

AESOP Thematic Group for Public Spaces and Urban Cultures

Series: Becoming Local

Call for papers for a Special Issue in *Journal of Urban Design*

Becoming Local: inquiries into public space practices, meanings and values

The AESOP Thematic Group for Public Spaces and Urban Cultures aims to better understand the relational nature of public spaces by using different concepts of urban culture as analytical perspectives. We support studies on evolving urban cultures and renewed intellectual and practical challenges that these practices pose to the way public spaces are used, interpreted, designed, and taught. We share and exchange different disciplinary approaches and experiences in practice and theory on the related subjects through research activities and workshops at an international scale.

The Thematic Group has organized a series of meetings under the general umbrella theme “Becoming Local” for the period 2013-2015. Each organisation team (local organisers and AESOP TG representatives) developed their own sub-theme related to the umbrella theme, on the one hand, and embedded into the local context, on the other. Within this context, the meetings reflected different topics as ‘The power of places & the places of power’ (Glasgow), issues of “Emancipation in planning and design” (Vienna), “Transforming spaces, redefining localities” (Paris) or “Generative places, smart approaches, happy people” (Porto). Contributions brought insights in contextual differences and highlighted the necessity of developing new epistemologies, research tactics, action-based methodologies and researcher identities bridging across academic and institutional boundaries. Multiple perspectives emerged along the series, exploring the set of practices and values that interact in urban spaces as crossroads where global and local forces meet and sometimes collide.

Our call for papers for a special issue in *Journal of Urban Design* has the goal to assemble and to precise insights of the becoming local series. We encourage contributors from the different workshops as well as other authors, who report from different fronts of becoming local in public space.

This call brings out the topics discussed, namely, by:

- 1) Understanding public spaces as “places” where global tendencies ‘sediment’ and are being ‘translated’ and ‘transformed’ according to local cultural, social and political contexts.
- 2) Public spaces as a ‘reflection of local identities’ shaped by community behaviours, patterns of everyday life and collective memories.

- 3) Public spaces as a 'ground of investigation of place making practices' by different actors and agents particularly in the context of changing role of state, market and civil society in shaping, creating and transforming public spaces.

Given the above, the aim of this special issue is to explore relevant debates on public space, bringing together researchers and case studies from different urban contexts. The outcome aims to contribute to the debate of achieving a consensus to create inclusive public spaces.

Guidelines for abstracts

Interested contributors from both practice and academia, and at their interface, are invited to submit an abstract of maximum 350 words to the e-mail address jud.becominglocal@gmail.com. The abstracts should include:

- Title, key words
- Author's name, current affiliation and e-mail address
- Research question, methodology, and findings of the research
- Maximum five key references
- Short bibliography and list of recent publications of the author(s)
- Two photos at a good resolution (200dpi) illustrating the contents of the proposed contribution (if needed)

The deadline for **abstract submission** is 31th August. The results of a preliminary review will be announced by the end of September. The selected authors will, then, be invited to submit **full papers** till 15th December.

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Links to the series meetings:

[Istanbul Meeting](#) (November 20-23, 2013)

[Bucharest Meeting](#) (June 11-14, 2014)

[Vienna Meeting](#) (August 30, 2014)

[Paris Meeting](#) (October 23-25, 2014)

[Glasgow Meeting](#) (June 4-6, 2015)

[Porto Meeting](#) (September 24-25, 2015)