

IN MEMORIAM DIMITRIS (Demetre) VASSILIS ANASTASSAKIS

1948 - 2019



With deep sadness we received the announcement, by his companion, colleague Claudia Pires that Dimitris Vassilis Anastassakis also known as "the Greek" because of his origin, died in Rio de Janeiro, during a surgery. The Brazilian Institute of Architects (IAB) announced the loss on July 27, 2019, as one of the most important figures in its recent history. (1).

Dimitris Anastassakis was born in Athens, migrated in Brazil at the age of eight and grew up in Nova Iguaçu. He graduated from the Rio de Janeiro School of Architecture (UFRJ) in 1973, having later, a master of urban planning with a two-year delay due to his imprisonment during the dictatorship as a member of the (Maoist) Communist Party of Brazil (Partido Comunistado Brasil). In Brazil he is known as the "architect of the poor".

Dimitris projects on social housing in many Brazilian cities developed in cooperation with colleagues.

His cooperative office (established 1989: 23 partners: 16-17 architects, a sociologist, an economist, a philosopher, 2 engineers, 2 designers etc) participated in competitions and designed many social housing complexes, (Vigário Geral / Parada de Lucas and Santo Amaro, Grota in Rio, Peinha in São Paulo, Novos Alagados in Salvador in Bahia, Independência in Petrópolis, 'Favela Bairro' etc.)

In addition to his intense professional activity, Dimitris played an important role in the IAB, being chairman of the IAB department in Rio de Janeiro (1994-1995), and the IAB (2004-2006) while also being a representative of the IAB in the city council. His brilliant contribution to Brazilian architecture secured the title of

Architect of the Year in 2006 at the National Federation of Architects and Planners (Federação Nacional dos Arquitetos e Urbanistas, FNA)

Dimitris was always passionately defending his values and ideals (meetings of the IAB's Conselho Superior and in public debates), sensitive with those who even had a strong confrontation. The "Greek" was puro coração (wholehearted), without contradicting the purity of his arguments. In an interview published in the Projeto newspaper shortly after IAB's national headquarters took over 15 years ago, Dimitris said: "I was born in Greece and proud of my dialectics. Dialogue is important. I have a strong belief in my views. I even talk about hell. I was imprisoned and even engaged in dialogue with my torturer..... It's not a shame to have a strong belief in your views, even if they could possibly change, I would still not have views without strong momentum. "

About the favelas he was saying that if the inhabitants do not want new settlements, we can not go as bourgeois to build for them. And on the other hand, there is the right that wants to drive the poor out of the favelas to exploit the land, as long as this land is not formally owned by the inhabitants and the building has been done without permission. But there is an intermediate way of saying that yes we have to maintain that it is well made in the favelas, but also do new things that are necessary, eg. to open roads, to make drains, to offer a new home, etc. In many cases, the residents built these buildings themselves. The money given by the municipality was not enough, so the construction was done with the mutirão system: Each family gave 16 hours a week. The older women watched the children and one of them cooked food for everyone. Through communal eating social relationships were established. It took only 18 months to build 600 homes with this system (2)

He had powerful relations and bonds with Greece and Greek architects. Apart from his sister architect Keti Anastasaki (Athens) and his cousin arch. professor Nikos Tsinikas (Thessaloniki) he was a good friend to Vasilis Sgoutas, previous president of UIA. Vasilis first met Demetre in 2003 in Miguel Pereira's house in Cantareira, on the hills of Sao Paulo and they had since then, kept in touch discussing on "architecture for the poor".

Last September Dimitris accepted the invitation from the School of Architecture at Volos (Greece) to give his lecture "Use Value = Exchange Value: Incorporating the Poor into the Labor Market" and discussed his views and his projects on social housing and the poor neighborhoods. During this visit he strolled around Athens, Volos and Thessaloniki visiting friends and relatives and places of his youth with his companion Claudia Pires

Demetre Anastassakis will be remembered for his powerful views, his generosity, enthusiasm and optimism. He will leave a big gap in social architecture especially in the sensitive economic and political era of our societies today.

