

## CINEMA AS A PLANNING “TOOL” FOR A SUSTAINABLE, CHILD-FRIENDLY AND THEREFORE WORTH LIVING CITY

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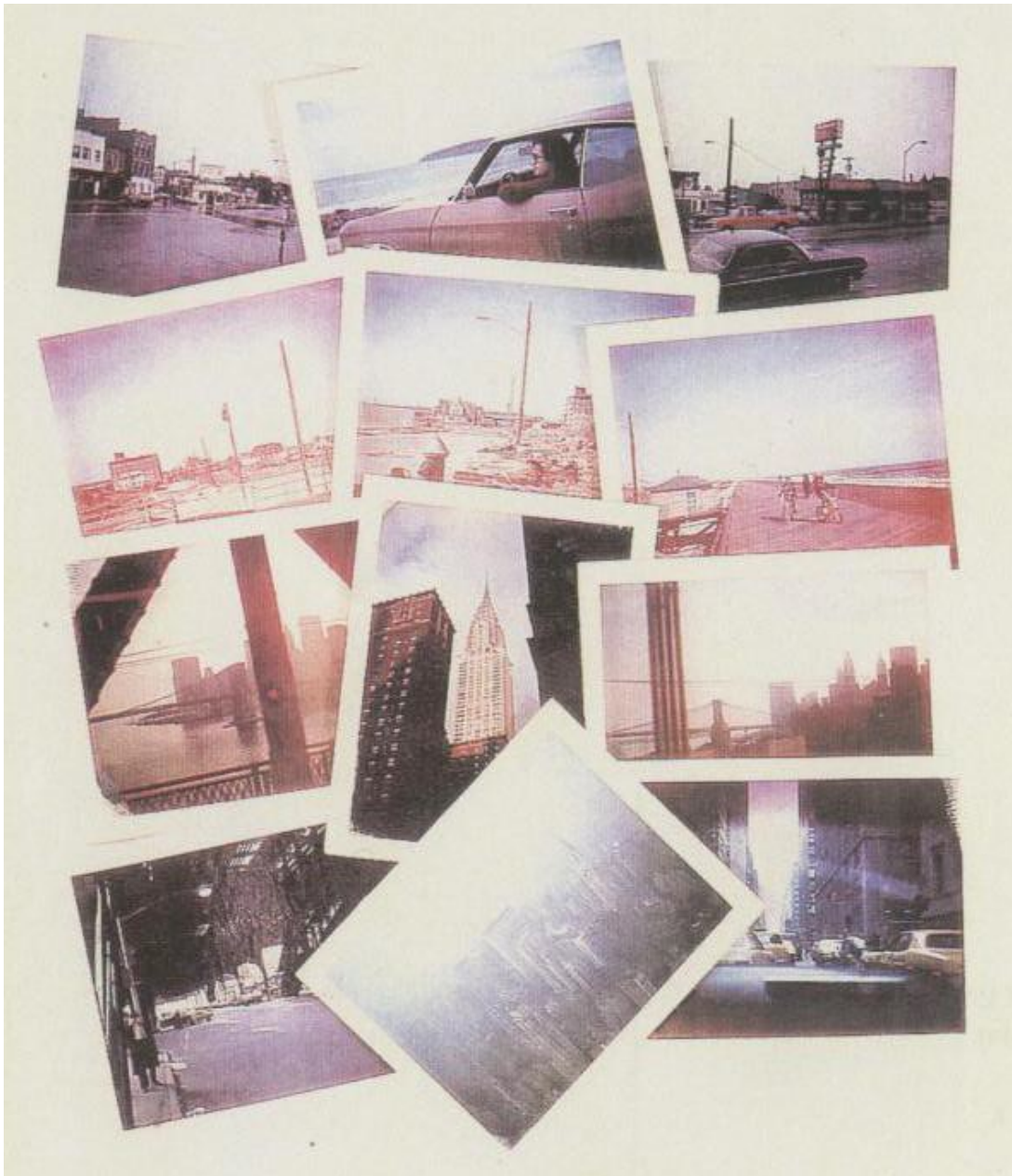
### **Abstract**

*According to Jorge Luis Borges “city is always in search of poetic”. The ability of art to shape language, which differentiates each place, also determines its creative expression. Cinematic representation is a special process to investigate the way we imagine cities as an experience, but also as a theoretical construction, since the cinema projects authentic urban images, which interact with the city's residents. Movies allow us to draw some conclusions about how we experience real urban space, how we would like it to be, what we are afraid of or what we hope it can happen in the future. After all, cinema has no right to set aside life, but it must observe, listen and doubt...*

*As the architectural historian Francois Loyer mentions “to find out what a city is, we should not ask Le Corbusier, but Michelangelo Antonioni, Francesco Rosi or even Jean-Luc Godard”. The study and interpretation of the city in cinema seeks in its representations that social dynamic, which will allow a meditation about the city to be expressed. It is an opportunity to deepen into a theory of representation, for the sake of a theory of spatial practice.*

*The cinematographic lens roams the city streets, penetrates walls and touches its soul and mind, its myth and word on diachrony. It offers an ability of deepening and metamorphosing the fragmentary and ephemeral urban experience into systematized and unified knowledge, which makes us even capable of urban planning action in an effort for a sustainable, pleasant for children and therefore worth living city. After all the former General Secretary of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, pointed out that “our struggle for global sustainability will be won or lost in cities”.*

**Key words:** *cinema, representation, planning “tool”, urban, sustainable, worth living, city*



Wim Wenders in the cities (from the film "Alice in the Cities", 1974)

"The city is always in search of a poetic."  
Jorge Luis Borges

## 1. Cinema in the city

The way in which man experiences the world at a certain period of his development is expressed in his art. Cinematic expression, in particular, is a kind of recording and processing of temporal experience. At the same time, the ability of art to shape a language that differentiates each place also determines its creative expression.

In moments when light and landscape dominate, consciously or not, in the world of images, cinematic depictions of cities and their details as elements of memory and knowledge for the viewer constitute a dominant urban mythology in contemporary cultural creation.

