



CITIES AS COMMUNITY SPACES

Third International Conference on Cultural Relations in Europe and the Mediterranean

23-25 November 2016

Background

The European Capital of Culture (ECoC) aims to *“highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens”*. The title is based on a European Community Action and is assigned on two main dimensions, namely: (i) the European Dimension, and (ii) the City and Citizens dimension. Various cities look at the title as a different opportunity, with legacy being one of the most desirable outcomes of receiving the title.

The City of Valletta was declared European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2018 on the 12th October 2012. The Valletta 2018 Foundation¹ is responsible for implementing the project in Valletta and Malta. The ECoC will include all the Maltese Islands, with an aim to spread the impacts throughout the whole Maltese territory. Valletta will be hosting the title in 2018 with the Dutch city of Leeuwarden.

Conference Aims

*“The city expresses a people’s culture: their likes and dislikes, their aspirations and fears. Culture is linked to tangible and intangible qualities. This includes what is remembered, what is valued and their tangible manifestations in how a city is shaped”.*²

The Valletta 2018 Foundation has launched a series of annual international conferences addressing different aspects related to cultural relations in Europe and the Mediterranean and within the wider 21st century globalised context.

Following the 2015 conference, ‘Cultural Mapping: Debating Spaces & Places’ the Foundation aims to look further at how different spaces within a city are used by the different communities.

¹ The Valletta 2018 Foundation is responsible for the implementation of the cultural programme, which will enable the participation of the citizens of Malta and Europe and will form an integral and sustainable part of the long-term social, economic and cultural development of Valletta. In conjunction with the cultural programme, the Foundation will develop a programme of consistent, accessible and comparable research and evaluation directly linked to culture.

² Landry, C. (2000). *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*, page 173

Cities across the world reflect the culture, lifestyle, and social interaction of the people that populate it, as succinctly described by Charles Landry. Through its third International Conference on Cultural Relations in Europe and the Mediterranean, the Valletta 2018 Foundation seeks to explore the social dynamics through which space – public, private and virtual– within a city serves as a site of discourse, contestation, and critical reflection within and between communities with a particular reference to the Euro-Mediterranean context and Valletta as European Capital of Culture in 2018.

This conference aims to document, analyse and discuss cities as community spaces, looking at the relation and intra-disciplinarity between spaces-places-scapes:

- *Space* as the actual and/or virtual physical frame within which urban interactions take place;
- *Place*, distinguishing between qualities of places (as spaces), spaces as places and non-places, whilst adding the more subjective character of the place;
- *Scapes* as scenes or views that are created or offer themselves for the viewer to dive into or to become part of.

Conference Objectives

The **central objective** of this conference is to bring together researchers, practitioners and policy makers to share knowledge about different uses and understandings of city spaces for different communities, and promote cooperation, with particular reference to the current Euro-Mediterranean context.

The conference has the following objectives:

- To discuss and assess various examples of community-driven, contested, creative, living and online spaces within cities as community spaces;
- To examine how civil society addresses different lacunae within community spaces;
- To discuss the pivotal role of such spaces during times of conflict or times of social renewal;
- To foster debate about the legacy and future of cities, within a culture, creative and community-oriented context;
- To analyse how culture may act as an empowerment tool for different communities within different city spaces, through engagement with and within public spaces;
- To promote the use of and understand how different technologies can help in the connection of different spaces and communities;
- To increase research interest on the multiple aspect of community spaces in light of ECoCs

Conference Themes

The conference is centred on five main thematic areas:

1. Community **Driven** Spaces: The use of public space by civil society, including spaces used by community groups and non-governmental organisations (social clubs, cultural centers, political clubs, religious spaces and centers, sports facilities, squares and other public spaces);
2. Community **Contested** Space: The use and pivotal role of community spaces to generate public discourse and debate, including on issues of migration, human rights, cultural diversity, activism and resistance to repression and to cultural and economic hegemonies, post-colonialism, the evolving role of language(s) in moulding cultural identities, and the use of public and protest art;

3. Developing **Creative Spaces**: Emerging and diverse visions for future creative cities, including developing creative clusters and residencies through different forms of funding, urban renewal and regeneration, reinventing heritage-based or former industrial spaces, use of spaces to foster professionalisation, the link between arts, science and creativity and the future and sustainability of creative cities within city master-planning practices, including the economic and entrepreneurial aspect of space development;
4. City Space as an **Empowerment Tool**: Culture as a catalyst and an empowerment tool for communities through engagement with and within public and institutionally-driven spaces, for different groups of people, including, but not limited to, the elderly, people with different abilities, people in correctional facilities and/or rehabilitation spaces, the use of health and therapeutic spaces and education spaces and the links of these with the overall impact of contemporary city master-planning;
5. **Online Community Spaces**: (Re)Connecting real and virtual spaces through advancement in technology, including community mapping, the use of different tools and technologies, the Internet of Things and the engagement in social media platforms.

