



**28th INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR URBAN
RESEARCH AND ACTION CONFERENCE**

**Footloose Warsaw.
Towards a walkable
urban theory**

WARSAW—POLAND 2018

**LECTURES
PROGRAMME**

As with all INURA conferences, Footloose Warsaw comprises open-air seminars, during which local experts, activists and researchers will walk us, both literally and figuratively, through key aspects of the city's contemporary life.

The first two days of the conference will be devoted to the central city. During the third day, we will venture into Warsaw's 20th-century suburbs; during the fourth day, we will visit new post-2004 spaces. Necessary background information for each trip will be provided during plenary lectures taking place the evening before. All the lectures will be held in the University of Warsaw Library (Dobra 56/66 street).

SATURDAY, 23 JUNE, ■ ■ ■ 18.10–19.45

HISTORICAL LECTURE: What Makes Warsaw Warsaw?

Every city has stereotypes attached to it; each city tries to construct an image of itself. Using statistics and other data from the last two hundred years, Grzegorz Piątek will probe beneath both negative stereotypes and self-reassuring legends, and will try to discern Warsaw's character, offering less-obvious answers to some obvious questions.

Grzegorz Piątek is an architecture critic and historian. He wrote a biography of Stefan Starzyński (1893–1939), Warsaw's legendary mayor, and is currently researching a book on Warsaw's post-war reconstruction. In 2008, the exhibition *Hotel Polonia* that he co-curated received the Golden Lion award at the Venice Biennale of Architecture.

SUNDAY, 24 JUNE, 17.00– 18.30

ACTIVIST LECTURE: The conundrum of property restitution

In the English-language world, the word “property” is self-explanatory. In Eastern Europe, however, property-as-ownership and property-as-real-estate is, to borrow Katherine Verdery’s term, fuzzy. In Warsaw alone, there are over 10,000 lots that have unclear ownership status. This uncertainty is not a given, but the product of very specific political and economic circumstances. Properties – in most cases substantially destroyed during the Second World War then rebuilt and maintained for decades by residents – have found their new owners, often on the basis of questionable legal documents. Despite brutal evictions and violence accompanying this (including the murder of Warsaw Tenants’ Association founder Jola Brzeska in 2011), tenants’ activists have been able to put the brakes on, and in some cases even reverse, the process of property “restitution”. And they were the first group to speak up about this issue, before it became the topic of nationwide debate and academic research. Beata Siemieniako, Antek Wiesztort and Maria Burza will share their insights, garnered over the course of struggling for affordable public housing, and will describe how property restitution lies at the very heart of Warsaw’s idiosyncratic pattern of gentrification.

Antek Wiesztort and Maria Burza are activists for the Warsaw Tenants’ Association and co-founders of the Syrena Collective. Beata Siemieniako is a lawyer providing legal service to those impacted by property restitution in Warsaw and the author of a book on the topic.

MONDAY, JUNE 25, 17.00–18.30

ARCHITECTURAL LECTURE I: Architecture of the Seventh Day

More churches were built in Poland during state socialism than during the entire millennium preceding it. The research team of Kuba Snopek, Izabela Cichońska and Karolina Popera have documented nearly all of them and tell the story of this “crowd-sourced” architecture through photography, maps, archival sources and interviews. Neither legal nor prohibited, church building engaged the most talented architects and craftsmen, who in turn enabled local urban communities to engender their own spaces – which served many needs, not only religious ones. Often idiosyncratic and even outlandish in style, often erected during night-time crash-constructions, these churches constitute the first portents of postmodernism in Poland and the most intriguing element of Poland’s vernacular landscape. They also represent community-led endeavours, relying on local building materials, funding and input, long before such practices became buzzwords in 21st-century architecture circles.

Kuba Snopek – urban planner and researcher. He has worked on architectural, urban planning and research projects in Poland, Russia and Denmark. He taught at the Strelka Institute in Moscow. His book “Belyayevo Forever,” on the preservation of intangible heritage, was published in English, Polish and Russian. Izabela Cichońska – architect and researcher. She led research projects and taught at the Strelka Institute in Moscow, before which she worked at Pentagram in London. Karolina Popera – architect and researcher. She is currently pursuing her master’s degree and was shortlisted in international REA Competition 2015 for her vision on the “future city”.

