USING A PROCESS-ORIENTED APPROACH & UTILIZING A TOOLBOX METHODOLOGY FOR MAINTAINING AND ENHANCING THE SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF GERANI DISTRICT IN ATHENS.
GERANI IN NUMBERS:

- 10,900 square meters
- 21 city blocks
- 243 buildings
- 7 unbuilt sites
- 108 one to three-story buildings
- 88 eight to twelve-story buildings
- > 3753 owners
- 17 hotels
- 11 public buildings & services
- 54 listed buildings as preservable
GERANI: what does it mean?

> System of pumping water from wells at a small depth.

GERANI, the area itself:

> The area had numerous water wells, tanks and pipelines; revealing systematic exploitation of water since the ancient & roman times.

HISTORICAL MAPS.

GERANI WITHIN ATHENS THROUGH TIME.

1778
Map by French consul Louis Francini-Faure.
Gerani is located at the north side of the city borders.

1855
The urban planning proposal by Kralcheb & Schaubert for the city of Athens.
Suburban character.

1890
Map by M. Meurier.
Gerani is finally integrated to the urban area. Public Services introduced in Gerani.
Town Hall, Theatre, Market.
New municipal Market in 1878.
New Theatre building in 1869.
Vanakion Plaza Market 1897.
Omonia railway station 1890.

2019
Gerani standing in the centre of a vast and solid metropolitan.

In 2010 on the financial crisis was looming, the overwhelming presence of wretched immigrants in Gerani and other down run areas of the Athens centre, has accelerated a process by which the line of the “endeavor” was turned into the horror for the “Other”. The locals in awe were unable to confront the shattering effects of humans turned into waste; for they already knew the future was casting its shadow already, and was going to be a very dark one.
PROBLEMATICS OF PUBLIC SPACE.
RUINS OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN GERANI.

1, 3, 9. Narrow sidewalks. Increase pedestrian movements because of the commercial character of the streets. Secondary arterial roads.
2. Immigrant gatherings on the street. Commuters, lonesome figures during the night.
4. Increase pedestrian movements because of the vegetable market.
6. Formal outdoor space of the municipal soup kitchen.
7. Discontinuity of the area.
8. Sealed street, formal & discontinuity of the urban fabric towards Pilgrimage district in the north.
9. Elevated green-planted roof of the underground parking. Square is very often empty.
10. Gathering of homeless people and drug addicts. Dangerous area during the night.
11. Gatherings of people on the street outside the social services office.
14, 17. Two of the few available plots in Gerani illegally occupied by outdoor parking.
15. An enclosed parking occupies the rear courtyard of the block.
16. The square serves as an illegal car parking space.
INITIAL MAPPING OF GERANI.
IDENTIFYING THE SPATIAL NETWORKS & FLOWS.

GERANI'S SYSTEM OF VOID & BUILT SPACE.
Circulation - Public Transport & Road Network.

Illustration of Perceived Density of Pedestrians.

Urban Capacitors:
Urban nodes, elements or programmes that attract and generate the gathering of people on public space.

- Homeless Welcome Centre
- Telephone Booths
- Foreign Cuisine
- Central Market & Grocery Market
- Doctors Without Borders
- Communal Grocery
- Soup Kitchen
- Town Hall
- Traditional Capes
- Gallery

Gathering of Locals on the Streets.

Gathering of External Visitors, mostly attracted by the market.
LAND USES ON THE STREET LEVEL WITHIN GERANI:

At street level the majority of users relate to retail shops and various services and craft industries. There is a high amount of empty buildings, as well as various styles of empty parts of buildings. Public buildings contribute enclosed entities and have minimal impact on improving the conditions in the area.

LAND USES ON THE MIDDLE & UPPER FLOOR LEVELS WITHIN GERANI:

The area’s middle floors, once hosted small-scale manufacturing facilities and offices, they have been transformed into illegal retail store rooms that don’t conform to hygiene and safety regulations.

COMMERCE:
- Clothing Industries
- Food/Pharmacy/Groceries/Spices & Herbs
- Individual Services
- Retail Trade
- Warehouses/Store Rooms
- Imports/Exports
- Craft Industries/Workshops
- Miscellaneous

SERVICES:
- Offices
- Dairies
- Public Services
- Health & Welfare
- Education

RESIDENTIAL:
- Residential Use
- Residential Use with Secondary Use

VOIDS:
- Rooftops of Single Story Buildings
- Former Residence
- Former Commercial Use
- Former Office Use
- Former Public Services
- Former Recreation Use

RECREATION:
- Gates/Doors
- Restaurants
- Hotels
- Religious Spaces
- Culture/Arts

PREVAILING LAND USES:

The 249 buildings in the (10.9 Ha) area hosting to more than 5,745 small scale property owners and present a distinct vertical differentiation of users. At street level there are retail shops and various services; the middle floors contain illegal retail stores, manufacturing, immigrant dormitories, office spaces, an up and flat and roof-slates.
BUILDING HEIGHTS IN GERANI & RESPECTIVE SUNLIGHT CONDITIONS.

Number of floors:

1  5 10

AVERAGE DAY SUNLIGHT IN RELATION TO BUILDING HEIGHTS:

OCTOBER 2010 06:00-18:00
DENSE CURVES INDICATE PLENTY OF SUNLIGHT.
TYPOLOGY OF VOID SPACE WITHIN EMPTY BUILDINGS IN GERANI

- Empty basement.
- Empty part of the basement.
- Empty floors.
- Empty parts of the floors.
- Empty parts of the floors & of the basement.
- Hole building is empty.