Besides, it is no coincidence that the development of cinema at the beginning of the 20th century coincided with the city dwellers' effort to capture the constant change of modern urban life and the ephemeral nature of events, to connect images and situations that follow each other at great speed, and to render them into a single whole.

Cinema was the first art that managed to "capture" space so completely. "It is a peculiar spatial form of culture" (Mark Shiel, 2001) that can be understood more fully if its aesthetic theory (space in films) and its "urban" practice (films in space) are studied.

The characteristics of the cinematographic film are not only found in the way in which man positions himself in front of the camera, but also in the way in which it depicts the world with its help. Cinema, based on the entire breadth of the visual and auditory sensory world, has the consequence of broadening and deepening our sensory perception. It is also a special means of exploring how we imagine cities as an experience but also as a theoretical construction. Films allow us to draw some conclusions about how we experience real urban space, how we would like it to be, what we fear, or hope may happen in the future. Essentially, it is an opportunity to delve into a theory of representation for the sake of a theory of spatial practice.

According to the architectural historian Francois Loyer, "To find out what a city is, we should not ask Le Corbusier, but Michelangelo Antonioni, Francesco Rosi or even Jean-Luc Godard." The reading and interpretation of the city in cinema seeks in its representations that social dynamic that will allow a reflection on the city to be expressed. "You just have to keep your eyes open, then reality is charged with meaning," M. Antonioni assumes. After all, cinema does not have the right to set aside life, it must see, listen, and doubt...

The cinematic lens roams the streets of the city, penetrates the walls of the buildings and touches its soul and mind, its myth and its discourse in timelessness. It offers a possibility of deepening and transmuting the fragmented and ephemeral urban experience into systematized and unified knowledge, which makes us capable even of urban planning action in the effort for a city that is not only sustainable, but also worth living.

After all, according to the former General Secretary of UN, Ban Ki-moon, "*Our fight for global sustainability will be won or lost in cities*". But the city is not the problem, but the solution. In this context, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights 17 sustainable development goals to change the world, on a path towards dignity with a time horizon of 2030. In particular, goal number 11 focuses on the sustainable development of cities and communities, to create safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements, without exclusions.

## 2. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was signed by the international community on 25/9/2015 during the 70th UN General Assembly and was characterized as a path towards dignity with a time horizon of 2030, as we did not inherit this world from our parents, but borrowed it from our children.

Indeed, on 25 September 2015, UN Member States agreed to create a common framework for sustainable development which included 17 goals that they should seek to achieve by 2030. These goals reflect the vision of the global community for our common desired future and indicate how the holistic approach to sustainable development will be achieved at Local, Regional, National and International levels. Its achievement is a one-way street for humanity, with no alternative avenues or prospects, as Ban Ki-moon (UN General Secretary from 2007-2016) characteristically stated, "*We have no plan B, because there is no planet B.*"

The term sustainable development first appeared at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972 and its definition was shaped by the World Conservation Strategy (1980), the Brundtland Report (1987) and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio (1992).

According to the Brundtland Commission, sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

In other words, sustainable development is undoubtedly essential for meeting human needs and improving the quality of human life. For this reason, it should be based on the efficient and environmentally responsible management of all the planet's scarce resources. It is development that seeks to meet the economic, social and environmental needs of society in a way that ensures short-term, medium-term and, most importantly, long-term prosperity. Essentially, sustainable development must meet current needs without compromising the well-being of future generations.

To understand the importance of the concept of Sustainability, one must consider the so-called "Three Pillars of Sustainability", or in other words the corresponding aspects of sustainable development: social, economic and environmental. These three aspects are interrelated and if combined and implemented in practice, they can create a solid foundation for a sustainable world from which everyone can benefit, as natural resources are preserved, the environment is protected, the economy is not affected and the quality of life of citizens is improved.

Therefore, sustainable development is a combination of these three pillars. If any of the three pillars is "weak" then the system is not sustainable.

To be more specific, the three (3) pillars of sustainable development are:

1. Environment (use of natural resources, environmental management, pollution prevention)
2. Economy (profit, cost reduction, economic growth (growth) increase in GDP, i.e. increase in real national product, research and development).
3. Society (standard of living, education, justice and equal opportunities).

Today, it has become widely accepted that achieving sustainable development for a better future requires a holistic approach, which combines economic growth, social justice and environmental sustainability.

The Agenda 2030 promotes the integration of all three dimensions of sustainable development into all sectoral policies and promotes the interconnection and coherence of sustainable development policies, giving intellectual dimension and qualitative depth to the three pillars of sustainable development. At the same time, it emphasizes the importance of enhancing the participation of social partners, civil society, and all stakeholders in the development and implementation of national sustainable development strategies and programs.

Greece adopted from the outset, at the UN General Assembly on 25/9/2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda. It has committed itself within the framework of the UN resolution to their implementation and therefore must mobilize its forces for this in combination with their appropriate adaptation to national priorities, specificities and needs.

Particularly in a country like Greece, which had been severely affected by the economic crisis and austerity policies, with an unprecedented reduction in national product and income and a drastic increase in unemployment, poverty and social exclusion, the 2030 Agenda offered:

- a) Arguments for the implementation of horizontal social policies towards fair and sustainable development, taking into account that the decade of recession widened income, social and regional inequalities and
- b) Procedures that favor open governance based on measurable goals.

### ***2.1 The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda***

As mentioned above, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to change the world, on a path towards dignity, with a time horizon of 2030. The 17 SDGs are global, of general application and create implementation commitments for all countries, developing and developed, considering national realities. These are goals that are SMART, i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bounded. In particular, SDG 17, cooperation, is also essential for all the others to function, as they are interdependent, interact and must cooperate. The SDGs are broken down into 169 sub-goals and 230 indicators for their measurement and evaluation by the UN and 99 indicators by the European Union (EU). The monitoring of the implementation of the SDGs falls under the General Secretariat of the Government of each EU Member State, with progress measurements at national level and reporting to the United Nations Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development. The local adaptation and use of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at Member State level concerns all 17 SDGs. After all, the concept of Sustainable Development is reflected in both the preamble and the main part of the Treaty on European Union (TEU, 1992), while since 22/11/2016 the EU revised its position on Sustainable Development in accordance with the UN Agenda 2030, following a holistic approach to achieve the SDGs, which become binding within the framework of the European Union, in contrast to the UN Agenda 2030, which does not have a high degree of legal bindingness, as there are no sanctions. Now, the SDGs in the European Union are turning into a source of inspiration for political decision-making. Strengthening its external action to consolidate the concept of sustainability in the rest of the world (developing countries) and at the same time seeking to improve the situation regarding the 17 SDGs in the EU itself.

## THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



UN Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goals.

More specifically, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the UN Agenda 2030 are:

- ✓ Goal 1: No poverty. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- ✓ Goal 2: Zero hunger. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- ✓ Goal 3: Good health and well-being. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- ✓ Goal 4: Quality education. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- ✓ Goal 5: Gender equality. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- ✓ Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- ✓ Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy. Ensure access to affordable, reliable sustainable and modern energy for all
- ✓ Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth. Promote sustainable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- ✓ Goal 9: Industry innovation and infrastructure. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
- ✓ Goal 10: Reduce inequalities. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- ✓ Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- ✓ Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- ✓ Goal 13: Climate action. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- ✓ Goal 14: Life below water. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- ✓ Goal 15: Life on land. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forest, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
- ✓ Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

- ✓ Goal 17: Partnership for the goals. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global partnership for sustainable development

UN General Secretary, António Guterres points out: *“The Sustainable Development Goals are the path that leads us to a fairer, more peaceful and prosperous world and a healthy planet. They are also a call for solidarity between generations. There is no greater duty than to invest in the well-being of young people.”*

It is in this context that the commitments of the 2030 Agenda concerning the SDGs were formulated:

- “No one will be left behind”

- The 5 Ps of sustainable development are: people – planet – prosperity – peace – partnership

Therefore, sustainable development mainly requires changing behaviors, achieving another civilization, as we must keep in mind that whatever programs we design, they cannot succeed in societies that fail environmentally, socially, and economically. The 17 SDGs seek societies with economic prosperity and social development and qualitative characteristics, such as fair distribution of wealth, respect for social values and peaceful coexistence of people and nations.

## ***2.2 The 11<sup>th</sup> SDG for sustainable cities***

Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda focuses on the sustainable development of cities and communities, to create safe, resilient, sustainable cities and human settlements, without exclusion.



The 11<sup>th</sup> SDG of the UN's 2030 Agenda

However, as early as 2008 and for the first time in human history, the global urban population surpassed the global rural population, according to UN data.



The Morumbi favela, one of the largest slums in São Paulo

The ever-growing human population is now expected to increase dramatically in cities. Indeed, as of 2017, 55% of the world's population resides in urban centers, while by 2050 it is expected that 65% of the world's population, or approximately 6.5 billion people, will live in urban centers.



Los Olvidados, L. Buñuel, 1950

Cinema, since 1950 with the film “The Forgotten” (“Los olvidados”) by L. Buñuel, which depicted the slums of Mexico City for the first time, but also up to the recent “City of God” by F. Meireles (2002), which entered one of the most dangerous favelas in Rio, and “Slumdog Millionaire” by D. Boyle (2009), which was filmed in the Daravi favela in Mumbai, has turned its camera and focused on the slums and favelas of the third world.



The Daravi slum in Mumbai, where the film “Slumdog Millionaire” by D. Boyle was filmed, 2009.

Europe's cities are home to 3/4 (75%) of its population, as well as 70% of jobs, while 85% of European GDP is produced in cities. In Greece, half of its population is concentrated in just 4.3% of its territory. According to Hellenic Statistical Authority data in 2011, 73% of the Greek population lived in cities, in 2022 the percentage exceeded 80% of the population. By 2050, it is estimated that 85% of European citizens will live and work in cities.

The consequences of population concentration in cities are:

- The abandonment of the countryside and the primary production sector (agriculture, livestock)
- The intensity of energy consumption
- The intensity of waste production
- The inadequacy of infrastructure
- The increase in pollution
- The climate crisis - deregulation
- The lack of social cohesion

Therefore, the main problems that arise in the city are:

- The concentration of unemployment
- Social isolation
- The concentration of poverty
- The acute environmental problems

While the various challenges that urban centers face are:

- Economic
- Environmental
- Climatic
- Social
- Demographic

It is now imperative to ensure livable living conditions for all citizens of a city, as another natural resource, space, is being dangerously depleted with the intensification of the phenomenon of urbanization. Goal 11 seeks inclusive cities and human settlements that are safe, resilient and sustainable and is broken down into the following sub-targets:

- 11.1: Housing, upgrading of slums.
- 11.2: Public transport and transport systems
- 11.3. Sustainable and inclusive urbanization, sustainable planning
- 11.4. Safeguarding world cultural and natural heritage
- 11.5. Addressing natural disasters
- 11.6. Addressing environmental pollution, saving energy.
- 11.7. Green public spaces for all (accessible without exclusion)
- 11.8. Support urban-peri-urban-rural partnerships
- 11.9. Increase the number of cities adopting integrated policies and plans (in line with the above sub-targets)
- 11.10. Support the least developed countries to build sustainable cities

Regarding Goal 11, Greece's commitment is to continuously strengthen, without exclusions, sustainable urban development and participatory, integrated and sustainable urban planning. In this context, Local and Specific Urban Plans are currently being drawn up in Municipalities across Greece and under the supervision of TCG (Technical Chamber of Greece), implementing the EU-established spatial planning and sustainable urban development strategies. Having as main challenges:

- ✓ The expansion of urban activities beyond the defined urban zones,
- ✓ The construction of buildings and housing in some cases without prior appropriate planning and building permits, especially in coastal areas
- ✓ The need to increase public and green spaces in city centers
- ✓ The transition from outdated practices, such as landfill, to reuse and recycling with source separation, even at the domestic level
- ✓ Urban mobility

In the context of the local adaptation and use of the 2030 Agenda (localization) and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the purpose of sustainability is analyzed, which is composed of:

- ✓ Attractiveness (for citizens, investors, institutions, etc.)
- ✓ Preservation and improvement of the environment.
- ✓ Resilience (adaptation to climate change, preparedness to deal with natural disasters, economic crises, etc.)
- ✓ Responsible use of resources (natural, human and economic).
- ✓ Social cohesion (inclusiveness, reduction of inequalities, participation, etc.)
- ✓ Prosperity/ Well-being (quality of life, equal opportunities, human city, etc.)

