



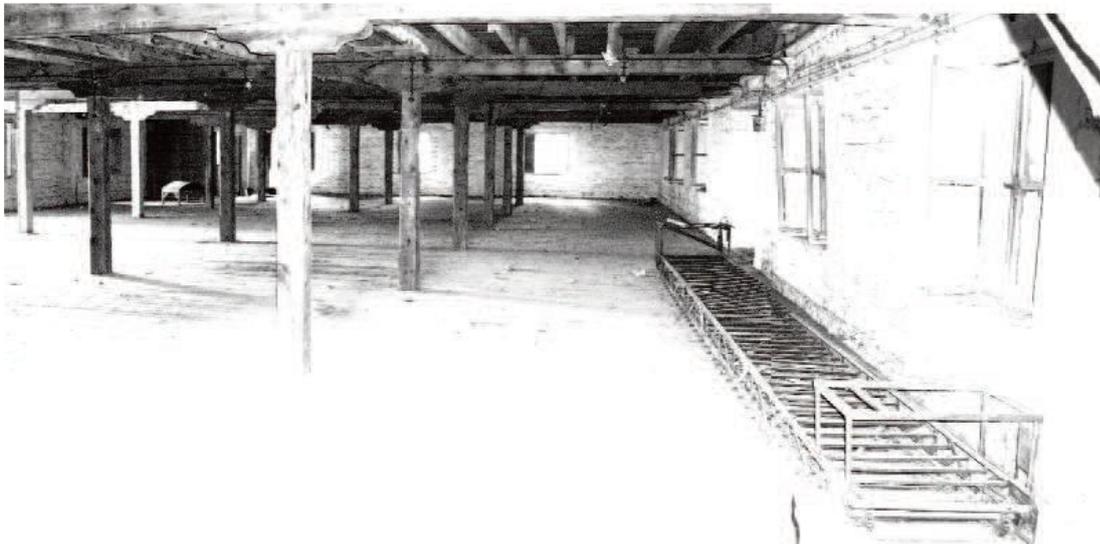
ERASMUS+ PROJECT: CRAFTING CIRCULARITY

University of Antwerp | Mario RINKE, Frederik VANDYCK
Amsterdam Academy of Architecture | Jeroen van MACHELEN, Machiel SPAAN
NTNU, Trondheim | Arnstein Olav GILBERG, August SCHMIDT
University of Liechtenstein | Urs MEISTER, Carmen RIST-STADELMAN
University of Thessaly, Volos | Maria VRONTISSI

LAYERS OF PERMANENCE workshop

(RE)USING EXISTING STRUCTURES

April 20-27, 2024. Volos, Greece



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GREECE, 2020s. A construction industry that hasn't formally integrated directives of circular economy, a society that isn't consciously applying principles of recycling; yet a building culture that has been informally integrating building elements with past lives into new building configurations for centuries.

VOLOS, GREECE. A city with several historic layers, with a significant score in adaptive reuse of building structures, yet with a considerable vacant building stock in concrete or stone. A city in transition, eventually with a high potential in harvesting salvaged building components and materials, extracted from buildings undergoing upgrade, renovation, or demolition works. A city in the course of gentrification, yet in need of temporary spaces.

CRAFTING CIRCULARITY. An ERASMUS+ project seeking to connect circular construction strategies to architectural education by integrating novel teaching methodologies based on availability-based design practices implemented in project-based design & build workshops and design studios.

LAYERS OF PERMANENCE. A design & build workshop looking at how to employ salvaged building elements in the (re)use of existing structures in concrete. Hands-on experimentation in international groups via component studies, physical models, construction mock-ups, and full-scale prototypes to explore how reclaimed materials can be combined to activate the otherwise vacant building stock to host ephemeral spaces.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

. Friday, April 19th, 2024

- Arrival in Greece (to Athens airport)
- Travel Athens-Volos (booked coach). Hotel check-in.
- Free evening
- Teachers meeting

