

A story by Zachos Varfis

My name is Zachos Varfis,

I'm an architect in live and work in downtown Athens, and I'm running this project Latraac. Which is an architectural initiative which is developing a kind of abandoned space. It's quite central like I said and because of the way that I want this space to be it was important that it had a social dimension so being central was kind of a necessity. I was interested in this area because it is a form of successful diversity I guess, because you have all the pressures you get in cities today where you have a lot of immigration, you have different social groups, you have Roma community, you have traditional Greek population, you have a lot of immigration and there is a kind of left wing situation happening. There is quite a bit of tolerance I think. I don't think the city has tried to create any initiatives to make that work but by accident it kind of found a little equilibrium. So I think it's a good model of how Athens sort of could evolve in the future. Where I guess you know the Greek, the national identity anywhere is becoming more and more mixed because of not only immigration but globalisation and the internet, multicultural. I don't think no matter what that that is going to go backwards. Yeah, it's good to see that it seems to work. I'm not sure what will happen with gentrification and that kind of things. This area has been quite resistant to it. I mapped some of the people from next door. It's like a Roma house. I guess they might be the most vulnerable because it's very easy for their rent to go up and it's important because for a lot of people here there is a community that supports them. So if they are forced to move then they lose that community and they lose their support. So yeah, that happens everywhere. I can see how it might begin to happen here as well. The Roma are very, they speak their own language they have their own costumes they do their own thing but they are more or less balanced they found a natural equilibrium socially.

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