In particular, the implementation of SDG number 11 for a sustainable city concerns the balancing of different and often competing needs at the environmental, social and economic levels, without compromising the capabilities of future generations to meet their own needs.

### **3. The physiognomy of the city in cinema. Cinema as a planning “tool”**

In films, cities are the “urban imaginary”, according to Ed. Soja, which constitutes a guideline not only for understanding, but also for reproducing urban space as a place and way of life, while at the same time confirming or opposing prevailing interpretations, desires and

mythologies. The demand for self-knowledge and the need for shared spatial awareness is now placed at the basis of a variation of the trialexotic spatiality according to Ed. Soja (Thirdspace, 1996), which includes:

- ✓ What is lived by the creator
- ✓ What is conceived by the cinematographic lens
- ✓ What is perceived by the viewer

Utopian or dystopian, the city is constituted as a pivotal point in the evolution of the human adventure, as cinema follows the footsteps of man on his journey to discover the lost city of the past and the imperative search for a city worth living in the present and sustainable in the future. A journey from space to its depiction, from speech to image, from architecture to cinema and vice versa.

The meeting of architecture and cinema in urban planning consists of the management of complexity and concerns the transversal communications between different fields and the possibility of innovative approaches to plan either through their collaboration or through its multiple representations. Different ways of storytelling are combined multiple times and produce representations. If, therefore, cinema represents the imaginary version of the real, architecture remains as the real version of the imaginary. The dimension that defines them is time (Figure 1).

The relationship between architecture and cinema concerns a new sensitivity, a new “narrative”, a wandering in the “unfamiliar” reality of our cities.

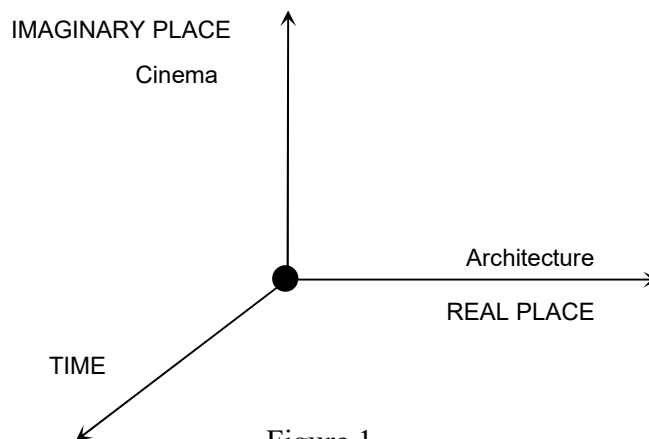


Figure 1

In every art, experimentation precedes rules. Over time, the technique of cinema has also acquired its own method. Audiovisual composition, editing and mixing, are the "cinematic peculiarity", thanks to which the film restructures reality through contractions and expansions of space and time. It is the basic tool of cinema that makes it an art, differentiating it from other arts.

Cinema as an art of fragmentation and composition makes the succession of shots a potential reconstruction of our relationship with space and time. For the pioneering Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov, the camera, as early as the third decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was not simply a substitute for the eye, but a tool that could overcome the shortcomings of human vision.



“The man with the movie camera”, D. Vertov 1929

The entry of cinema into the city can be analyzed as a recording of a wandering course that reflects urban life as an event in time and the rhythm of the city as a sequence of shots in routes of representation of reality (Figure 2). Space is perceived in motion, that is, as urban life is experienced in its dynamic unfolding, while time is no longer calculated through movement, but itself constitutes its rhythm and measure. This is a new mythology of the city where wandering goes hand in hand with cinematic traveling and architecture with urban narrative.

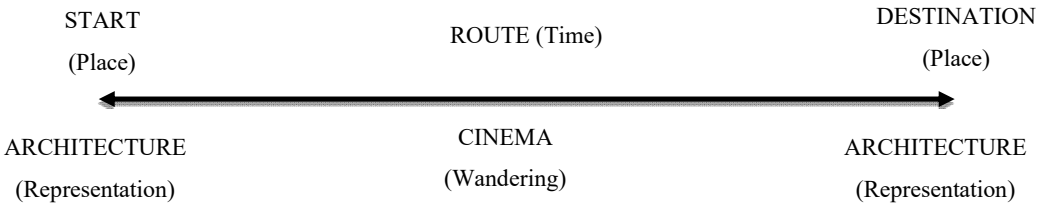


Figure 2

Cinema is par excellence an “urban” art, its matrix is the city. It is another way of reading its semantic and emotional content and at the same time a representation of its spatial “reality”. The “iconology” of such an approach, as graphically presented in figure 3, highlights the relationship between the phenomenon of the city and its Architecture, and Cinema. Space as a place and as an object of representation is not inert and static, but contains vectors and speeds. Time as a flow arises from the succession of shots, while in its entirety it depends on editing, which reduces it again to movement and sequence of shots. Time does not flow only from the alternation of shots, but also within them. Editing invades them in order to create an interaction that will maintain their coherence by adopting a new balance. The journey of wandering goes hand in hand with the alternation of shots and temporal impressions. Its pace is synchronized with the rhythm of the city and the flow of shots. In

particular, the form and rhythm of the metropolis offered cinema the evolution of its technique and discourse. The traveling of the camera visualizes the wandering, the movement in the metropolis, while editing is the only way to render its feverish rhythm and depict its “phantasmagoria”, its unexpectedness. The only way to tell the fragmentary stories that take place in its bowels, as it is the basic and necessary prerequisite of the aesthetics of the art of cinema, being the carrier of rhythm.

