

Towards Post-Capitalist Spaces: The Meaning of the Commons

Two events on the commons, An Architektur at Athens Biennale 2009, July 3+4

The notion of private property is crucial to capitalism. For the last 30 years the neoliberal agenda helped to transform the urban landscape into a field of commodities dominated by the claims of capitalist utilization: Its perpetual need to find further profitable terrains for capital accumulation resulted in the commodification and privatization of former public properties, services and spaces that had long been considered inaccessible vis-à-vis profitability calculations. These politics of dispossession, disfranchisement and exclusion led to increasing spatial and social inequalities.

The current crisis, however, has meanwhile led to a decreasing legitimation of these neoliberal politics. Yet the left seems to be lacking concepts to make use of the material and imaginary spaces that are opened up by the current situation: How to further resist and challenge the capitalist demands on the production of space? How to develop alternative models of urbanization and society?

We want to discuss the potential of the concept of commons as a political discourse and practice that sets a limit to capitalist accumulation but that also goes beyond it – a strategy of de-commodification and re-appropriation that tries to recognize and articulate the already existing though maybe minor and often micro-level alternative practices. Commons are an optimistic alternative, a grounded vision based on existing struggles but fundamentally questioning the hegemonic logic of today's society. We want to discuss the notion of commons in different historical situations and explore how it can be actualized today. What are its potentials, limitations and can it be turned into a social and political force and perspective towards post-capitalist spaces?

Friday, July 3: 7.00 pm – 9.00 pm, at Floisvos beach, Athens

Public Interview with Massimo de Angelis and Stavros Stavrides

Saturday, July 4: 11.00 am – 3.00 pm, at Floisvos building, Athens

Open Workshop with Massimo de Angelis, Stavros Stavrides and further guests from Athens

Massimo de Angelis is Professor of Political Economy at the University of East London

Stavros Stavrides is Assistant Professor of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens

An Architektur in cooperation with the Athens Biennale 2009

as part of "live", curated by Dimitris Papaioannou and Zafos Xagoraris

www.anarchitektur.com

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