. Saturday, April 20th, 2024

- 9.00-13.00. Visiting the city of Volos
- 13.00-14.30. Lunchbreak
- 15.00. Workshop introduction & working groups
- 20.00. Welcome Dinner

. Sunday, April 21th – Friday, 26th April, 2024

- 9.00-13.00. Work in groups
- 13.00-14.30. Lunchbreak
- 14.30-18.00. Work in groups
- 18.30-20.00. Presentations, discussion, reflection
- 20.00. Dinner

. Saturday, April 27th, 2024

- 9.00-13.00. Final details & Cleaning-up
- 13.00. Public presentation
- Free evening
- Teachers meeting

. Sunday, April 28th, 2024

- Hotel check-out. Travel Volos-Athens (booked coach).
- Leaving Greece (from Athens airport)

STUDENT ACCOMMODATION (for foreign students) tbd

3*** hotel in Volos center. Rooms for 2-3 people. Breakfast included.

LOCATION tbc

Department of Architecture, School of Engineering, University of Thessaly, Volos

ORGANIZATION

ma[K]e | Building Structures Research Unit

CONTACT

Assoc.Prof. Maria VRONTISSI | mvrontis@uth.gr

The city of VOLOS [\[link\]](#)

Built on the ruins of ancient settlements dating from earlier than 1.500 BC, and incorporating roman, byzantine, medieval and ottoman parts within its palimpsest, Volos is a Greek city with a relatively short history, turning to an **important industrial center** and a **major commercial port** only in the late 19th century, after the incorporation of Thessaly to Greece in the 1880s. Situated in the very center of Greece, adjacent to the agricultural core of the country, the Thessalian plain, and served by a fully operating railway service since the 1890s, Volos became the primary Greek harbor in exporting agricultural products, tobacco mainly, after the 1st World War. **Tobacco, textile, flour, and steel industry** were the main areas of the city's thriving economy in the interwar era that was followed by parallel **social and cultural growth**. The city saw its population increasing by about 40% in the 1920s, when receiving large numbers of refugees from Minor Asia, that were mostly absorbed in the local factories.

Starting just before the 2nd World War the first signs of industrial decrease were present, while the catastrophic earthquakes of 1955 resulted in severe damage of more than a quarter of the city. The gradual decline of the industrial sector continued in the 1960s, leading to a **de-industrialization** of the city after a few decades, and resulting in more than 50 vacant industrial buildings within the urban fabric. In a critical turn in the city's course, the **University of Thessaly** was founded in Volos in the mid-1980s, employing several of these buildings to host a large range of its activities, and setting a paradigm shift for the municipality towards a **large-scale adaptive reuse program** reclaiming a large part of the former industrial building stock for cultural and public purposes in the 1990s.

In the following years, next to the remaining **large-scale abandoned industrial building envelopes** is added a **significant number of medium- to small-size empty buildings**; deserted older small-scale houses built in stone or half-finished structures bearing almost nothing but the concrete skeleton, typical of the Greek building construction practices, waiting for more prosperous times for the house to be completed. Furthermore, during the economic crisis of the 2010s, several offices and many commercial spaces shut down, increasing the vacant building stock, in a city where the main construction activity for years was almost solely powered by subsidized small-scale renovation works for energy performance upgrades of existing buildings.

In the post-Covid era, the city is in a phase of yet another transition, as Volos is growing fast as a **popular tourist destination**, profiting both by the people-friendly small-scale of the urban municipality and the neighboring attractions of mount Pelion and the Sporades islands, that have been inviting Greek, primarily, and international visitors since the 1960s. Old two-storey stone houses become high-income residences or are replaced by new multi-storey housing, empty stores are initially transformed to student housing to later yield their place to posh short-term residences, construction works resume in several concrete structures, new stylish hotels pop-up. **Gentrification** is rapidly taking over across the center of the city.

A trend that even the **catastrophic floods of September 2023** paused but shortly, adding just one more layer of deserted spaces, as homes, shops, university units seek shelter elsewhere, as a temporary solution, until restoration takes place, or as a permanent measure, anticipating the likelihood, according to many, of similar phenomena in the future.