



Design values in the Mediterranean (DP3)

Andreas Sicklinger & Angelos Psilopoulos

The track offers a comprehensive overview of design practice and philosophy around the Mediterranean region. As a platform for millennia-old exchange of goods and knowledge, the so-called "liquid continent" connects a rich diversity of cultures, languages, and traditions. Politically divided due to religious differences, the southern and southeastern parts are oriented towards an Arab tradition, while Turkey largely serves as a bridge to the northwestern part of the Mediterranean, and the strong, predominant Northern part. Some central islands, such as Sicily, Malta, and Cyprus, still bear witness to the intertwined paths of traders, intellectuals, and travelers, offering a rich, overlapping environment of food, language, and traditions between the borders of the Mediterranean.

This fluid dynamic has been challenged historically by the predominance of Atlantic-centered European powers since the 17th century and the modern nation-state norms, as well as the modern adherence to 'universal values' as guidelines for prosperity within frameworks such as the EU. However, contemporary circumstances such as migratory trends or tourism reveal still the persistent dynamic of exchange between the shores of the Mediterranean, challenging back Eurocentric narratives and revealing a much more complex problem space to develop ideas on. As a route of contemporary Western civilization and simultaneously a thriving habitat of Arab culture, the Mediterranean region still has much to say about design and its expressions for human life and education in a global sense.

One part this exploration can be addressed on the level of ideation, represented by the keyword "**Making**". It aims to explore the value of design in the Mediterranean as a field practice that can be understood by showing the connection to the roots of culture and tradition within the Mediterranean archipelago as a unified fluid area through design aesthetics that represent design Heritage and originality, which is, and must be seen as, a source of inspiration for new design on a broader level. Under this scope, participants can explore the core characteristics that determine the design culture and discipline within the Mediterranean and play an important role in regional differences in design language, as well as seek out a common basis for the real practical application of "making" under the modern umbrella of "knowledge-based" design theories. Ultimately, the call seeks to examine the various experiences



based on both the "core features" and the modern interpretation and its influences on contemporary lifestyle.

A second part could go under the heading "**Focus**", seeking to describe case studies that might stand for all of the above in the field of design. In this context, participants can additionally explore cases on design training and experimentation, as well cases of design events, e.g. in the form of design weeks, that promote the value of design among people and move the economy from craft to mass production. With these vertical examinations, the track would like to give back a holistic picture of the contemporary design culture and design thinking in the Mediterranean.

The topics to be covered can be, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Craft traditions, and the way they cross over to mass production and industry*
- *New design theories and the way they understand / represent mediterranean heritage*
- *The exchange of material use and techniques, between the North and South of the Mediterranean*
- *The exchange of experiences and expertise (research projects, workshops, cultural exchange programs) within the Mediterranean region.*
- *Aesthetics, as a means of examination of a 'Mediterranean' identity*
- *Social responsibility of design through ethics.*
- *Social and economic factors that determine the quality of design ideation and production*
- *Design philosophies and their validation through grounded research within a Mediterranean context*
- *Design education and pedagogical strategies from a 'Mediterranean' aspect*
- *Design weeks and design events promoting design within a Mediterranean framework: their reflection on society*
- *Narratives for regional stories: the value of design*