

Beyond the Success and Failure of the Athens D.O.E.S. 2002 Cultural Olympiad Competition

Maria Theodorou

**BEYOND THE SUCCESS and FAILURE OF THE *ATHENS D.O.E.S. 2002*
CULTURAL OLYMPIAD COMPETITION**

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ABSTRACT

On the occasion of the Athens 2004 Olympics the Hellenic Ministry of Culture supported the launching of an open international architecture competition on *Ephemeral Structures in the City of Athens (Athens D.O.E.S.)* under the auspices of the International Union of Architects (UIA). The competition was organized in the context of the Cultural Olympiad's programme for architecture and approached the contemporary Athenian cityscape as a site for experimentation by considering it to be both the site of practice and the site of thought. The competition brief provided architects an opportunity to invent 'fields of forces' whose impact would offer the inhabitants an opportunity to re-orient their perception of Athens.

Structured into two parts, an ideas category for the students and a professional category for architects, the competition attracted 1279 registrations, 466 submissions from 54 countries and 34 prizes were awarded. 60 professionals were involved in the various stages, as members of the jury, authors of the brief, exhibitions designers etc., and backed the aspirations of their client, i.e., the 21st Greek State's wish to challenge the prevailing 19th century perception of Athens. Nevertheless, the commissioning of the competition projects stumbled on the local construction industry that resisted any idea of research and innovation in architecture.

The paper reframes the Athens 2004 competition in the context of the current financial crisis to discuss the potential of introducing Bruno Latour's actor-network theory to think competition briefs that can be designed and implemented by an assemblage of clients, architects, emerging technologies and common usage.

KEYWORDS

Athens 2004 Olympics, Ephemeral Structures, Parasite, Architecture Competitions, Actor-Network Theory and Architecture, Assemblage

INTRODUCTION

Are we currently experiencing a paradigm shift unfolding? On the one hand, there is the evidence of swelling social agitation, economic crises, and environmental challenge. On the other, the work of influential thinkers (Latour, De Landa, Hardt and Negri and their seminal books with telling titles - such as *Actor-Network theory*, *New Philosophy of Society*, *Commonwealth*, *Multitude*) advocate for a reconceptualization of the way we connect to the world. In their work concepts like ‘common’ and ‘assemblage/multitude’ are introduced as a way out of the concepts of ‘public’ and ‘society’ respectively.

It is also argued that the modern state and its institutions are in their final throes (Martin, 2013). Other types of formations emerge which are still difficult to grasp – most are apparently short-lived (occupy movement) – but their impact is making an imprint as to the potential for future alternatives of living and operating together. Can institutions, that emerged within the modern state and twisted around within its neoliberal variation, survive? or is it the work of our time to invent new type institutions or formations? [R. Martin, 2013]

This is the general framework in which this paper unfolds, while ‘safely’ nesting within the specific field of architecture competitions. Its basic premise draws on the early 20th inaugural relation of architecture competitions to the institutionalization of the profession within the modern state¹ [Aymone, 2009]. This relation appears to still hold, manifested for instance as a consensus institutional rhetoric of competitions which corresponds, as Tostrup argues, to the consensual democracy in the neoliberal state [Tostrup, 2009].

A question therefore worth asking can be the following: Is it currently possible to trace the evidence and detect the possible impact of a paradigm shift in the institution of architecture competitions? This sounds, and indeed it is, an overwhelming and entirely impossible task in the context of a short paper. Nonetheless, the choice of a well-placed case study can at least provide productive insights and open up the implications of such a question. This is in fact, what this paper aims to attempt.

The chosen case study is an international architectural competition in Athens. A number of features converge to make this appropriate for our investigation. Above all its timing: 2002 was only two years away from the 2004 Athens Olympics “coming to their birthplace”. Greeks have embraced with enthusiasm their European identity as promoted by the EU monetary integration; Greece joined the euro in 2000 and held the EU presidency in 2003. There was a sense of euphoria and financial bliss as Greece acquired visibility and confidence in thinking its future beyond the deeply embedded 19th century stereotype of classical antiquity. Even the massive, overwhelming and mainly uncontrolled, influx of immigrants who flooded the ‘national’ territory, was seen through the exotic lens of ‘multiculturalism’.

