**14.1 URBAN CULTURES AT THE CROSSROADS**

14 – 18 September 2015

Conference organizers:

Kjell Skyllstad, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

ZuzanaJurkova, 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 haveincreasingly 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 andchallengeswe 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 observethe growth of adevelopmental 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 tendencyof 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 anarts 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 aboutthe 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 relateto other living cultural expressions?’  
‘How can art counteract the dominant urban trend ofaesthetisation 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, capitalisticlogicwhich govern most urban habitats?’   
‘Where and how can individuals and groups find the spaces for adopting sustainable andalternative 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 andto 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 degreeof 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 asconstituting 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 toexplore 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:

Deadline for abstract submission: May 15th, 2015

**The deadline for abstract submission has been extended to June 15th, 2015.**

We invite abstracts of no more than 500 words (including an indicative

reference list).

Notification of acceptance: July 1st. 2015

Deadline for full paper submission to the Journal of Urban Culture Research: November 15th2015. (www.cujucr.com)

Contact Details:

For information on the conference program and abstract submission please contact:

Sandra Uskoković: sandra.uskokovic@gmail.com ;

Celine Motzfeldt Loades: c.m.loades@sum.uio.no

Kjell Skyllstad: [kmskylls@yahoo.com](mailto:kmskylls@yahoo.com)

ZuzanaJurkova: [zuzana.jurkova@post.cz](mailto:zuzana.jurkova@post.cz)

Boris Bakal: katedrala@priest.com

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

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

Registration - see the link under "Basic info"

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