



*East European Film Bulletin*

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## Call for Papers

# Special Issue on Cinema, Architecture and Urban Space in the Balkans

**Proposals:** 15<sup>th</sup> of July 2022

**Papers due:** 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2022

Often unified by the concept of the “cinematic city”, different approaches in film studies tend to examine urban space through three main angles. Films shot within the build environment may record - perhaps unwillingly - its current dynamics, architecture and urban planning (city as background), consciously use the representational value of specific places for narrative purposes (as character) or directly comment on the socio-political conditions and memories of a city (as subject). However, it can be argued that most of these discussions eventually converge to a double question: how does cinema reflect upon the past, present and future of a city and how do films reinforce or contest narratives and myths and affect the collective urban experience.

Following our previous special issue on urban themes in Russian and Soviet cinema, this year we turn our focus to the Balkans. Often described as the “other” of Europe, “insufficient European”, or a “specter haunting Western culture” (to use the Maria Todorova’s provocative description), the countries and people of the Balkan Peninsula more often than not are seen as a geographic and culturally unified unit of measurement, against which Europeans can prove their superiority. The fall of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent Balkan wars as well as breakup of Yugoslavia, led the newly formed Balkan states to assert distinct national identities, mainly structured around religion and language. The collective amnesia of

a multiethnic past is however negated in everyday practices where cultural footprints proliferate (linguistic and culinary p.e.), the result of a century-long multicultural blend and the Ottoman presence in the region.

The special issue is intended to discuss Balkan urban space and architecture through a cinematic perspective, and further explore elements linking urban studies with film studies. We are particularly interested in contributions discussing fiction films or documentaries focused on specific urban spaces of the Balkans, significant constructions, major cities or lesser-known towns and villages. We are also interested in itinerary films that map the peninsula through their passage from different built environments.

Suggested topics (non-exhaustive list):

1. Urban space, planning, architecture on screen
2. Common aesthetic trends between architecture and cinema
3. How films record urban dynamics and practices and comment upon them
4. How films reinforce or resist dominant narratives about the identity of a city
5. Topographies of memory and places with socio-historical significance
6. Cinema as the vehicle to uncover hushed or erased stories
7. Urban manifestations of a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-linguistic past.
8. Cities as core places for political protest and resistance
9. The experience of displaced persons in alien urban environments
10. Internal migration towards cities and external migration towards Western urban centers

Contributions should be in English

Proposals of 250-500 words for contributions that deal with any aspects of the above themes should be sent to Antonis Lagarias at [antonislagarias@eefb.org](mailto:antonislagarias@eefb.org) by **July 15th 2022**

Stylistic guidelines for contribution can be found [here](#)

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