

# ECOWEEK 2011 Workshop W16: archigraph architects

## Parallel Cultures

The subject of Archigraph's EcoWeek project is the design of a sustainable temporary installation to be used by minor and neglected communities of Thessaloniki in order to be introduced to city life through various urban activities. Although the installation refers to the notion of the 'bazaar', it broadens to include social merging, cultural interchange and ethnic assimilation. In this sense, the installation is not just a street market, but also a crossing point, a place of coexistence, between the citizens of Thessaloniki and these communities.

The project is based on the multicultural heritage of Thessaloniki to bring about the notion of 'open city' as a place that distinguishes and supports 'common life' beyond the dissimilarities and the particularities of the different communities. This is achieved by reinforcing personal creativity and social contribution as these are manifested in simple and low cost productive activities. These activities could be crafting, artefact production, trading, but also urban farming and ethnic cooking. Social interchange and sustainability are key issues in these activities. Most of the newly introduced communities come from places where economy is based on primary means of production. They can help established inhabitants to be familiarised to a more sustainable and natural way of making and living.

The character of these activities is based on continuous social interchange. For this reason, a temporary and ever changing installation is suggested. This could be placed at various locations in Thessaloniki. However, as these activities depart from plain trading, more stable and recognizable sites have to be chosen. A possible site that could accommodate the installation is "Lemonadika" (Old Vegetable Market of Thessaloniki) at Agiou Dimitriou street. This will be the case study of our workshop.

The installation to be designed has to support these activities and every day public life. It must rely on simple and light means of construction and easily attainable materials. Recyclable or even urban waste materials could be an option. The whole structure must be flexible and customisable. Above all, it must put forward an environmentally friendly and ecologically balanced way of urban living.