

### The Athens Studio

Athens is a city of contradictions: a city at both the centre of European identity and the edge of the western world; a city with massive influxes of voluntary tourists and involuntary immigrants; a new city that thinks it is old; a city defined as much by its amorphous sea of generic white buildings as by its perfect monuments of architecture. Above all Athens is in crisis. Many are looking for an economic or political solution, but the space of the city goes overlooked and under-examined. It is both a city in need of immediate work and the contemporary European city that most dramatically embodies the urgent, alarming and intractable crises that face our cities today. There is much to be done and much to be learned.

Eighty-three years ago, while sailing to Athens, Le Corbusier and other members of CIAM IV wrote what came to be known as the Athens Charter, a manifesto for the modernist city. This year, events such as Documenta and Ideas City are tapping into the recent emergence of Athens as the epicentre of a number of global issues. Increasingly referred to as 'the new Berlin', the city is once again becoming culturally relevant. Intermediate 15 will participate in this conversation – documenting, questioning, analysing and distilling the essential conditions of Athens, attempting to render legible a city that is stubbornly difficult to grasp and revealing new opportunities for intervention.

Against the sprawl of sameness and the lack of meaningful spaces of appearance, architecture has the power to break the monotony. Creating more public space alone isn't enough. Intermediate 15 starts from the hypothesis that legible form must be given to the institutions of the city – its universities, museums, government buildings, health facilities, libraries and theatres – monuments and voids which orient us in the isotropic fabric of the city. This year Intermediate 15 will specifically address the institution of the university; examining how it is currently manifested in Athens, identifying emerging models and historical precedents and then imagining radical new propositions at the urban and architectural scale. Only by reinventing these institutions, both their logics and forms, can we reinvent the future of the city.

#### Unit Masters

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Kristina Argyros is co-founder of Nalheiser Argyros, a London-based multidisciplinary architecture practice with projects in the UK, US and Greece. Originally from Athens, she graduated from Princeton University and received her Masters from the Yale School of Architecture. She has worked at a number of award-winning firms

including WORKac, OMA New York and Ateliers Jean Nouvel and has previously taught at Cardiff University and Yale University.

Ryan Nalheiser is co-founder of Nalheiser Argyros. He holds a dual-degree in engineering and art from Swarthmore College and a Masters from Princeton University School of Architecture. He has

worked for OMA Rotterdam and Diller Scofidio + Renfro, has taught masters' thesis at Princeton University and has been teaching at the AA since 2014. He is a co-founder of *Another Pamphlet*, co-editor of *Agenda: Can We Sustain Our Ability to Crisis?*, and his writing has been published in *New Geographies*, *Bidoun* and *Pidgin*.

