

# ΔΕΣΤΕ

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE -

Ίδρυμα ΔΕΣΤΕ  
Εμ. Παππά & Φιλελλήνων 11.  
142 34 Νέα Ιωνία  
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DESTE Foundation  
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JUNE 2012

### *COLLECTING ARCHITECTURE - TERRITORIES*

DESTE Foundation  
Nea Ionia, Athens

June 20, 2012 —  
October 31, 2012

Opening Hours,  
Wednesday 12:00-20:00  
Saturday 10:00-14:00

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The exhibition *Collecting Architecture Territories*, presents the development of the art-architecture, cultural-academic collaboration between the **DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art** and **Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning & Preservation (GSAPP)**.

This collaboration is rooted in both partners' wish to further explore the character and dynamics of the intersection where art, architecture, collecting practices, curating, design and urban communication meet. A graduate studio and a seminar started research last January in GSAPP, probing the dual senses implied by the term *Collecting Architecture*: considering architecture both as an object of contemporary collecting practices, as well as an agent that organizes and supports, but also challenges and reflects on contemporary collections. The exhibition at DESTE samples and presents in an installation specifically designed for the building, this research.

One of the most significant developments reshaping the domain of art and architectural practice over the last three decades is the veritable explosion of institutions and foundations that have emerged out of private collections. The sheer breadth and diversity of such institutions—ranging from experimental new museums to renovated industrial, commercial, or military buildings, and from long term installations to highly temporary exhibitions—demands analysis. *Collecting Architecture Territories* proposes that the historical institution of the museum, forged by the culture of the Enlightenment, is no longer sufficient to describe the expanded territory in which the practices of artists, collectors, curators, and architects now operate. By extension it asks if our understanding of collecting itself has been altered by recent architectural articulations beyond the space of the museum and new art institutions.

The seminar investigates contemporary discourses on collecting and compiles a survey of spatial and economic information comprising over 70 different institutions that have emerged from private collections since 1980. The institutions outline a global territory that stretches from Hobart to Oslo, ranges from metropolitan cores to rural villages, and spans a spectrum from the largest private collections to small, agenda-driven foundations.

The studio focuses on the context of contemporary Greece through a variety of collection circumstances, including the European Union and sovereign association, state debt and revenue collection, and the city understood as an assemblage of cultural assets, speculating upon these findings through research and design. The city of Athens and its environs provide a space for reflecting on global architectural collecting



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practices, from those of UNESCO World Heritage sites, to the European border management and collection facilities of Frontex. The emphasis upon territory highlights the spatial proliferation of various collecting activities, which have shifted from the traditional centers of power to operate across a new constellation of global cities, and increasingly, a range of "non-sites." This spatial diffusion of contemporary art collection and the particular conditions in Greece serve as lenses and points of departure for further speculation concerning architecture's relationship to the infrastructures of movement, the networks of circulation and financial investment, the technologies of protection, as well as the strategies of viewership and exposure implicated in the territories of collection. DESTE is being examined as part of this growing typology given the breadth of its international activities and the particulars and significance of its Greek base.

As part of the expanded dialogue between DESTE and Columbia University GSAPP, a team of graduate students in the **Department of Architecture, University of Thessaly**, have been invited to engage the project's theme. Through four different installations / projects, presented at DESTE, the different ways in which architecture appropriates, interprets and interrogates collecting practices, structures and materials are examined. These projects focus on postwar Greek farming development, Posthumous Digital Identity Ruins, the culture of street markets and the different versions of the monstrous in Greek urban space. Starting point of all projects is the fact that the formation of the contemporary Greek cities does not depend on "tabula rasa" type conditions, as is the case in other cultures and territories. It rather demands accumulation, fragmentation, juxtapositions, micro-economic models, polyarchy, the informal and unplanned development.