The competition captured this moment of opening to create a brief that functioned as a toolbox of concepts for the architectural reinvention of the city of Athens. The architectural community (the many participants, star jury, and architectural institutions) shared the enthusiasm with their client (the national state), while the general public and the media

joined in. This was the big ever international competition organized in Greece in terms of the number of participants. There were no disputes (which are very common in most architecture competitions in Greece), the UIA safeguarded the process of openness/anonymity and the UNESCO regulations were followed through.

It came as a disappointment that none of the competition awards were realized. Implementation stumbled at the local construction industry unwillingness to be involved; for they had a bigger fish to catch and fry. The Olympic infrastructure was to be built by exploiting the available illegal immigrant cheap and unskilled labor. The standard traditional techniques (reinforced concrete) yielded big and quick returns; there was no time to be wasted on architecture experimentations in research and innovation. New technology of materials and construction was nowhere near the local construction industry concerns.

The success of its resonance and the failure of its implementation are the distinct feature of this competition; in a strange, or not so strange, coincidence, the competitions fate appears to reflect the success story of Greece: it lasted until 2004 and was turned into a deafening and deepening failure story from the year 2008 and onwards.

The paper argues that the Athens DOES conceptual tool box, created for the architectural reinvention of Athens at the moment of a cultural high in 2002, touches upon a number of creeping and unresolved issues that were to force their way into the open with a fore in 2008. The competition brief seen retrospectively, appears to touch this moment of a seismic shift that was about to happen. The current dislocations of neoliberal state cannot leave the institution of architecture intact and architecture competitions are in for a much needed reconsideration.

ATHENS D.O.E.S.ⁱⁱ: THE CONTEXT – the client and the program

On the occasion of the Athens 2004 Olympics the Hellenic Ministry of Culture supported the launching of an international architecture competition on ‘Ephemeral structures in the city of Athens’ under the auspices of the UIA (International Union of Architects). The competition was organized in the context of the Cultural Olympiad; it was included in the programme for architecture and approached the contemporary Athenian cityscape as a site for experimentation by considering it to be both the site of practice and the site of thought. With the games ‘coming back to their birthplace’, the competition call, asked for a return to Athens as a site for thinking architecture rather than a replay of the 19th century idealised city of the classical past. The competition was in fact, an invitation to architects worldwide to re-think their relation to the city of Athens.

The challenge of the competition programme was to intertwine practical needs to wider theoretical considerations. The architectural task was to provide a series of structures that would be constructed and used for events directly or indirectly related to the athletic ones during the games. On the other hand, the competition brief inserted a series of concepts in the programme thought to be relevant to the design of the cityscape. Nonetheless, an

engagement with issues of architectural theory was required only insofar it enabled the competitors to use concepts as tools for architectural invention and not as an aim *per se*.

The competition was open anonymous and structured into two categories: one ideas category for the students and one professional category for architects. At the practical level, its programme was not object oriented; it attempted a move away from typology and asked for ‘theme-structures’ to be designed. Four out of the six ‘theme-structures’ were directly related to the Cultural Olympiad events, that is, structures for leisure activities, such as events platforms, open-air theatres, ‘creative’ activities spaces, and semi-open exhibition spaces. The design of all the above had to meet the detailed technical specifications given by the competition programme.

The fifth ‘theme-structure’ asked the competitors to reflect on the category of leisure in contemporary cities. The brief here reflects the consolidation of a ‘society of pleasure’ and its cultural considerations; this was a distinct feature in Athens (and not only) in the nineties. The brief introduction reads as follows:

“Leisure’s antithetical relation with work has been fully exploited by modern planning with the allocation of appropriate time and design of specific areas for both. Nowadays, cities are turned into cityscapes, i.e., states of constant configuration. The conventional distinction and space configuration of work/leisure seems redundant. Moreover, in the contemporary context of identity politics, city-leisure may concern activities where individuality - as a set of different cultural traits and individual desires - may be fully displayed, enjoyed and accepted by fellow ‘inhabitants’. The term ‘inhabitant’ indicates an ongoing assimilation of city-inhabitants to city-visitors. We may say that cityscapes have ‘inhabitants’ while cities had dwellers. Nevertheless, city-leisure may also be a collective activity, a face-to-face interaction or even a site for negotiating conflicting cultural or other visions and enjoying shared fantasies. The competition posed the question of leisure for individuals or groups within the contemporary city as a question to be thought of and designed. The design of such structures attracted the majority of participants. [Theodorou, 2003, Volume I, p. 16]

The sixth structure, the ‘Landmarks of Olympic Activities’ was reserved to the professional category only. This was a special structure to operate as a landmark to signal the entrance of athletic venues and other Olympic city-events. While being a kind of way-finder for spectators it would also be used for crowd management services and as a watchtower when needed. The landmarks were expected to contribute to the ‘Image of the City’ for the 2004 Games.