Timeline

Call for Papers and Posters	9 th February 2016
Call for Papers and Posters closes*	18 th March 2016
Registration opens (<i>inc some speakers</i>)	12 th April 2016
Early registration closes	26 th August 2016
Registration closes	31 st October 2016
Submission of conference documents**	31 st October 2016
Conference	23-25 November 2016

*Call for papers may be extended or a second call may be issued at the discretion of the Valletta 2018 Foundation

**full papers, presentations and posters, as applicable

Call for Papers

The conference will take place over three days, 23-25 November 2016, in Valletta, Malta. The conference will include two plenary sessions, various networking session, a number of parallel sessions and a poster presentation session.

Contributions from academics and practitioners worldwide addressing some of the issues highlighted above are welcome. The range of papers may cover theoretical and methodological perspectives, practical examples and artistic interpretations of the issues and challenges faced in cities by communities.

All interested researchers, PhD students and practitioners are invited to submit, by email, a paper proposal (abstract) of not more than 250 words by **no later than Friday 18th March 2016 to research@valletta2018.org**.

A 20-minute slot will be allotted to each selected presenter, followed by a discussion session with participants.

To submit a proposal, send a document containing the following:

- Project title;
- Five keywords;
- Abstract not exceeding 250 words;
- List of which of the conference themes the abstract addresses (maximum of 3, in preferential order);
- Short bibliography in support of the proposal;
- Type of presentation being proposed – oral, performance, workshop, etc.;
- Full details of primary author, including name, surname, title, institution, email, phone number;
- Name(s) of other authors (if applicable);
- A short bio not exceeding 250 words.

Non-traditional presentation forms are also welcome.

Late proposals will only be considered if space is available. Applicants will be notified of the acceptance of their proposal by **not later than Friday 8th July 2016**. Registration will be open April 2016.

Call for Posters

The conference will also include a Poster presentation session. Below are some guidelines for submission:

- Poster shall address at least one of the conference thematic areas
- Interested participants shall submit an **abstract of 250 words** (max) describing the poster;
- Poster presentations should incorporate illustrative materials such as tables, graphs, photographs, and large-print text, and materials should be clearly readable from a distance of three feet;
- Poster presentations may represent completed work or work that is currently taking place, and is to illustrate new findings or approaches to the subject matter;
- Participants whose proposal will be accepted shall use a standard poster size of A1 with a good quality paper.

The chosen posters will be on display for part of the event. The authors will be encouraged to stand by their poster and discuss aspects of their research with attendees and delegates during the various networking sessions of the conference.

All interested researchers, PhD students and practitioners are invited to submit, by email, a poster proposal (abstract) of around 250 words by **no later than Friday 18th March 2016 to research@valletta2018.org**.

20 minute oral presentations will be allotted to each selected poster presenters, followed by an exchange session with participants. The Valletta 2018 Foundation may select only a selection of the posters being displayed to be presented during the poster session.

To submit a proposal, send a document containing the following:

- Poster title;
- Five keywords;
- Abstract not exceeding 250 words;
- Short bibliography (a minimum of 5 relevant references) in support of the proposal;
- Full details of primary author, including name, surname, title, institution, email, phone number;
- Name(s) of other authors (if applicable);
- A short bio not exceeding 250 words.

Late proposals will only be considered if space is available. Applicants will be notified of the acceptance of their proposal by **not later than Friday 8th July 2016**. Registration will open in April 2016.

Conference Scientific Committee

Prof Pier Luigi Sacco, Full Professor, IULM University Milan, and Visiting professor, Harvard University

Dr Oleg Koefoed, Action-Philosopher, co-founder and director, Growing Pathways

Caldon Mercieca, Project Leader, Valletta Design Cluster

Dr Karsten Xuereb, Executive Director, Valletta 2018 Foundation

Graziella Vella, Research Coordinator, Valletta 2018 Foundation

Neville Borg, Research Officer, Valletta 2018 Foundation

Glen Farrugia, Valletta 2018 University of Malta Secretariat

Pawlu Mizzi, Programme Officer, Valletta 2018 Foundation

Conference Costs

**tbc*

Early bird	Euro 75
Regular admission	Euro 100
Concession (Students, Senior Citizens, Speakers)	Euro 70

All participants will be required to register for the conference through the Valletta 2018 Foundation website.

Further costs with regards to parallel events as part of the conference cultural and social programme will be announced upon registration launch.

Other Details

Full conference details, including programme and list of speakers will be published in due course on the Valletta 2018 Foundation's conference website, www.conferences.valletta2018.org.

The conference main language shall be English. The Valletta 2018 Foundation may also offer sign language interpretation upon request.

Proceedings

The Valletta 2018 Foundation will be publishing the conference proceedings, in collaboration with Fondation de Malte, www.fondationdemalte.org. The Valletta 2018 Foundation will also be exploring the possibility of publishing a number of papers in selected journals following the conference.

Contact details

For further details please send an email to research@valletta2018.org.

Project Partners



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