



Drawing of the path to the Acropolis, by Dimitris Pikionis, 1954

# Critical Regionalism and the Mediterranean

ARCH 4605/6605

Cornell University AAP, Department of Architecture

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Elective Course, Fall 2021  
Tuesday 11:20 – 13:50

Can the notion of Critical Regionalism be renewed to confront the needs and constraints of contemporary architecture? Is it still necessary to claim local culture? How do we define the vernacular today?

The framework has changed since the 1980's, when the term Critical Regionalism was first coined by Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis, and many of the parameters of regional building have been reformulated. We need, for instance, to offer radical alternatives to the so-called green washing when dealing with the subject of sustainable building. If we need to continue building, which is also often a question, we must assure that we provide the tools for an inclusive, flexible, and circular

development achieved collectively, and: at a local scale?

In this seminar we will make an analysis of the potential of a renewed understanding of Critical Regionalism as a way to respond to current environmental and social emergencies. The goal of this seminar is also to help the students acquire a set of tools they can implement toward their design capabilities grasping the potential of architectural regionalism to inform a process.

Vernacular architecture -traditionally, and today- could be characterized by having and efficient and direct understanding of site, material, structure, climate and sustainability.

If this is known, the question remains: should we build more local?

The seminar will consist of readings, lectures, screenings and a semester exercise. In the discussions, the aim will be to extend the geographical, social definition and common knowledge of local architectural movements in the Mediterranean through the lens of contemporaneity. We will have seminar a common bibliography, but the seminar will encourage discoveries in the lesser known regions as well.

Attendance to the first class is required to join the seminar.