The Cultural Olympiad and the Games provided not only the practical but also the theoretical framework that determined the competition’s content. The very theme of the ephemeral, for instance, touched directly upon concerns for the after use of Olympic structures and slightly dislocated the discussion regarding the appropriate ratio between permanent and temporary constructions that host the athletic venues. This was the recurrent theme of the IOC – UIA Conference on *Olympic Games and Architecture* in

Lausanne in May 2001, where the ephemeral competition was first announced by the author.

Nevertheless, the choice of the term ‘ephemeral’ had wider theoretical implications that a number of authors were invited to by the author, who as the competition director devised the theoretical and practical agenda of the competition. M. Cousins, P. Hirst, A. Benjamin, D. Papalexopoulos, Z. Kotionis and I. Efremidis were invited and asked to work on the peculiarities of the competition framework such as the absence of competition site, the description of ‘the name of Athens’ and key terms such as the ephemeral, the parasite, the condition of contemporary cities, and produce a text, or a photographic essay. Their work constituted the competition context that in a conventional competition brief corresponds to the background information, which contains the history, the description and the drawings of the competition site. The material was structured in two parts; the first one concerned the key-terms whereas the second provided ‘information’ regarding the city of Athens. The competitors were asked to work within the competition’s framework and use its key-terms as tools for architectural invention in addition to the regulations and the specific technical requirements for the design of the theme-structures.

The competition brief took the form of a series of essays that aimed to construct the competition’s city Lexicon: the task of the essays authors was to define or redefine terms such as the ‘ephemeral’, ‘the parasite’, to unravel the implications of designing ‘in the name of Athens’, provide appropriate material, and remind participants of the long forgotten political aspect of cities immersed in the ‘all things cultural’ mentality of the nineties. In other words, the competition created its own conceptual framework.

ATHENS D.O.E.S.: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK – beyond architectural invention

In the text that follows, the phrase in the title that appears by the side of each term/concept draws the attention to the current implications of the term/concept and highlights its connection with conceptualizations of the current paradigm shift. The text below each term/concept is drawn from the original formulation as stands in the competition brief.

EPHEMERAL *–to rethink ‘time’ in the city implies an understanding of architectural objects as material things of concern with which individuals make attachments (as in Latour’s 2005 associology)ⁱⁱⁱ.*

The term ‘ephemeral’ adopted by the competition has a negative meaning in the everyday language. What appears to be negative in the ephemeral is that it lasts for too short a period of time and then it vanishes. And although the word temporal refers to a short period of time as well, it does not seem to have the same negative connotations. The difference between the two terms reproduces the difference between the Latin *temporalis* which is related to *tempestas* (defined as ‘weather’ in the Oxford Latin dictionary) and

the Greek *ephemeron*: that which lasts for one day (Chantraine, P. Dictionnaire etymologique). However, a day *ἡμῶν* in Greek is not the day of a month but the destiny experienced by an individual [Onians R. B., 1951]. Hence the difference lies in the fact that ‘temporal’ refers to time as an entity that can be measured and mastered (under controlled weather conditions). The ephemeral, on the other hand, relates to a different experience of time, during which one’s destiny remains unchanged as an effect of an attachment established between an individual and a thing or event, or between individuals. The ephemeral lasts as long as the attachment remains unchanged, and there is no secure method to measure its duration. As it is difficult to predict when, due to a change, the attachment will be dissolved, we may say, that the melancholy and the negativity that accompany the common use of the term ephemeral, reveals the anxiety of not having control over one’s own fate.

The structures of the competition were ephemeral in the sense that they were to be mounted and remain in a site as long as they produced attachments and people used them. When the situation changes, they should be demounted and transported to another site, transferring the traces and the history of their ephemeral attachments from site to site and city to city. The ephemeral of the competition does not denote the existence of an expiring date but it rather implies the mobility and adaptation of attachments as a requirement for the design of the projects.

