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Visiting Professor
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19:00-20:30 [EET]

Social Infrastructures and Imaginaries

A Reading of Postwar Athens



This talk will present a reading of Athens in the post-war era. Rather than being wholly planned, like other global cities, Athens grew as a patchwork of improvisations and adaptations, ad hoc, individualistic, and pragmatic. This does not make it uninteresting. A Mediterranean version of “informal” urbanism, Athens’s “abject” and “amorphous” development based on the ubiquitous figure of the *polykatoikia*, was, I will argue, positive, even transformational in a social sense: it enabled migrants who poured into the city following World-War II and Civil War, to become urban citizens, aspiring to a modern way of life. The growth of the *polykatoikia* relied upon a set of unique processes between producers and users. These processes, that we might also think of as the city’s tangible and intangible infrastructures, depended on deeply ingrained social and cultural patterns that need to be deciphered. I use these as explanatory or critical “sites” for my interpretation.

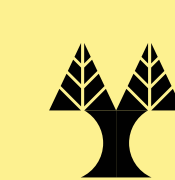
Ioanna Theocharopoulou is an architect and architectural historian whose research focuses on cities and on the histories, theories and evolving concepts of post-carbon architecture and society. She trained at the Architectural Association in London (AA Diploma), and holds a Master’s degree in Advanced Architectural Design (MSAAD), and a Ph.D. in Architectural History from Columbia University. Theocharopoulou has participated in multiple academic conferences and publications. She is the author of *Builders, Housewives and the Construction of Modern Athens* (2017). A new edition of the book is currently in preparation supported by the Onassis Foundation and Cultural Center (Athens, 2022). The book also formed the basis of a documentary film by Tassos Langis and Yiannis Gaitanidis, about the growth of Athens in the 20th century, with the same title. Theocharopoulou has taught at Columbia University, the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, and at the New School. She is currently a Visiting Professor at Cornell’s Architecture, Art and Planning Department.



Room O13, 75 Kallipoleos Ave, 1678, Nicosia

Zoom: <https://tinyurl.com/kzswtmhb>

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