## **Open Architectural Competition: Redesign of Aristotelous Square and Axis**

1<sup>st</sup> prize

#### Design Team:

Architects: Ariadni Vozani, Associate Professor NTUA, Paraskevi Fanou, PhD Candidate NTUA

Collaborator Architects: Gregory Voutoufianakis-Petropoulos, Dorette Panagiotopoulou

Architecture Student: George Retsos

#### MEMORY THREADS

Important monuments of the city, in proximity to Aristotelous axis, belong to Thessaloniki's urban fabric before the 1917 fire. The introduction of old city traces in the proposal, serves as a reminder of the city's history that has been 'erased', while indicating the direction to these specific monuments still exist and belong to this old urban fabric. These 'Memory Threads' are projected on the ground as an additional 'scripture' on the new metropolitan image of the axis and the square. The proposal attempts to highlight Aristotelous street as a metropolitan central arteria well as an axis with a relation with its recent history. Aristotelous Square is identified as the 'mirror' of the city, an open field of action with unobstructed sea view.

The proposal has a simple and symmetrical organization, which is only interrupted by the introduction of old traces on the ground, urban equipment, water elements, and different types of planting. It seeks to be in balance with the emblematic buildings of Ernest Hebrard, from which it is borrowing the materiality, while recognizing the importance of the open view towards the sea.

The main intention is first to identify and highlight the special characteristics of the public space, to connect it with the rest of the city, and to upgrade the urban experience through this new design organization. The characteristics of the proposal are summarized in the following gestures:

## 1. Material and Design continuity

The intention of the proposal is the perceptual continuation of the project through the continuity of materiality and the basic grid lines. Thus, the width of the axis between the buildings determines the width of the central units of both Aristotle's Square (rectangular area), and Egnatia square (square area)

## 2. Specific Identity of the two Squares

The two squares (on Egnatia and Aristotelou's) are two public spaces of different character and importance. As thresholds for the connection of the study area with the city and the sea,

respectively, they acquire a special identity that is connected with their location and importance: The square on the Egnatia Street is the 'Room with the Palm Trees' and Aristotelous square is the 'Mirror of the city'.

## 3. <u>Rooms</u>

Given the importance of the perceptual continuity of the proposal, a specific identity is assigned to each urban block of the axis, depending on their location in relation to adjacent important landmarks of the city. These are: a) The Water Room - Ephemeral Market b) The Magnolia Room c) The Time Room - Ephemeral Sculptures.

## 4. Inverse Circulation

Reversing the current situation, the central part of the axis becomes an esplanade. The main circulation area is in the centre, and two zones of sitting areas are located in each side of the main axis.

## 5. Introduction of two grids

a) orthogonal grid of the modern urban fabric organizing circulation, planting and sitting areas.

b) traces of the city before the 1917 fire, as a secondary grid, that serve as a reminder of an important historical period of the city that has been 'erased', while indicating the direction to monuments that belong to this lost urban fabric.

# 6. Water as a design tool

The proposal is characterized by the alternation and rhythmic repetition of three different water structure typologies. The integration of these elements depends on the specific intervention area (cooling, reflection, transparency, etc.).

## 7. Introduction of ephemeral structures

Introduction substructure to receive ephemeral structures in specific parts of the axis, and always related to adjacent parts of the city: a) the units of an ephemeral market (closer to Kapani and Modiano markets), and b) ephemeral sculpture exhibitions.