Thus, competitors were asked to design non site-specific structures. However, such a choice run the risk to produce generic objects that fit anywhere in the world. To avoid that, the competition asked two things. First that the competitors design ‘in the name of Athens’, second, that the structures operate as guests to be adapted each time to the features of the sites hosting them. By posing the problem of the site-adaptability of the structures the competition sidestepped the traditional dichotomy between site-specific VS generic architectural objects. On the other hand, to avoid the branding approach that ‘in the name of Athens’ could lead to, the competition employed another negative term, that of the ‘parasite.’ The parasite while addressing the problem of site –the site may be considered as the ‘process of being a guest’ - it touches upon the question of architectural form.

IN THE NAME OF ATHENS – *a moving away from the 19th century concept of land as the repository of the national identity where every attribute fits in its location and can be mapped in a mimetic way, to the navigational mapping in the ever changing city territory. (as in Latour’s navigational mapping)*

In an instructive historical account, Mark Cousins presented the way the notion of nation state was combined with the generality of the term urban. He then goes on to indicate that the abandonment of both is substituted by the contemporary question of identity, which takes the form of a question concerning the identity of the city. The ‘in the name of Athens’ design approach proposed by the competition reverberates the contemporary concerns about identity. This could lead competitors to think the identity of the city as set of easily recognized trademarks, of the architectural branding kind.

However, the brief encouraged the competitors to address the problem of turning an architectural object into an Athens-scape. The first word of the term refers to the competitor's conception of Athens. The second indicates the architectural inscription of a continuous adaptation process that the structures should perform to follow the cityscape transformations. The 'in the name of Athens' along with the notions of the ephemeral and the parasite could then be employed as tools to invent an architectural solution to the question of city-identity intended as a set of the cityscape's changing attributes.

THE CITY AS A POLITICAL INSTITUTION - *from the institutional democratic order to the field of forces (as in Hardt's and Negri's multitude)*^{iv}

Paul Hirst's text presents a brief history of cities, from ancient Greece to globalization. It examines the city as a political institution and considers the ways the processes of globalization are changing the political function of contemporary cities. The political aspect of the city is introduced into the competition only to make evident that any recourse to the traditional idea of city - even if this city is Athens, the very site that generated the idea - is just impossible. Both the traditional concept of the city and of democracy is problematic. To make these terms points of reference for the design seemed -the least- romantic. Cultural diversity and individuality constitute today's chaotic city context and as the author notes it is difficult to combine diversity and democracy. This bleak depiction of cities opened a possibility for competitors to envisage the leisure structures, the competition is asking for, as a kind of community/communication generators

PARASITE - *from settled and distinct entities to the assemblage of unstable networks that include human and technical/technological actors (as in Latour's Actor–Network theory)*^v

The Ephemeral structures, were thought of within this condition of hospitality. Athens the host-city was not considered the neutral backdrop in which the ephemeral structures should be accommodated. The competition brief asked for structures that constitute alien architectural 'entities' and called them parasites. These parasitical entities should not quite fit in the host-city context but should be able to initiate a transformation process. The term hospitality – (*philoxenia* in Greek) evokes in fact a transformation process accomplished by following specific rules by which an alien, (*xeinos*) -and potentially hostile- individual or element becomes a friend (*philos*) and it is accommodated into a hosting structure. In the hospitality process, guest and host interrelate and both enter into a transformation process.

Andrew Benjamin's text explores the relation between architecture and parasitism. The author works through the 'possibility of allowing the figure of the parasite to play a role within the generation of form'. He also defines parasitism as the co-presence of maintaining and transforming. When a parasite is attached to an existing structure/site, its survival depends on the survival of the structure/site. This involves the maintaining of an

existing situation while at the same time transformation occurs as an effect of the parasite's presence. A parasite to remain as such should not be incorporated and merged with the structure or the site; it has to maintain its difference. The combination of the structure/site and the parasite is always an unstable situation, and will be maintained as long as their attachment produces effects of an incomplete transformation.

Dimitris Papalexopoulos' text, introduced the issue of digital technology and its relation to parasitism. The author argues that a novel kind of network relevant for architecture might emerge which combines physical and digital parasites.

ATHENS INFO – from the ideal image to the changing human scape: the complexity of persons / networks / organisations / governments / cities / nations assemblages (as in De Landa's New Philosophy of Society)^{vi}

To approach site as parasite, that is, as 'in a process of being a guest', falls back to site-related problems in the construction of buildings in Greek cities, and in Athens in particular. The continuous inhabitation of most cities is physically manifested in the form of archaeological remains. Undisturbed layers of history become unintentionally unearthed in most cases whenever the digging to lay the foundations of a new building starts. Depending on the importance of the findings, the project may need to be transformed or have to be quitted. The unearthed history of the site has been an obstacle to a number of building projects and previous architectural competitions, the well-known one for the Acropolis Museum included.

