

# Circular Design and Social Innovation for Sustainable Cities

## A Round Table Discussion

21 September 2021

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### Speakers Bios

#### Seth Scafe-Smith, Director of RESOLVE Collective



Akil and Seth are Directors at RESOLVE Collective, an interdisciplinary design collective that combines architecture, engineering, technology and art to address social challenges. They have delivered numerous projects, workshops, publications, and talks in the UK and across Europe, all of which look toward realising just and equitable visions of change in our built environment.

Much of their work aims to provide platforms for the production of new knowledge and ideas, whilst collaborating and organising to help build resilience in communities. An integral part of this way of working means designing with and for young people and under-represented groups in society.

For them, 'design' encompasses both physical and systemic intervention, exploring ways of using a project's site as a resource and working with different communities as stakeholders in the short and long-term management of projects. For RESOLVE, design carries more than aesthetic value; it is also a mechanism for political and socio-economic change.

Akil and Seth have been leading RESOLVE's portfolio of projects across the UK and Europe over the last 4 years. They are also currently teaching an undergraduate unit at the Architectural Association.

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## **Manijeh Verghese, Director of Unscene Architecture and Co-curator of the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2021**



Manijeh Verghese is a co-founder of Unscene Architecture and the Head of Public Engagement at the Architectural Association (AA), where she is also a Unit Master of Diploma 12, a seminar leader for the AA Professional Practice for Fifth Year course, and a member of the Senior Management Team. Over the past nine years, she has led postgraduate and undergraduate design studios at both the AA and Oxford Brookes University and has taught workshops and courses across universities in the UK and abroad. Previously, she has worked for architecture practices including John Pawson and Foster + Partners, and has contributed to design publications, think-tanks, books and peer reviewed journals. She is currently an External Examiner at Cambridge University and a member of the Future City Curatorial Committee as well as on the curatorial panel for the 2021 London Festival of Architecture.

## **Madeleine Kessler, Co-founder of Unscene Architecture and Co-curator of the British Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2021**



Madeleine Kessler is the co-curator of the British Pavilion at the 17th International Venice Architecture Biennale, co-founder of Unscene Architecture and Director of Madeleine Kessler Architecture. Trained as an architect and engineer, she sits on the National Infrastructure Commission's Design Group, and teaches at the London School of Architecture and Architectural Association. Her work explores architecture as a conversation about the city at every scale, from strategic masterplanning and policy-making to materiality and craft in design. Previously she worked at studios in Basel, Beijing and London, including Haworth Tompkins, Studio Weave, and as an Associate at Haptic Architects, on projects including Battersea Arts Centre, Kings Cross W3, St James's Market Pavilion, and Theatre Royal Drury Lane. In 2020 she was named in the Architects' Journal 40 under 40, and she was awarded the 2019 RIBA Rising Star Award.



## **Areti Markopoulou, Academic Director at Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia**

Areti Markopoulou is a Greek architect, researcher and urban technologist working at the intersection between architecture and digital technologies. She is the Academic Director at IAAC in Barcelona, where she also leads the Advanced Architecture Group, a multidisciplinary research group exploring how design and science can positively impact and transform the present and future of our built spaces, the way we live and interact. Her research and practice focus on redefining the architecture of cities through an ecological and technological spectrum combining design with biotechnologies, new materials, digital fabrication and big data.

Areti is co-founder of the art/tech gallery StudioP52 and co-editor of Urban Next, a global network focused on rethinking architecture through the contemporary urban milieu. She is the project coordinator of a number of European Research funded Projects on topics including urban regeneration through data science, circular design and construction and multidisciplinary educational models in the digital age.

Areti has founded and is currently chairing the Responsive Cities International Symposium in Barcelona and she has served as a curator of international exhibitions such as Future Arena and On Site Robotics (Building Barcelona Construmat 2017-19), Print Matter (In3dustry 2016), HyperCity (Shenzhen Bi-city Biennale, 2015) and MyVeryOwnCity (World Bank, BR Barcelona, 2011), while her work has been featured in exhibitions worldwide. She is the Co-Head Curator of the forthcoming Tallinn Architecture Biennale 2022 on the topic of circular design and food titled: Edible, Or, the Architecture of Metabolism.

## **Costas Voyatzis, Founder of Yatzer online magazine and creative studio Yatzerlab**



Costas Voyatzis is the founder of Yatzer, an international online magazine for architecture, design, travel and the arts, and Yatzerlab, a creative studio working on the intersection of design and marketing. Born in Piraeus, Greece, in 1980, he dabbled academically in Meteorology at the Physics University of Athens before switching to studying Interior Design. After graduation, he worked for a number of Greece's leading interior design magazines as a stylist and trend forecaster, developing relationships with many international designers and manufacturers, and garnering acclaim for his unique perspective on design excellence and innovation. In 2007, he launched Yatzer with a vision of creating a single, high quality source of design information. What started as a personal blog – its name a wordplay on his surname (Vo-Yatzer) – soon became one of the best online destinations, earning Costas four years later a spot among Architectural Digest's 100

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most influential people in the design industry. In 2021, fuelled by his creative mind and communication skills, he founded Yatzerlab, an Athens-based studio that focuses on design-based marketing and branding across digital and analogue applications. Costas has further honed his experience as Curator of the Art Shop at the Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens and Jury member for the Editors' Choice Award at Stockholm Furniture & Light Fair, as well as numerous creative projects and collaborations around the world.

### Dan Merta, Director of the Jaroslav Fragner Gallery



Dan Merta studied Art History and Aesthetics at the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava.

As Curator, he organised exhibitions in Prague Castle (E. Dietmann, Ch. Boltanski, K. Gebauer, A. Gormley, Laureates of Jindřich Chalupecký Award, V. Fiala etc.), in the Gallery of the Raiffeisen Building Society (J. Černický, K. Nepraš, J. Sopko, J. Róna, M. Mainer, T. Císařovský, J. David, R. Franta, J. Načeradský, V. Kokolia, J. Votruba, M. Rittstein), and co-curated the tour of Machat and Velíšek (1992).

Between 1999 and 2008, he was Secretary of the Jindřich Chalupecký Society (producing and curating the Award for young Czech artists under 35 years of age).

Between 1996 and 2000, he was employed as Head of the Department of Culture of the Prague 3 - Žižkov city district, where he co-founded the modern tradition of cultural-social bacchanalia: Žižkov Shrovetide and the Vinohrady Grape Harvest.

He was one of the initiators and founders of the Iniciativa Za novou Prahu (Initiative for New Prague) and Tady není developerovo (This is not developers' land) (2011).

Since 2001, he has managed the Jaroslav Fragner Gallery where he defended his position in a selection procedure in 2010.