

# AND NEXT... EUROPAN 9

## PROCEDURE AND EVENTS

On the basis of the **generic theme of “European urbanity”, associated to site criteria, let the European cities propose corresponding urban sites**, pre-selected by the national structures. A rather long period of time, starting at some point during the previous session, would be devoted to this work. From May to October 2006.

On the base of that National pre-selection, the Scientific Committee defines a first classification by thematic families of sites (September 2006).

**Starting with these thematic groups of sites, debates among EUROPAN partners**, site representatives, juries, and young architects are articulated during the different European events that structure the session:

- **In November 2006**, a **Sites Seminar** offers the occasion to create a debate on these thematic sites groups, led by organisers, sites representatives and experts. Reflection would be conducted in different workshops, one per site category. It must enable to better precise or to compare the goals of the sites and the programmatic frames before being presented on the European Internet site. The launching events are organised at national level.
- **From January to June 2007**, the **Conception phase** for the candidates is conducted in one phase leading to the submission of three panels and a file outlining the strategic reflection to the national structures of the country in which a site is located.
- **From August to November 2007 the Judgement procedure** is made by National juries in two different phases, with a large foreign participation. Site representatives would, however, not take part directly in the judgement. During its first meeting, each national jury would select a maximum of 20% of the submitted projects on the basis of the quality of the ideas they embody.
- **In November 2007, the Cities and Juries Forum** deepens and fine-tunes the thematic reflection conducted during the previous phase in the light of the pre-selected projects. This reflection would also be conducted in workshops, gathering the sites representative and the jury members in order bring the work forward.
- **National juries** meet a second time to choose the winning projects and runner-ups.
- **In June 2008, the Results Forum** can also serve as an occasion for the same participants to analyse the contents of the competition.

## **EUROPEAN URBANITY, SUSTAINABLE CITY AND NEW PUBLIC SPACES**

The objective of Europan is to bring to the fore Europe's young architecture and urban design professionals, and to publicise and develop their ideas. Its objective is also to help cities and developers which have provided sites to find innovative architectural and urban solutions for the transformation of urban locations.

The Europan theme acts both as a stimulus and unifying factor for projects of ideas but also as a vector line in the search for competition sites.

## **EUROPEAN URBANITY: HALF SOCIAL, HALF SPATIAL**

The generic theme of Europan 9 – European urbanity – specifically involves collaboration with the towns and urban developers in the organising countries. Indeed, the ultimate aim of the European vision of the city is to make society, in other words to bring together people of all conditions and origins. However, the dominant trend towards individualisation, the quest for autonomy, cannot be ignored. This is precisely the contradiction that Europan addresses: on the one hand wanting the city – i.e. animation, communal life, people – and on the other side wanting intimacy, privacy, home and the immediate circle.

Urbanity can be defined as a shared way of experiencing the city and its functions but also as a way of envisaging city space on an urban and architectural scale to create the conditions for people to come together in communal places: public space. Urbanity also encourages thinking about the forms of public space by re-placing them in their local and environmental context.

## **PUBLIC SPACE: MEANINGS, CHALLENGES AND LIMITS**

Before formulating the common criteria of the Europan sites around the theme, it is important to try to define what makes urbanity, i.e. a certain way of envisaging public space. In urban societies, public space represents all the through-spaces appropriable by all and by everyone directly accessible, without restrictions if are respected the rules of use, established by the public authority.

It forms the spatial structure that links together private plots, that facilitates or codifies the relations between them, commerce, the expression of community life and of certain forms of freedom and conflict. As a structure, it determines the development of the city and adapts to the site with the streets and infrastructures network.

Urban public space is also a locus of public power: general organisation of the city, urban infrastructures and symbolic or monumental operations.

Sometimes or necessarily opposed to power, it is also a locus of freedoms, of expression, of appropriation, of identification... Urban public space is strongly imprinted with local lifestyles and activities. This imprint takes many forms: the atmosphere, colour and decorations of the street, markets, communal activities (terraces, stalls, games, etc.) largely protect the social status and anonymity of everyone, with a wide variety of possibilities in cities.

The explicit use of the concept of public space is relatively recent and its modern meaning – as a particular space – dates back to the second half of the 20th century. These days, we tend to think of it as a type of space that has a certain number of specific features: an empty space in tension between elements of urban fabric; space of mediation, vehicle of social life. Dynamic space containing the values, symbols and signs of urban life, it is a space to welcome the possible ones and plural practices.

A place of alliance and peace but also of conflict and insecurity, public space is governed by a certain rationality, organisation, but can also awaken the imagination, facilitate daydreaming. So public space is at the same time that of the everyday, the festive or the playful.

The questions raised by this attempt are:

- Where does public space start and where does it stop? We can start by thinking about its boundary with private space?
- Can neighbourhood and local spaces be seen as part of the public domain when their use is restricted to a specific community of users?
- Can we use the term public space for the new communal spaces – such as shopping malls, cultural and leisure centres, stations and airports – which have become important elements of the urban project, but where commercial space takes precedence over public space?
- What status can public space have in the space of the “diffuse” city - a “networked” city - at a time when the issues of the sustainable city oblige to reformulate the question of urban public space in terms of stratification – main characteristic of the European cities? Does European public space – caught as it is between these two aspect of the city, still generate urban identity?

## **SUSTAINABLE CITY AND SITE CRITERIA**

Designing urbanity-creating projects that link in with the status of public space means rethinking it in the context of sustainable urban development, i.e. development that does not damage the environment but incorporates it into the process of change.

While projects need to take account of technical environmental performance (air quality, noise, water quality, microclimate, etc.), it is above all on the urban scale, in the programmatic frameworks associated with the sites in the competition, that qualitative requirements on urban space need to be formulated.

### **Mobilities and diversity of travel**

These days, the goal of regulating car use and encouraging a diversity of travel methods is an essential part of the quest for urban quality of life.

### **Densities, morphology and open spaces**

Preventing city sprawl consuming natural areas is an important goal of sustainable development. This very often means increasing construction density. The other side of the coin is the need, within the city, to create or to enhance communal open spaces where nature is present in the city. Managing the land in such a way as to achieve this also means increasing construction density while still establishing openings onto these open spaces.

### **Multifunctionality and intensity**

The functionalist city used urban zoning to create a separation of functions. This policy encouraged urban sprawl and a growth in mobilities to travel from one zone to another. Today, the goal of sustainable development is to promote a functional mix in order to reduce travel distances and facilitate social interactivity. How can residential neighbourhoods become more urban through a greater diversity of uses?

### **Private space/public space**

Whilst the city is the product of a multitude of private initiatives, these need to be able to coalesce around the public domain. The consumerist city of today tends to focus on the private and commercial dimension and private investment to the detriment of the communal dimension and public property.