Athens is a landscape of history. This can also be said for the entire Greek territory. It is with the foundation of the new nation state in the 19th century and in the context of the emerging nation-states in Europe, that the landscape is invented as the depository of identity. Geography, geology and archaeology used the notion of landscape to support national claims. The layers of history became the testimony of the Greek identity and the material proof of a direct connection between modern and ancient Greeks. As a repository of national identity, the landscape of history was sacred and state protected. Greek identity had to be consolidated and preserved uncontaminated. Building restrictions applied by the archaeological service created isolated nucleus of ancient ruins within Greek cities but also within the Greek territory as a whole. New construction kept the prescribed distance and do not lay claim to any continuity or relation with the past. The past had a place that represented the ideal, as did the present, which stood for the real. The two never coincided deliberately and were actually in sharp opposition. In such a context the 'in the name of Athens' of the competition sits uneasily. The promoter did not want to give a historical account of the city or its detailed description, but to offer a rather oblique view of it.

The photographic essay by Iosif Efremidis, has as its starting point the romantic 19th century views from hilltops as well as the landscapes with ruins. The photographic essay undoes the 19th century view of landscape as a depository of national identity. The shoots taken early in the morning show no sign of people and just depict the amorphous built

environment of the city. The black and white is also an allusion to the neoclassical fiction of whiteness. The photographs depict the reality of the present and evoke the ideality of the past. The everyday life of individuals is missing and seems crashed between the monumentality of the amorphous building mass and the perfection of the monuments. It is this in between that the competitors should use as an actual and conceptual site to give architectural form to their ephemeral and parasitic structures.

Human presence is at the centre of Zissis Kotionis text. The author attempts a guided tour in the city. The city's history is however re-created as a series of fictive narrations of the inhabitants' experience, in different locations and in different historic moments. The approach is inscribed and draws from the concept of landscape as a depository of history. The difference with the 19th century is that this history is not a collective narrative that is established as a collective memory of Greek identity. It is the history of individual experiences that does not even lay any claim for authenticity. It shows the individual expectations, fantasies and activities projected and inscribed into the landscape to transform it into an ever-changing cityscape.

ATHENS D.O.E.S.: OUTCOME AND SUCCESS – *the alliance: client - the architectural community (participants, the jury, institutions) and the public – the power and the glory (as in Agamben's Economy of Government)*

The competition process was documented in publication entitled the title ATHENS D.O.E.S. It consists of four volumes which follow the various stages of the competition and mark the events organized in its context. The titles of each volume is drawn from the language of theology; they operate as a reminder of the Greco-christiano-judaic tradition in which the thinking of architecture and of architecture competitions is embedded

- Volume I: **Annunciation**, a re-edition of the competition programmed
- Volume II: **Hermeneutics**, texts prepared by the members of the competition's technical committee after their first encounter with the 470 competition entries
- Volume III: **Revelation**, the catalogue of the exhibition, the identity of all participants and projects revealed
- Volume IV: **Judgment**, the adjudication process, texts by jurors and awards

By the time the Jury arrived in Athens the judgment setting that was also an exhibition setting was ready and hosted in the Byzantine and Christian museum. Following the opening in Athens the winning projects touring exhibition was shown in London, Paris, Limassol, Herakleion and Lamia and travelled even in Japan.

ATHENS D.O.E.S.: FAILURE AND DEAD ENDS - *the divergence: client + architectural community VS the local construction industry - The emerging formations: the becoming 'common' of the public*

Experimentation can be described as the thought's ability to confront the unknown and especially *aporia*, the dead end state. Experiment's endings are not always secured and it

is when they hit a dead-end that become more effective. An experiment's dead-end may lead to the reconsideration of the problem and of the whole context in which a problem is posed or arises. In that sense, the competition dead-ends are less about its failures and more about the need to reconsider its failing context. The first dead-end of the competition concerns the difficulty of the implementation stage and has been briefly mentioned in the introduction. The second touches upon architecture's confrontation with city symptoms.

