals to achieve. In order to address the pressing challenges of a rapidly globalizing world we need to reopen our cities as living, communicative spaces, bringing into our lives a sense of residing together in shared spaces. We need to re-envision the urban fabrics as constituting of living, thriving and sustainable communities. The UN Post-2015 Agenda calls for a new participatory and collaborative effort in studying and consequently making informed recommendations and decisions about our future course. Recognizing these pressing needs the organizers invite researchers, practitioners, politicians, students, activists and artists to collaborate in the quest for a sustainable urban future by participating in our conference. We encourage participators to explore the above-mentioned research questions and/or to contribute with their own fruitful research questions and perspectives on how to achieve sustainable urban futures. In accordance with the leadership of the Inter-university Centre in Dubrovnik, conferences focusing on urban culture studies are being planned as annual occurrences at the IUC.

Presentations in the form of papers, multimedia presentations and panels are especially welcome but not obligatory for registration and attendance, as are also contributions to the peer reviewed Journal of Urban Culture Research.

DATES TO REMEMBER

The deadline for abstract submission has been extended to June 30th, 2015.

We invite abstracts of no more than 500 words (including an indicative reference list).

Please send abstracts to Ms. Petra Petrusic at: p.petrusic@gmail.com with the notification “for the conference Urban Cultures at the Crossroads.” Please note that the evaluation will take place from 15 May and that you will be notified after July 1, 2015.

Notification of acceptance: **July 15, 2015**

Deadline for full paper submission for the Journal of Urban Culture Research: **November 15th, 2015.**
(www.cujucr.com)

Contact Details

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For information on registration/payments, accommodation and traveling to Dubrovnik etc.
please contact:

Mrs. Petra Petrušić: p.petrusic@gmail.com

Registration - see the link in "Basic info"

Also see the link for accomodation at and via IUC : <http://iuc.hr/accomodation.php>