Cinema was not content with recording images and reproducing movement. It learned to produce movement with its own means and not only with the movements of the camera, the panoramic shot and the traveling shot, but with montage, which activates space and spatializes time and with the changes in shooting angle and distance between the object and the camera. It has the ability to act simultaneously fragmentarily and in flow, in parallel, intertwined, but also conflicting paths, with rhythm or against it, training man to stop standing and looking, but to observe, to know, to see...

It is a narrative, iconographic and design investigation for the revelation of the “truth” of the city.

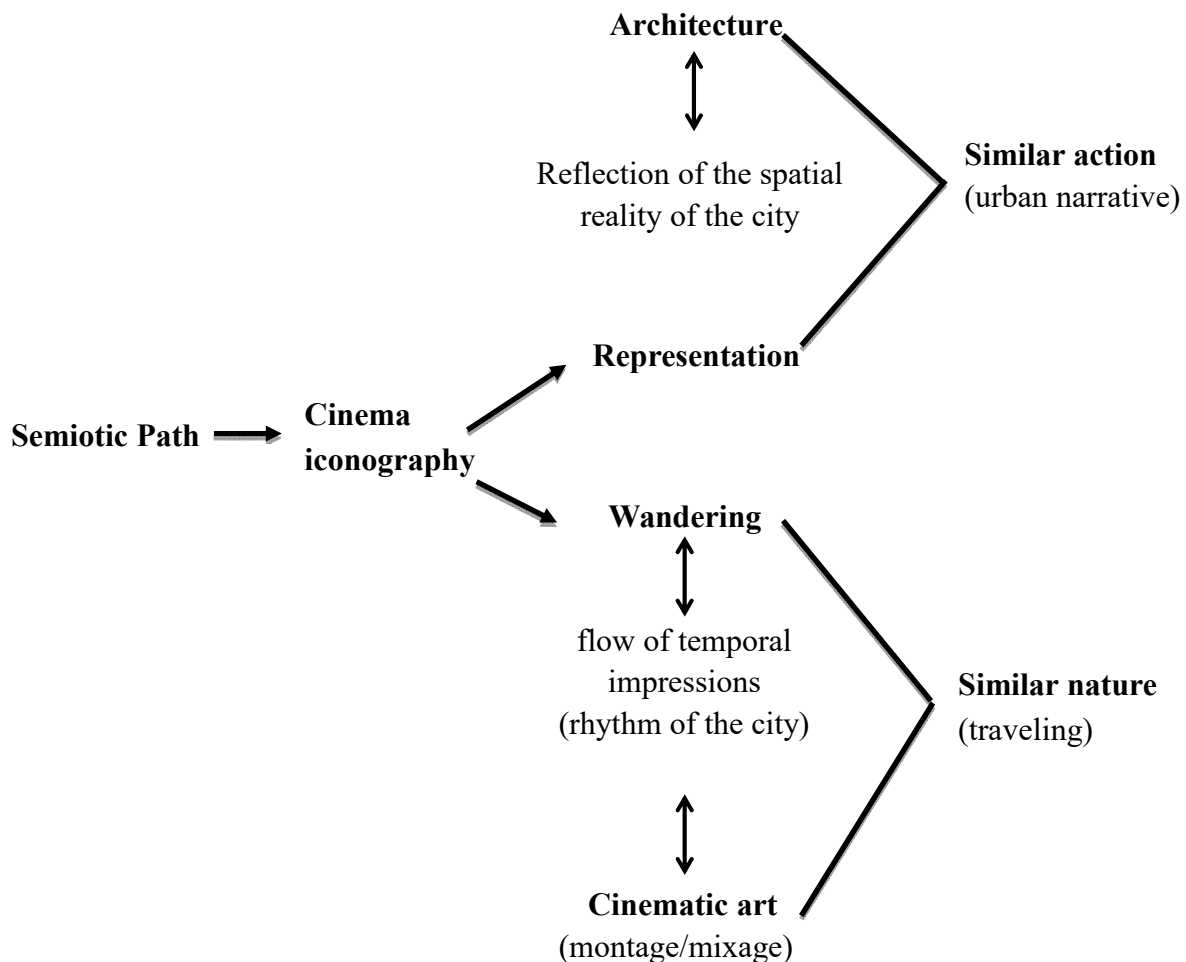


Figure 3

In particular, cinematic writing can be highlighted as a “tool” for reading, interpreting, evaluating and ultimately analyzing the quality and content of the city. Even as a “tool” for spatial planning, as it is original, beyond the traditional and usual, easy to use, now with the use of digital cameras, having the ability to provide complete and accurate urban information. It is indicative that already in the 1980s, sociologist W. Whyte filmed urban squares, parks and pedestrian streets, managing to analyze how urban spaces function and to suggest ways of designing successful public spaces. Today, with the development of digital technology applications from mobile phones to drones and even for a “handmade” DIY (Do It Yourself) Cinema, more and more possibilities are provided for research, analysis and synthesis of the parameters for the spatial planning of an urban area. Following a process of opposition between city and cinema (Table 1), urban narrative and script (story), urban planning study and reperature (field research), urban planning plans and decoupage (camera positions), movement in the city (traffic, networks) and the traveling of the camera and finally between the rhythm of the city and the cinematic technique of audiovisual editing (montage/ mixage).

City	Cinema
Urban narrative	Scenario (story)
Urban planning study	Reperature (research)
Urban planning plans	Decoupage (camera positions)
Movement in the city (traffic, networks)	Camera Traveling
Rhythm of the city	Montage/ mixage

Table 1

Now, the camera records continuously. The new generation guides the digital camera, now, without separations, but also without “sensitivities”, towards a new form of “representation”. It is now the urban image that interacts with the passersby of the city. It is about direct cinematography with processes of participation and reflection, as dictated by the principles of direct democracy. In the era of globalization, economic crisis and pandemic, where the fictitious, the virtual, has been transformed into certainty, while the real, the true into uncertainty, all that is left to us is Godard’s admonition and a basic principle of cinema: “walk towards the light and illuminate the night...”

Therefore, the art of cinema does not concern the studio city, a sterile, unobtrusive image of the city, juxtaposed with an urban planning of distance, in opposition to any idea of immediacy. *“The city carries the momentum of life and is carried by it: the city, a game of synthesis between architecture and urban planning, within its volumes, its spaces and its light, is teeming with life”* will say Kostas Axelos. Cinema does not have the right to set aside life, it must see, listen and doubt...

