REPORT / YEREVAN
5-6-7 October 2012
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The main reason of our earlier arrival to Yerevan was to expand the research on the city of Yerevan, current processes shaping its contemporary identity, urban struggles and debates, and about the initiatives that have been active in the recent period as articulators of different approach to policy making, urbanism and city planning, majority of them belonging to the civil society in formation.

Since the official program created by our partners from Utopiana, am has forseen only Yerevan based research, we took the opportunity to visit another city in Armenia- Gyumri, border city heavily damaged by the Earthquake of 1988, whose consequences are still visible in the city structure (ruins, tin houses), as well “as side effects” of the attempt to reconstruct it in times of political and social changes, after the desintegration of the USSR (a phantom city of Mush). Gyumri is also known for the visual arts biennial that takes place since the end of the 1990s and for a few civic and artistic initiatives active in cultural field.
Upon arriving to Yerevan, on **October 5th**, we had a meeting in Utopiana, in order to get some initial information about our lines of pre-research. We also had consultations on several topics: policy forums, possibility of starting dialogue with the current governmental agencies in order to improve the position of the independent scene, burning issues related to public space transformation etc. We also had chance to meet and talk to several artists and activists who were working on their projects in Utopiana.

One of the institutional visits we had on the first day was - Cafesjian center for the arts (Cascade complex), a privately owned art center situated within the Cascade Complex, one of the Yerevan landmarks. ...

City walks included following the trace of the 1960s- visiting the Armenian Genocide Monument complex built in the 1960s on one of the hills. In its immediate surrounding there is a monumental Concert Hall/Sport and Culture Center finished in the beginning of the 1980s, today underused building ...
October 6th: visit to the Urban Lab Yerevan (Sevada Petrossian and Sarhat Petrosyan)- learning about contemporary challenges of urban development of Yerevan, with a special insight in the processes of (re)construction of the Northern Avenue, the challenges of the Kond district (that we visited afterwards within the official program), gentrification processes and possibilities of influencing city government, from the standpoint of civic policies.
October 7th: Visit to the city of Gyumri- meeting with local artists and representatives of the art association “5th Floor”. Guided city tour by Levon Fijian, artist and teacher at the Gyumri art academy. Visit to the deserted district/ abandoned reconstruction project Mush 1, a strongly present narrative in numerous artists’ works.

Each of the meetings had a character of the cultural exchange, as we were presenting SPACES project and KIOSK/Flat Space, Chisinau platform for artistic and civic action, possibilities of the SPACES residency, as well as a social research related to the problematics of the public space in four SPACES partner countries.