The jury noted the inability of the participants to work upon 'the name of Athens' and turn it into architectural invention. This is not an issue of theory turned into practice, of concepts related to structures or a problem of addressing the local context; it touches upon architecture's process of sublimation. In fact, the 'in the name of Athens, together with the other concepts-tools (the ephemeral, the parasite, the political, the photographic presentation and the fictive history of Athens' localities) that were included in the competition programme, describe the Greek cities' symptoms. 'In social analysis the symptom would be that which is ideologically thought to introduce disharmony in a society that would otherwise be harmoniously unified under a certain utopian ideal' [Stavrakakis, 1999].

The brief invited the participants to fully accept and work with the 'symptoms'. As the winning projects indicate (see appendix), architects came up with beautiful and celebratory objects to provide a public space for the 2004 Olympics occasion and architecture reinforced its process of sublimation. "Sublimation is ... the public space in which our singular perverse bodies may make contact with one another through the creation of beautiful objects that stand for them". [Rajchman, 1991]. This was in line with the contemporary production –by means of computer technology - of sublime or sublimated architectural objects scattered worldwide which is indeed remarkable and assimilates architecture to the star system.

The public was attracted by architecture's capacity to provide a fantasy for the future at the beginning of the 21st century. It would be interesting though to observe how the various architectural micro-fantasies interact with a city's context but far more interesting to experiment with the ability of structures to leak out the problems that they cover up. However, nothing of this sort was proposed by the participants. Nonetheless, it is the public that disappears by the on-going dislocation of constructed realities in today's Athens.

CONCLUSION

The irony is that Athens is currently a site for experimentation as the competition envisioned. Racism and extreme nationalism followed the short-lived and once trendy concept of multiculturalism; the economic euphoria is a thing of the past, an open wound for the unemployed as the state and its institutions are crumbling.

All the above have visible effects in the city and its inhabitants; and this explains the intense interest of international architecture schools which organize study visits to Athens

while well-known thinkers parade and give talks in disused building attended by passionate and engaging audience. Athens has finally become a hub for thinking through and experiencing first-hand another way of city living.

It seems, the political challenge of architecture would be to “shape” the experiences of emerging formations and aggregates that are still difficult to grasp; maybe this is not a task that can be delivered by competition briefs in which the various roles of the client, of the architectural community, of the ‘vanishing public’ and the technical/technological factors /implications are seen as belonging to separate entities that consent or dissent.

The current dislocations cannot leave the institution of architecture intact and it seems architecture competitions are in for a much needed reconsideration. It might be necessary that the re-designing of our world becomes a task of an extended assemblage of humans, emerging technologies and common usage and it remains to be decided “...whether the assembled aggregates can form a livable world” [Latour 2005].

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APPENDIX (attached on a separate PDF file)

Illustrations with captions and basic information on of the competition

AUTHOR BIONOTE

Dr Maria Theodorou Phd (AA), GradDiplRes, DiplArch, Fulbright visiting fellow Princeton (2005), senior lecturer, History and Theory Coordinator, The Leeds school of Architecture and Director of the School of Architecture for All (SARCHA). <https://www.leedsmet.ac.uk/research/dr-maria-theodorou.htm>

ⁱ "The introduction of competition rules during the late 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th coincides with architects getting professionally organized in associations and unions". [Andersson et al., eds. 2013, p.7]