The analysis of cinematic urban patterns requires, beyond the spatial, their sociological and anthropocentric approach, as the city is not only its image. The city is its people, its living

forces, the cause that moves and unites them. It is the actions, thoughts and desires of its inhabitants, its myth, its discourse and its history. As director Thanasis Rentzis notes (2009): *“The city (which received a consciousness of itself through cinema) and cinema (which focuses on all points of urban space) are discussed and meditated upon productively and inductively, searching for common components and the intersecting discourse with the aim of understanding, revising and rearranging the terms of our fluctuating and long-suffering urban life.”*

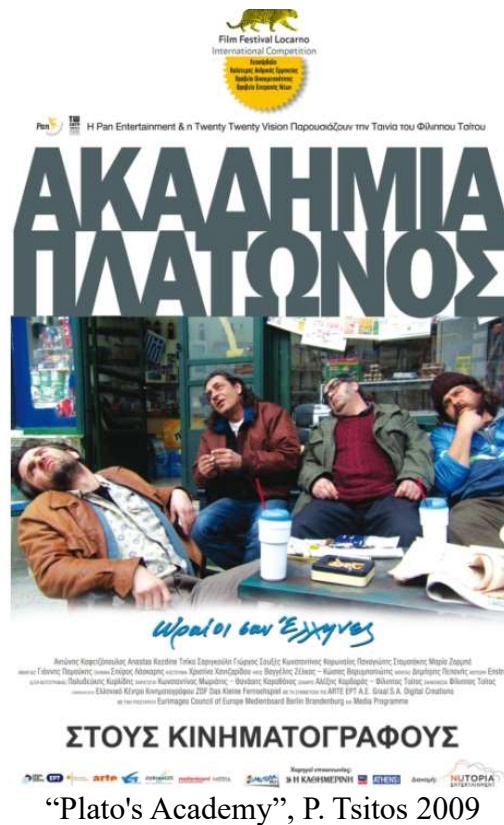
The city now acquires its “animated” dimension by highlighting its “interpretations – roles” in cinematic writing. Thus, we have the "real" and the "imaginary" city, the "historical" and the “future”. At the same time, the attitude of the art of cinema towards the city is revealed, which is sometimes critical, sometimes of projection and highlighting its historicity, through the creation of symbol cities and sometimes of laboratory, as in the case of Athens, which is projected in conditions of mixing historical standards and urban planning models. This is, as mentioned above, an opportunity to delve into a theory of representation, for the sake of a theory of spatial practice. A collage that emphasizes the parallel exhibition not only of different moments, but also of different types of representation of the city's physiognomy.

Through cinema, it is possible to predict the future of the city, as it is represented as the city of “the next day”, but also its current transformation, from the concept of “metropolis”, to the globalized “metapolis”. However, always keeping in mind the “other city”, the city of the 3<sup>rd</sup> world in the “new” order of things. Those parts of the big cities where misery, violence, illegality, poverty prevail. These are the slums, the marginal cities, the favelas, which are increasingly dense, as since 2008 and for the first time in the history of humanity, the global urban population has surpassed the global rural population. There, cinema does not entertain. It denounces, provokes, sensitizes, moves...

### **3.1 Filmed Athens**

In Athens, the coexistence of multiple spaces in the same place, such as the ancient Athens of monuments and the modern Athens of apartment buildings, results in the abolition of any sense of linear flow of time, which makes the city cinematic.

Regarding Greek cinema and its relationship with the city, the choice of protagonists who follow exactly the course of life and the evolution of post-war Athens is characteristic. From “The Neighborhood Girl” and “The Drunkard” (Or. Makris) of the old Athenian neighborhood (Plaka), we move on to the films with Logothetides (“A Pebble in the Lake”, “A Hero with Slippers”, “Fake Lira”), the classic Athenian bourgeois of the 1950s-1960s, to come to the typical internal immigrant, the sly, cunning, but honest, provincial Thymios Hadjichristou and to the crazy from the movement and modern rhythms, the anxiety and the frantic running of the troubled bourgeois of the 1960s-1970s period with Th. Vegos as his ideal interpreter. The decade of the 80s and 90s with the director in the foreground is characterized by a decadent social introversion (solitude of apartment buildings, drugs, etc.) until it reaches, from about the middle of the last decade of the 20th century and onwards, a focus on the immigrant, protagonist of Athens as “other”, as a foreign, but also as a strange city. And if the question was initially: who is the immigrant? in films such as “From the Snow” by Sotiris Goritsas (1993), with the dawn of the new century it mutated, focusing on a more internal search regarding the question of who we are in relation to the immigrant? in creations such as “Plato's Academy” by Philippos Tsitos (2009).



A search for personal and even family identity, which intensified with the advent of the economic crisis from 2010 onwards, in the context of the investigation of its causes in films such as “” (2010) and “Explosion” (2014) by Syllas Tzoumerkas, “Another World” by Christoforos Papakaliatis (2015) and others.



“Another World”, Christoforos Papakaliatis 2015

In cinema, what matters is the search for a sense of space and ourselves within the world and especially in the city, the depiction of our urban life in its dynamic unfolding. In space, as a real field of forces, it is the energy that in the case of the city emanates from its social dynamics, the sum of the forces that shape and define it. The dynamics of migration combined with the effects of the economic-humanitarian crisis and the pandemic of recent years now determine the social and cultural physiognomy of Athens and have a catalytic effect on the formation of its urban environment. The “stranger” has become our mirror. He is a resident, a part of ourselves and not just another user of our city, after all, as is pointed out in K. Katzourakis’ film “The Road to the West” (2003) “...and whoever does not have a job in his own place is also a stranger”.