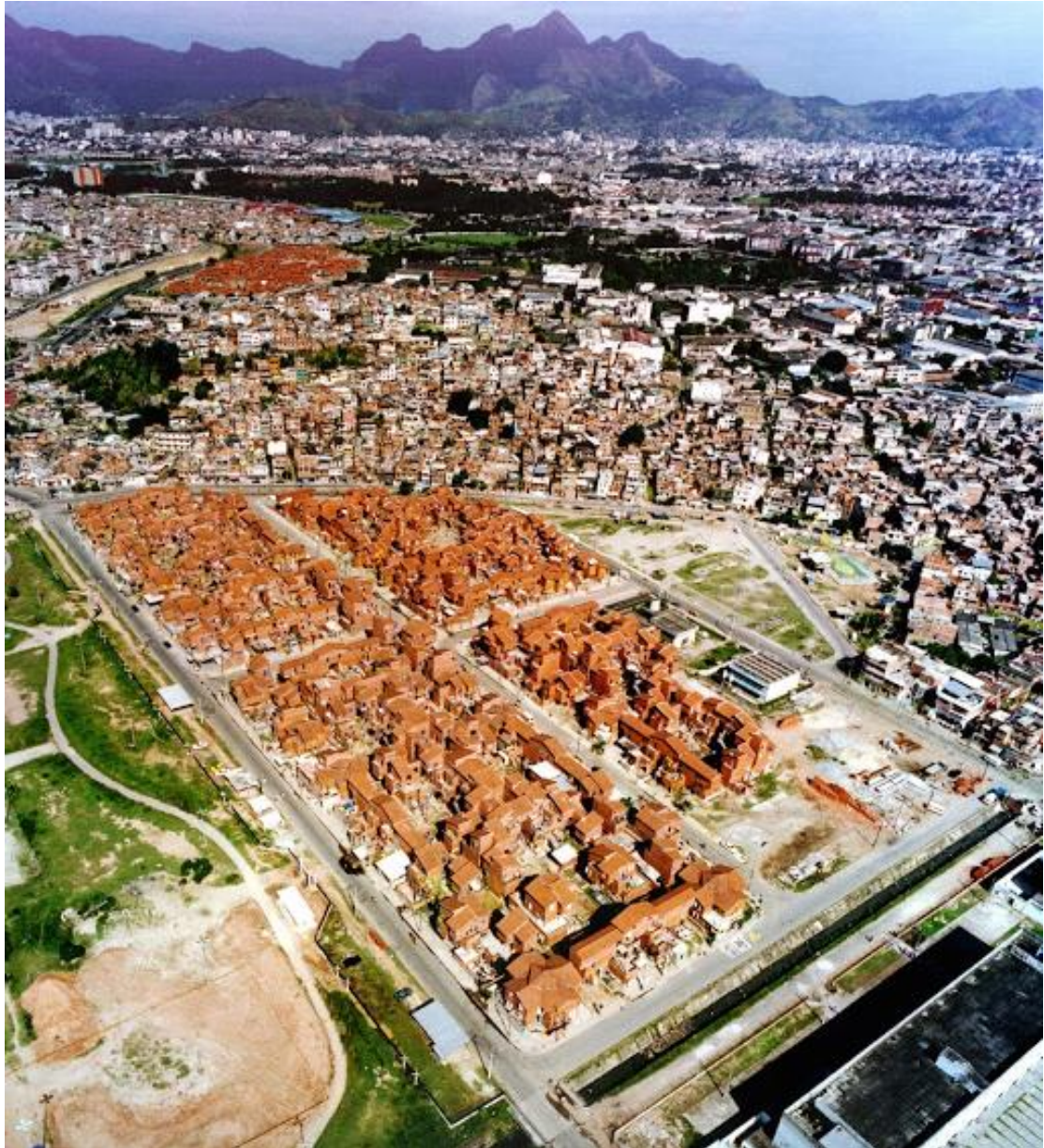
Our sincere condolences to our colleague Claudia Pires who was at his side the recent years and to his children and relatives of the "Greek".

On behalf of the UIA Greek Section

prof. Fani Vavili

Based on

- (1) Nivaldo Andrade, president IAB, Brazil
- (2) Συνέντευξη στην Τζίλλυ Τραγανού. Η κοινωνική αρχιτεκτονική στην Βραζιλία και η κρίση ως ευκαιρία. Δημήτρης Αναστασάκης: ένας Έλληνας αρχιτέκτονας στις φαβέλες. http://avgianagnoseis.blogspot.com/2018/03/blog-post_22.html
- (3) Μαρία Δεδούση, CNN Greece, March 2019
- (4) Vasilis Sgoutas, p. president of UIA
- (5) And also members of Anastasakis family: Anna & Keti Anastastasaki arch. Nikos Tsinikas prof. Arch.



The settlements of Maré and Bento Ribeiro Dantas (in the background) in Rio de Janeiro, 1996, photographer Dimitris Anastasakis



Participatory construction of the São Francisco settlement in Sao Paulo, 1991, photographer Dimitris Anastasakis