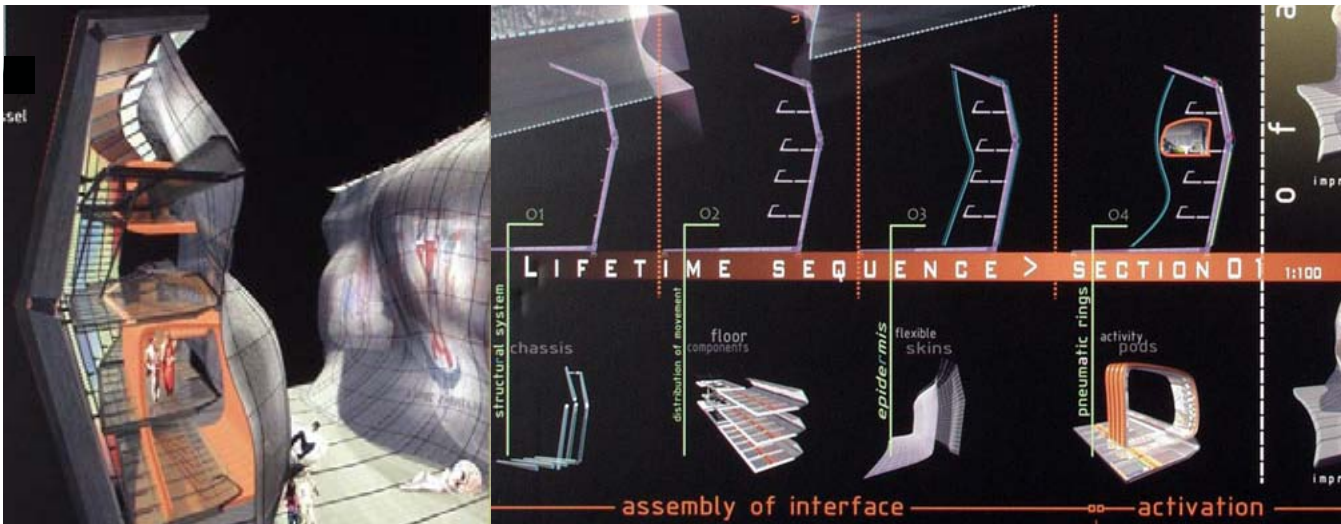
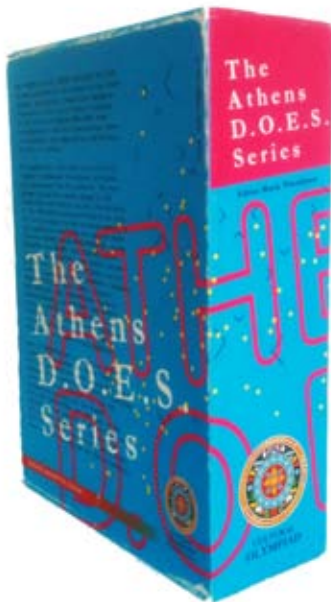
ⁱⁱ The presentation of the competition in the present paper draws extensively from material included in its four-volume publication [Theodorou, 2003].

ⁱⁱⁱ Associology / Actor- Network Theory: Treat human and non-human agents (called actors) as equals - An actor is made up from heterogeneous elements called networks - Networks: associations of human, natural, technical/technological actors (assemblages) - Networks are highly unstable. [Latour, 2005]

^{iv} Democracy and the project of Multitude: The multitude is neither an identity (like people) nor uniform (like masses), the internal differences of the multitude must discover the common that allows them to communicate and act together. The common we share...is not so much discovered as it is produced. [Negri & Hardt, 2001]

^v As above endnote iii.

^{vi} Assemblages are wholes whose properties emerge from the interactions between parts - Unlike organic totalities, the parts of an assemblage do not form a seamless whole -The synthesis of the properties of the whole is not reducible to its parts - They are highly unstable; do not obey rules of linear causality (causes fail to produce expected effects) [De Landa, 2006]



P5 110 | U.S.A. | mention

EPHEMERAL STRUCTURES IN THE CITY OF ATHENS 2002

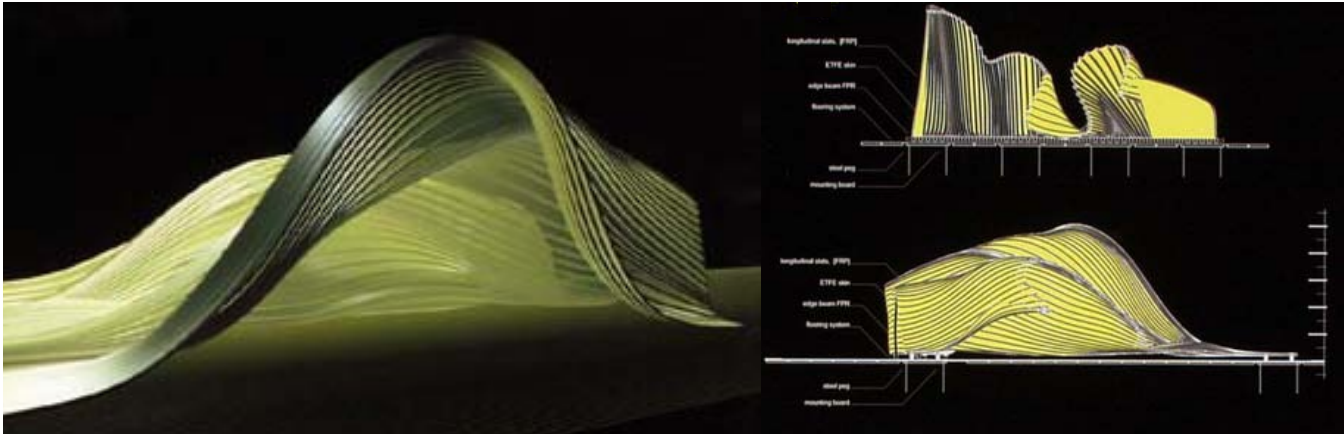
ATHENS D.O.E.S. international (UIA-UNESCO) architecture competition, Athens 2004 Olympic Games, Cultural Olympiad grant 800.000