ARCHITECTURAL LECTURE II: Amplifying nature

Amplifying nature postulates architecture that is not a shelter from nature, or a tool enabling easy access to it, or a medium for its conquest and exploitation. It embarks on a reconstruction of the planetary imagination inherent in post-war Polish modernism, cognizant of the co-dependence of social routines and the workings of the planet. Most notably, it shows how Warszawianka – a sports complex built between 1954 and 1972 – was an architectural dialogue with the geological and hydrological build-up of Warsaw. Instead of ignoring or combating nature, the architects used such forces such as gravity and water flow to their advantage. Utilizing their research exhibition for the 2018 Venice Biennale, Simone de Iacobi, Małgorzata Kuciewicz and Anna Ptak guide us through Warsaw's architectural landmarks and tell a broader story alongside it – a planetary one, in fact – showing how some answers to challenges that architecture faces in the age of climate change can be found in some of the little-known Polish modernist projects.

Małgorzata Kuciewicz and Simone de Iacobi are the core of CENTRALA, an architecture studio and a research task force. They have curated numerous research projects and exhibitions over the past decade in Poland and abroad. Anna Ptak is an art curator, co-editor of *The Making Yourself at Home Guide to Warsaw* (with Monnik and Rani Al Raji) and curator of the Polish Pavilion at the 2018 Venice Biennale of Architecture.

TUESDAY, 26 JUNE, 17.00– 18.30

ACADEMIC LECTURE I: The geography of Mordor

Mordor usually denotes the inaccessible, hostile land in Tolkien's fictional universe. In Warsaw, however, the term has become imbued with another meaning: it defines a suburban office district and a nightmare for over 100,000 commuters. Compared with other secondary business districts, Mordor comprises an exceptionally large share (26%) of the city's entire present-day office space, making it the most important secondary business district in Europe (relative to the respective central business districts). Even more exceptional is the "spontaneous" genesis of the area, which arose with no master plan. Why has the center of gravity for Warsaw's economy leaned towards Mordor, and what can we discern from its "chaotic" nature?

Maciej Smętkowski, Dorota Celińska-Janowicz and Katarzyna Wojnar are geographers and lecturers at the University of Warsaw's Centre for European Regional and Local Studies (EUROREG).

ACADEMIC LECTURE II: The new promised lands

The post-2004 boom engendered not only new office spaces but also entirely novel residential areas. The suburbs of Białołęka and Miasteczko Wilanów are excellent cases in point. The latter has been dubbed "Lemmingrad": home to the conformist middle classes who have allegedly blindly followed the latest fads and fashions set by international corporations, as lemmings mindlessly stampede into an abyss. Białołęka is said to comprise countless "Frank Swiss Streets" because its rapid growth was triggered by the rise of foreign exchange mortgages denominated in Swiss francs. Mikołaj Lewicki follows the money and analyses how global flows of capital boosted rapid (sub)urbanisation of Warsaw's peripheries and engendered new class-formation processes.

Mikołaj Lewicki is an economic and urban sociologist working at the Department of Sociology, University of Warsaw.

WEDNESDAY, 27 JUNE, 17.00– 18.30

MAP PRESENTATION AND A DISCUSSION: Warsaw metropolitan mainstream?

We will conclude the City Part with a panel discussion, including INURA members and local researchers. For the past few months, a group of researchers and activists have been working collectively on making the Warsaw map for the New Metropolitan Mainstream project – initiated originally by INURA members and developed throughout the past INURA conferences. The team will present the outcome of their work and we will also open the discussion to include insights generated throughout the conference. It will be thus a chance to wrap-up of the four days of excursions and lectures and a platform for dialogue between INURA members and local researchers, activists and residents. Are we now able to say what constitutes Warsaw's spatial coherence? What can the Warsaw urban-studies community learn from the perspective and insights brought in by INURA members?

The Warsaw edition of the New Metropolitan Mainstream map was prepared by a team of researchers comprising: Katarzyna Wojnar (EUROREG), Jan Sowa (Biennale Warszawa), Andrzej Leśniak (Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts), Bartosz Frąckowiak (Biennale Warszawa), Edwin Bendyk (Polityka magazine), Marta Żakowska (Miasta/Cities magazine), Zofia Dworakowska (Institute for Polish Studies, University of Warsaw), Jakub Rok (EUROREG) and Jan Mencwel (Miasto Jest Nasze).