Within *Collecting Architecture-Territories* the book *Architettura* by Sebastiano Serlio is exhibited as an intervention by the DESTE Foundation President and Columbia alumnus, Dakis Joannou. *I sette libri dell'architettura* (Seven Books on Architecture), as it is commonly referred to, is a collection of seven books by the Renaissance architect and theorist Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554). Published separately between 1537 and 1618, they were likely compiled into the single volume exhibited in *Collecting Architecture Territories*, at some point in seventeenth century. Written the Italian language of the times, the books were conceived for a broad readership of building professionals, and unlike earlier treatises in manuscript form, Serlio's Seven Books on Architecture fully embraced emerging print culture by making extensive use of woodcut illustrations. The combination of such mechanically reproduced drawings and the system-seeking nature of Serlio's treatise—the first to canonize the five orders—would influence the development of architectural theory and practice for centuries.



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As part of the Collecting Architecture-Territories project, a laboratory-like event, an informal symposium, titled "The Athens Minutes", was realized in Athens on June 15 and 16. With the participation of artists, architects, theorists, university teachers and graduates, curators and writers, the findings of the project's research were discussed, designs and related concepts were presented and the outline of the relevant prospect publication was developed. Architecture, as an "almost infectious desire", (one closely related to private collecting on the 20th c.), which tries to imagine the world in new and radical ways, was described by the Dean of Columbia GSAPP Mark Wigley, as well as theorist and historian of modern architecture, head of Princeton phd research program Beatriz Colomina. The head of Frankfurt Städelschule and director of Portikus, architect, curator and theorist Nikolaus Hirsch, described the tension created in these fields by the combination of artistic demands and social responsibility, whereas artist Tomas Saraceno, called for a realistic confrontation of the most radical, even utopian projects and ideas.

The team working on the collaborative project Collecting architecture-territories includes: Nadja Argyropoulou, Curator, DESTE Foundation, Craig Buckley, Director of Publications GSAPP, Yorgos Tzirtzilakis, Consultant of DESTE Foundation, Assistant Professor, Dpt. of Architecture, University of Thessaly, Mark Wasiuta, Director of Exhibitions, GSAPP.

By incubating radical ideas that test the limits of artistic and architectural practice, Collecting Architecture — Territories is a collaboration between DESTE and GSAPP designed to create new visions for how art and architecture will inform the future of our global world and contribute to the evolution of related fields.



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## **Exhibition Participants**

### **Columbia GSAPP**

#### **Curatorial Assistants:**

Adam Bandler / Troy Therrien

#### **Curatorial Team:**

Momosuke Araki / Jordan Carver / Jared Diganci / Kyle Hovenkotter /  
Trevor Lamphier / Farzin Lotfi-Jam / Tom Mckeogh / Jess Ngan / Marina  
Otero / Bryce Suite / Jen Wood

#### **Studio Participants:**

James Amaya / Momosuke Araki / Joseph Justus / Kyle Hovenkotter /  
Eriko Kawamura / Trevor Lamphier / Helen Levin / Farzin Lotfi-Jam / Tom  
Mckeogh / Jacob Segal / Bryce Suite / Jen Wood

#### **Seminar Participants:**

Jordan Carver / Jared Culp / Jared Diganci / Nina Kolowratnik / Jacob  
Moore / Sarah Morrison / Jess Ngan / Helene Nguyen / Marina Otero /  
Jessica Ouwerkerk / Sarah Rafson / Luciana Varkulja

### **University of Thessaly, Department of Architecture**

#### **Graduate Program**

**Course:** Collecting the Social. From Collecting to Collectivity

#### **Tutors:**

Lois Papadopoulos / Yorgos Tzirtzilakis

#### **Teaching Assistant:**

Yorgos Rimenidis

#### **Team:**

Lida Alexiou / Epaminondas Argyropoulos / Anthi Gallou / Euaggelos  
Dimitrakopoulos / Eftihis Efthimiou / Maria-Eleni Zounaraki / Nestoras  
Kanellos / Maria Karatsiori / Katerina Kelessidou / Euaggelos Koutrogiannis  
/ Vassilios Kritikakis / Kostis Ktistakis / Ioanna Xidi / Konstantinos  
Papathanakos / Vassiliki-Maria Plavou / Aliko Samara-Chryssostomidou /  
Michalis Softas / Evy Tsolaki

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