Brief

“With the [Athens] Olympic games as trigger, the competition provided an opportunity to imagine catalytic interventions that could generate urban transformations. Via the metaphor of host and parasite, it asked for these interventions to be non site specific, while embodying in their concept the idea of the host city – as experienced, remembered, or simply imagined. The innovative strength of this brief lay in the fact that what it asked for was neither contextual nor typologically driven, nor based on an idea of urban design as planning. The categories of intervention asked for were seen more as acupunctural interventions, whose impact would offer the inhabitants the opportunity to re-orient their perception of Athens, in other words interventions that could themselves “re-make” the context.” (excerpt from the Jury’s preliminary statement)

Involvement

60 professionals were involved at the various stages of its implementation; among which, invited jurors (Zaha Hadid, Elias Zenghelis, Sylvia Lavin, Hani Rashid, Yatsuka Hasime etc.), authors of essays for the brief (Mark Cousins, Paul Hirst, Andrew Benjamin, etc.), authors of essays assessing the entries (edited by the Archis chief editor Ole Bauman), exhibition designers, technicians, etc.



P4 011 | GERMANY. | prize



P5 096 | FRANCE | mention



P4 034 | FRANCE | mention

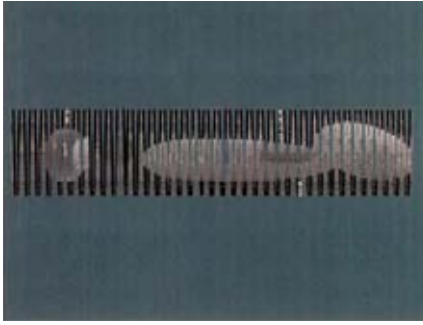


P1 015 | U.S.A. | prize

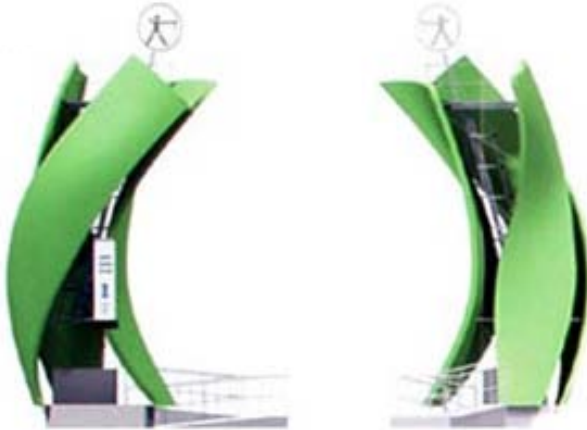
Outcome

The competition attracted 1279 registrations, 466 submissions (of students & architects) from 54 countries. The jury awarded 34 prizes/mentions to participating teams from 13 countries.

The six first prizes presented a high level of ingenuity and buildability; they were selected from a complementary group of interventions that formed a 'family' of urban catalysts, connected by their association to that part of architecture discourse that assigns them to the category of the 'field' rather than as finite objects projects.



P5 141 | ITALY. | mention



P6 021 | FRANCE. | prize



P2 023 | U.S.A. | mention

Impact

Nationally/Internationally

- The competition and its publication functioned as a platform for thinking and discussing architecture and its making and brought the Greek architectural community as a whole into contact with the architectural community worldwide. It reached a wider public in the form of touring exhibition and public presentations in London (RIBA), Paris, Athens and various cities in Greece, Cyprus, and Japan.
- It continued to attract the interest in subsequent years and a number of invited presentations were delivered in architecture schools as well as at the program in Hellenic Studies at Princeton (respondent: professor of Urbanism Christine Boyer)

Internationally

It was classified as a best practice example for the UIA – UNESCO international architecture competitions

Personal

“...the jury wishes to unanimously express its wholehearted appreciation and thanks to Dr Maria Theodorou ... for her commitment and professionalism - and for her unfailing guidance throughout, from the competition’s inception and theoretical development, to the last details of organization, management and hospitality” (excerpt from the Jury’s preliminary statement)