**Closed-down stores**
Craft industries
Entrance of the building.

**Closed-down shops**
Craft industries,
Store still running,
Entrance of the building.

Informal use as residence by immigrants or store rooms.

Often as residence in the upper floors,
Store rooms in the middle.
Retail on the basement.

Often preservable or low buildings.
INTENTIONS FOR GERANI.
ORGANIZING & CATEGORIZING THE OBJECTIVES

RADIATION CONCEPT.

AREAS WITH RESEMBLING CHARACTERISTICS TO GERANI AND THE OVERALL RADIATION CONCEPT:

2013: Stress on borders between Gerani and neighboring villages.
Fragmentation of separate projects for each area alone.

2014: Development of two cores within Gerani.

2016: Expansion of the core outside Gerani.
Starting to demolish the borders.

2018: Final redefinition of the element inside Gerani.
Other cores might develop in similar locations.

2020: Experiences are expanded.
New cores start to appear.
Borders start to weaken.

EXPLAINING THE STRATEGY STEP BY STEP.

1. Preparing the common grounds: 6-month period
   - Informing the locals.
   - Foundational studies.
   - Urban-livability workshops.
   - Mobile info centers.
   - Communication and hand-out manuals.
   - Demolition of small buildings and parts of buildings.

2. Collection of materials: 12-month period
   - Salvaged materials.
   - Metallic.
   - Furniture.
   - Fabrics.
   - Individual local materials.

3. Documentation: 12-month period
   - State of small buildings.
   - Vacant buildings.
   - Potential public spaces.
   - Analysis of usages.
   - Consideration of the built potential.

4. Determination: 2-month period
   - Identification of intervention areas.
   - Project management.
   - Coordination with stakeholders.

In opposition to the formal proposals that affect Gerani and are considered to be fragmented and yet-to-be-realized, the project provides a different vision about how small-scaled interventions can function in the area. An appropriate way would be to create cores that radiate and expand through space and over time. A time to five years' time span is a respectable period to put the project to test, starting by establishing two specific cores within Gerani.

After this experimental period and provided that the project is successful and beneficial for the area and its people, it can radiate to other neighboring areas, which share reworking characteristics to Gerani. Piren, Metaxourgo and Kalamaki are also underdeveloped areas with a remarkable social network and a rich historical building stock which is under decline. In these areas, the project can work in a similar way, adapting to the specific characteristics and conditions of each area.
2015: The two cores start to be activated.

WELCOME HELP CORES AND CENTERS:
- First aid
- Employment agencies
- Psychosocial & psychiatric support
- Language courses
- Medical assistance

WORKSHOPS:
- Craft industries: Carpentry, Textile industries, Furniture, Shoemakers, Repair industries.

2016: The cores begin to validate.

Taking part in the documentation process.
- Informs local and external stakeholders.
- Raising means for the mobility of neighborhood assemblies.
- ...
CONCEPTUAL SKETCHES OF INTENTION.
PREPARING THE COMMON GROUND PLATFORMS AND SETTING UP SCENARIOS FOR THEM.

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR THE USE OF COMMON GROUNDS:

- open-air food market
- open-air screenings
- common dining
- neighborhood assemblies
- performances-theatrical plays
- open-air bazaars of clothing & textiles
- urban gardening

During this process of commingling, the students strongly aim to fulfill the locals' needs as well as get them actively involved in the public space making. The process includes finally creating a network of public spaces that can serve as common ground platforms, preparing the locals for the process. After collecting all the unwanted and unused materials and storing them in storage spaces (that are already being used as informal warehouses & dormitories), so that they can be reused, people are provided with handouts. This way, they are assisted to create their own constructions through detailed manuals that include sketches and instructions of all the tools and materials they will need. In case of complicated or labor-intensive interventions and structures, the help of local craftsmen will be used.

OPTIONAL SCHEME TO DETERMINE THE SURFACE TREATMENT:

open-air food market
open-air screenings
neighborhood assemblies
common dining
TOOLS & MATERIALS USED

INSTRUCTIONS:
"HOW TO DO IT?". POSSIBLE CONSTRUCTIONS:

**MOBILE SHED**
- dismantle wooden pieces
- mount surfaces together
- place wicker tiles on the top sides
- gather table wheels and attach them to the shed
- mobile shed is ready!

**TIRES FLOWERPOTS**
- gather unused tires
- remove the side
- paint in various colours
- place one on top of the other in whatever topography you wish
- fill in with local soil
- root local plants, vegetables, seeds etc.
**GREEN WALLS**

- Find metal rods, screws & a hammer
- Cover a crate with rood controlling fabric & fill in with local soil
- Dip into the crates plants, flowers, seeds etc.
- Fasten the net on a wall and place the planted crates underneath - let the plants grow & climb on the wall.

**LIGHTENING WICKER TIE**

- Find rattan baskets
- Cut the lower part of each basket and find a chain
- Set the chain on the basket and apply a hold through it.
- Create a shed like in case 1.
- Apply the hanging baskets on the shed.
COMMON GROUND PLATFORMS.

CHOOSING A POSSIBLE SCHEME FOR THE TREATMENT OF THE COMMON SURFACES.
One of the "thousand" possible scenarios for the common ground spaces would be that of an urban garden which can be connected to the local market, providing fresh and natural products directly consumed by the residents.
Another possible scenario for the common ground spaces would be that of an open-air cinema run by the residents and the respective block clusters. A very low symbolic ticket could be introduced for the needs of the neighborhood.
We can do so much more together —

It is not so impossible!
Tack

Thank you.