The question of sustainability in the city is now being raised. Today, the future of metropolitan Athens, of the homeless, the unemployed and the immigrants, is at stake in the areas of disruption, in the in-between spaces, in the circulating urban voids, in the degraded zones, in the suspended spaces of otherness in the center and on the outskirts of the city. Places where bold and inventive design programs must be implemented and must be explored narratively and iconographically by the films. With studies on the limits, on the combinations, on the microscale, on the multiple scenarios of free appropriation of space by the resident, as in times of crisis, inventive adaptation is a privilege of the weak, in complete contrast to the entrenchment of the private, following a cinematic practice that mobilizes it, as it activates space and spatializes time in a process of developing a dialectical relationship between image and movement, where each sequence of images will become an object of reflection. Cinema fulfills the deepest need of man to see and hear without intermediaries, as it projects these places as they are and us in relation to them. Places that the eye has learned to avoid. As an art of audio-visual composition, it makes it possible to reinvent our relationship with space and time, since it cannot but represent what is at stake in these areas.

In the films of Athens, it is the cracks of time between the images that tell the story. The most remote suburbs, but also the intermediate spaces, the unbuilt areas, the urban voids in the city center and on its outskirts are the protagonists of its changes and contradictions. Both filmmakers and architects take refuge there as:

- ✓ They are the stitching points of the city, since its boundaries have evaporated
- ✓ They are spaces that function as repositories of memory
- ✓ It is today, the present that produces memory and shapes social dynamics
- ✓ It is a meeting place for forming ideas and inspiration.

In a globalized, crisis-ridden, and intercultural environment, Athens must now immediately focus on the faces of its residents, especially the most vulnerable, on an alternative experience and representation of the city, having as its sole prerequisite its self-awareness, in a process of transformation, not simply into a sustainable, but into a worth living city for all its citizens.

#### **4. The sustainable and ultimately worth living city**

The human population living in cities is constantly increasing and will increase dramatically in the long term. Combined with the fact that the pandemic, according to the UN, has increased the percentage of people worldwide living in slums to over 1 billion, it is now imperative for a city that will be focused on people and therefore worthy of living in it. A “smart” city, which will make a conscious effort for the innovative use of technologies,

information and communication networks (ICT) to support a more inclusive, diverse and sustainable urban environment. According to D. Papastergiou (former Mayor of Trikala) *“it is the city that “listens” to its citizens and together they proceed with projects and actions with substance and a human face”*. A city that, with the help of cinema, does not bypass needs, but projects them, does not ignore problems, but solves them, aiming for sustainability, with the human being as the only choice. A city that should be sustainable and at the same time resilient and "open" to design and offer services to all its citizens without exception, without discrimination, so that everyone feels part of a worth living city and at the same time a “smart” city that innovates and has in its DNA the change of culture. It is the place where traditional networks and services become more efficient with the use of ICT for the benefit of residents. The term “smart” city is an umbrella for how technologies can improve the efficiency of a city's operations and the quality of life of its residents, while at the same time promoting the local economy.

In a smart city, new technologies and innovation are the means for:

- ✓ Improving the quality of life of citizens
- ✓ Sustainable urban development
- ✓ Boosting competitiveness
- ✓ Creating new communication channels
- ✓ Access to information
- ✓ Ease of access and enhancing the efficiency of public services.
- ✓ Environmental protection
- ✓ Enhancing accessibility, safety, and comfort
- ✓ Mobility
- ✓ Social cohesion and integration.

As Dimitris Papastergiou (former Mayor of Trikala) notes: *“We essentially mean a city with a central, integrated strategic plan and steady steps towards specific directions. These directions have been selected based on the specific characteristics of each area. That is, the goal is to use the tools that allow for the improvement of the functioning of the Municipality for the benefit of citizens. “Smart” is not only the city with the use of IT, but also the one that uses its services correctly and with planning”*.

Therefore, “smart” is the city that increases the rate at which it provides social, economic and environmental sustainability results and responds to challenges such as climate change, rapid population growth and political and economic instability, radically improving the way it engages society, applies collaborative leadership methods, works across all sectors and systems of the city and uses data information and modern technologies to provide better services and quality of life to those in the city (residents, businesses, visitors), now and for the foreseeable future, without the existence of any unfair disadvantage among them, or the degradation of the natural environment.

But what does a “smart” city mean for the citizen?

- Increased efficiency and accessibility to services
- Reduction of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion
- Reduction of pollution and environmental impacts
- Collection of data for their disposal and reuse in the effective formulation of policies (open, anonymous data)

Now, the definition of sustainable cities combines traditional urban sustainability with the needs of modern cities (ICT and innovative participatory methods) the resilient with the smart city:

- Resilient city: promotes efforts to prepare for events (e.g. natural disasters) that constitute an existential threat to urban life, strengthening and securing the critical infrastructure on which it depends.
- Smart city: priority in the application of information and communication technologies (ICT) to urban management problems, aim to optimize city systems and services

Essentially, there are 5 principles for designing sustainable cities:

- Urban policy for the common good
- Integrated approach
- Participation and co-creation
- Multilevel governance
- Place-centered approach

The sustainable city open to new ideas and innovations is the tolerant and inclusive city, which welcomes a variety of people and cultures. A city of equal opportunities for all, open to the combination of the lifestyle and creativity of the population, with cultural and commercial diversity. In other words, a city where all its citizens feel that they are part of it, a worth living city which:

- Creates opportunities for diverse contributions and participation, inviting citizens to play a greater role in shaping their community and in social and economic development.
- Is connected to its citizens, as it responds to their goals and objectives.
- Designs and delivers, without discrimination, services to all its citizens.
- Reduces barriers to information and provides access to services through digital networks, connecting people wherever they are.
- Promotes unhindered consultation, participation and the recording of all opinions
- Is a consumer and mediator of technological solutions that promote transparency, collaboration and inclusion.
- Requires an "open" approach from urban planners.

It is therefore the sustainable city that can be "smart" and resilient, open and safe, and ultimately worth living, contributing both to the completeness of services and the quality of life of its citizens, as well as to sustainable development, which satisfies the environmental, social and economic needs of its citizens today, without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs.

