AFTER THE CLINIC: IDENTIFYING PATTERNS OF CIVIC ASSEMBLAGES

Eleni Katrini

The Esch Clinics operate as a temporary urban agency: embedded in the city, close to institutional processes, yet deliberately non-representational. During the residency, my interest is to turn an investigative lens back onto the project itself and ask what remains in the city once the clinic, as a time-bound format, comes to an end.

My work focuses on urban commons, urban ecology, and participation. Specifically, I have examined how collective initiatives, togetherness, and urban space influence one another. My doctoral research investigated the spatial patterns of sharing culture, identifying critical spatial elements that can support participation and commons in everyday life. More recently, through my postdoctoral work Places of Togetherness, I have flipped this question, examining how spaces designed for togetherness can be reactivated through collective spatial practices. When inserted into a neighborhood's public spaces and everyday life through repetition, negotiation, and care, such practices can support residents' collective action, creating embodied experiences of commoning, even if only performatively.

My work therefore focuses on the middle ground between the top-down and the bottom-up. What can activate residents while also holding local authorities accountable, so that the city can be reimagined as a place of collective action? What elements facilitate such processes, and how are they shaped by space? Through this lens, my recent research interests have turned to civic assemblages, understood as in-between places and mediators. From this perspective, they are not only sites of experimentation; they are also infrastructures that leave traces even after they are gone: habits of collaboration, informal knowledge, social ties, expectations, and sometimes unresolved tensions. Some of these traces persist, others disappear. Understanding these traces is critical. Equally important is identifying if there are elements of civic assemblages that are essential across contexts: from space, data, resources, materials, and infrastructure, to processes and institutions, people and networks, and the everyday activities and practices they enable.

During the residency, I propose to work with the Cultures of Assembly team to reflect on the Esch Clinics as a civic assemblage:

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- What kinds of knowledge, relationships, and capacities has it generated in the city?
- Which of these elements are dependent on the project's presence, and which have the potential to outlive it?
- What spatial, institutional, or social conditions make such persistence possible?

To address these questions, I will compare the experiences of the Esch Clinics with international case studies of commons-oriented initiatives. Through this comparative work, I aim to identify recurring spatial and procedural patterns that make initiatives meaningful within their local context, while also revealing elements that are transferable across cities. Rather than producing a model, the goal is to articulate a set of patterns: conditions, roles, and practices that repeatedly support continuity, learning, and civic action.

The residency will result in a reflective framework that situates the Esch Clinics within a broader landscape of civic initiatives, while remaining grounded in Esch's specific realities. In doing so, the work seeks to contribute to an ongoing conversation about how research-based urban interventions can move beyond temporary engagement and become part of the city's everyday capacity to act, assemble, and care for shared spaces.



Places of Togetherness, Collective Dinner at Nikea, Greece (May 2023). Eleni Katrini.