• Paper / Proposal Title:

Narrative, Metaphor, Fiction: How Might They Serve Architectural Education

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• Abstract (300 words):

Architecture is faced with a crisis today: it concerns the loss of novelty and the search for a highly technological, sustainable function, though disconnected with humanity and environmental reality. Can young architects still conceive of and create spaces communicating the complexity and novelty of life? How could architecture be taught and perceived before the built work? I aim to explore how architectural education could respond to the development of a perception of what life is, within the spatial and social complexity of architecture. For this purpose, I would like to use the case study of a small village of the Cyclades; my argument is that studying big architectural drawings and maps, reading architectural descriptions of village landscapes or city areas, or applying sociological and anthropological principles to places is not enough. Only in these ways, students/young architects cannot acquire a profound understanding of what place is or how life evolves in it. Through narratives connected either with the reality of the village landscape or urban reality, I realized the value of metaphor as a natural language sharing a communal way of living connected with the natural and built environment. Consequently, metaphor, narrative and fiction are presented as tools. They offer students/young architects a broader and deeper understanding of what the world they will design for really is, and
alleviate them from the preoccupation of what this world should be, as required by contemporary social and political commandments. They equip architects with a way to interpret the local tradition or urban structure into a contemporary way of living and innovation, without responding to architecture and dwelling through form and fashion – instead, they force them to tap more into the social and ethical function of architecture, a “meaningful regionalism” related with humans and the environment.

**Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Maria Vidali studied architecture at Portsmouth and Kingston University. She holds an MPhil degree in History and Philosophy of Architecture from Cambridge University and a PhD from the University of Thessaly in Greece. Also she has been a research trainee at Mc Gill University with interest in Architecture and Narrative. She has been participating in conferences in Greece and abroad. Her research work: Village and Land, The outlying chapels of the island of Tinos was published as book in Greece, in 2009. Since 2007 she runs her own practice Maria Vidali Architect. She has taught at the Drury Centre in Greece, the flagship programme for Drury University of Missouri extensive Study Abroad offerings. Since 2017 she has been teaching in CYA (College Year Athens, an educational institution based in Cambridge, Massachusetts) the Contemporary Urbanism course: Athens through Time, Space and Narrative. From February 2019 she will be teaching at the University of Thessaly, school of Architecture as well.