Therefore, it is imperative for a city to be centered on people and therefore worth living in. A worth living city, according to the professor of Ecology Panagiotis D. Dimopoulos assumes:

- A model of integrated development that is compatible with the environment, is founded on, goes hand in hand with and contributes to the social and cultural development of its citizens,
- The creation or strengthening of the characteristics of a fair and equal city,
- A rational urban planning based on criteria that protect the physiognomy of the city and serve the coexistence of the natural environment with the urban environment.

In order for a city to be sustainable, focused on people and their needs and therefore livable and enviable...

## 5. In conclusion

The relationship between city and cinema is highlighted not only in films that showcase the city, but mainly in those that represent the particularity of the urban phenomenon in its everyday life. An approach that must start from what the city is, which remains well hidden, as we do not see the city, we do not look at it in the eye, we do not try to understand it or feel it, we simply pass by it. "Because ultimately the highest intervention of the narrative art of cinema is that it challenges us to compare what we see and hear with what we live, with what comes to mind, with what we would like, with what we have tried, but also with what we have never thought or felt..." (S. Stavridis 1998)

Today, in the era of uncertainty, as a result of the economic-humanitarian crisis and the pandemic of recent years, the stakes are now to initiate a dialogue around the urban landscape, its changes and their impacts, as they are identified in cinematic representations and the pursuits of contemporary urban planning and architecture. The cinematic discourse on the city can constitute a new starting point in the effort to understand urban life theoretically and in practice; to become aware of the crisis of urban space and to confront the everyday violence it exerts through a process of reflection for an alternative representation of its "truth". To highlight cinematic writing as a "tool" of urban planning, contributing to a process of formulating an "other", contemporary language for architecture. An alternative perspective, another way of seeing the city, beyond the traditional and usual ones, which will make us capable of urban action. This requires the interdisciplinary analysis of cinematic urban models, focusing, in addition to urban planning, on their sociological and anthropocentric approach, as the city is not simply its image, but a living organism. Therefore, it is possible to develop a new field of urban action, which will be capable of recognizing and interpreting, analyzing and evaluating, through cinema, the urban, sociological, humanitarian and other issues of the modern city and, in particular, nowadays, a city in crisis. For the creation of not just a viable, but a worth living and at the same time enviable city. Always keeping in mind, the advice of the architect D. Pikioni: *"A little more humanity, deeper understanding and mental sensitivity – and everything changes: from the initial attitude to the details."*

Today, the great stakes of the Greek city of the homeless and immigrants are at stake in the intermediate spaces, in the urban voids in the center and on the outskirts of the city. Cinema fulfills the deepest human need to see and hear without intermediaries, as it projects these places as they are with us in front of them. Places that the eye has learned to avoid. Cinema cannot help but represent what is at stake in these areas. The urban image interacts with the passerby of the city, developing a dialectical relationship between image and movement, where each sequence of images becomes an object of reflection. Both immigration, the economic-humanitarian crisis, and the pandemic of recent years, now constitute the social dynamics of the city, which determines the cinematic writing. After all, cinema as an art "in motion" can capture urban life in its dynamic unfolding, highlighting the social phenomena that constitute this dynamic.

Now the game of the city is played in regenerations. At the same time, a new design on the scale of the city can bring about resistance to superficial change, the acceptance of the documentation of the city's cultural memory, the enhancement of the value of public space, the dialogical relationship with the environment that brings about essential changes in the relationship between public and private space. The point interventions for the transformation of the urban landscape, combined with the formation of a collective interest, a cultural

consensus among the factors that contribute to their implementation, constitute the important first steps for a sustainable city. This collective interest can be initiated by cinema, focusing on the relationship between it and the city as a living social reality. In the context of the search for a sustainable and at the same time worth living city.

For cinema, the city is not simply a field for recording stories, which transforms it into a perceptible text. The spaces of the city themselves, with their function, guide the narrative. Stories are mapped with roads that can direct you everywhere, but also nowhere. But the urban landscape also contains a story, it contains an identity, a physiognomy. It affects people, creates a sense of time and a "cinematic" emotion, it is experiential, in short, the landscape is inhabited.

The cinematic possibility of a narrative about the city and at the same time a description of its image are those elements that can not only be projected, but also act catalytically in the formation of its physiognomy, as cinema was created to capture the eternal that constantly changes forms in contrast to architecture which aims to make the form eternal. As Doors singer Jim Morrison wrote in his notes on vision: "In dim light, form is sacrificed to light. In full light, light is sacrificed to form."

But the city of cinema is never a definitive image. It is always in evolution, like its urban environment, as it is made up of people who experience it, feel it, are moved within it, it is a living organism. It is a city that is always invented, even when it is real. The cinematic image usually imposes fragmentary perspectives of the city, delimited by the frames chosen by the creator. As Jean-Louis Comolli (1996) said: "The cities that have been loved by cinema have been filmed as enigmas. They are there and they are not there, they hide at the same time as they reveal themselves, they escape and condense in the bodies that embody them, they disappear within them". Therefore, it is not only cinema that "loses" the city, but also the city itself that has been "lost". According to anthropologist Marc Augè, there is no longer anything but a city or a "desert", so it is not exactly a city, as we considered it until today, but mainly a space that must be reevaluated, rediscovered from the beginning to evolve/ design the history of tomorrow. The subway stations, the informal settlements of the periphery, the ghettos of the urban center and the favelas of the third world megacities, are, in the same way as the highways, the waiting rooms at airports, the office towers and the malls of the spectacular metropolises, the undefined space of a history that, although we were completely unaware of, some inspired creators such as Wim Wenders, Jean-Luc Godard, Federico Fellini, became our eyes and ears and were able, through their images, to make us see and hear the noise it makes, as it approaches like a swell. While waiting for it, we must see and listen, be vigilant and focus on the city dweller of the new century. To design:

- Behaviors of people in the city, which will make it not only sustainable, but worth living for all its citizens, as sustainable development mainly requires a change in mentality to achieve another culture,
- Cities that children will love and want to live in, not only now, but also when they grow up.



Homeland, Syllas Tzoumerkas, 2010

In this context, Jean-Luc Godard (video: “moments from the history of cinema”) points out the contribution of cinema:

“What is cinema? Nothing  
What does it want? Everything  
What can it do? Something”.

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