

Nice, Friday 19 September 2014
Invitation to members of the press

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URBAN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE FORUM

**Inauguration of the
"PROXIMITÉ(S)" exhibition**



With **Janine Gilletta**, Chair of the Land,
Local Heritage, Building permits
Architecture and Urban planning Committee, representing
Christian Estrosi, Mayor and Member of Parliament for Nice, and
President of the Nice Côte d'Azur urban authority.

Thursday 25 September 2014, 6.30pm
Urban Planning and Architecture Forum
Place Yves-Klein – Nice

This Thursday will mark the official opening of "PROXIMITÉ(S)", an exhibition jointly organised by l'Observatoire de la Ville and la Cité de l'architecture & du patrimoine, running until 22 November 2014 at the Urban Planning and Architecture Forum in Nice.

Underlying shifts are taking place in the way we think about and live in urban environments. Central to these changes is the concept of proximity, which is calling into question some of the received wisdom about urban planning.

The starting point of this concept is - where does each person feel "at home", in other words, in familiar surroundings? At a time when networks are becoming ubiquitous, we must ask ourselves: where does "here" end and "there" begin? Proximity has a bearing on our everyday lives. We all have criteria as to the distances that we are willing to travel between home, place of work and leisure amenities. The question is; how do we combine private and social life in our immediate vicinity?

But proximity is also an objective, quantifiable factor. It affects mobility, has been integrated into trials of new working methods and influences urban zoning.

The exhibition explores different avenues of current thinking. Some ideas are still at the experimental stage, at what is an exciting time for urban design, when some of the most outlandish ideas have become perfectly acceptable in the eyes of policymakers, architects, urban planners and – most importantly – future residents themselves.

The exhibition offers some preliminary answers. Its main contribution, however, is to use proximity as a point of entry into the central narrative, namely the manner in which we want to develop urban spaces that are warm and friendly places to live in - in other words it is a debate about their humanity.

It is the culmination of a thinking process carried out under the auspices of l'Observatoire de la Ville, involving group work by architects, urban planners, developers and sociologists, supplemented by a series of consultations, interviews and public seminars. **The exhibition thus offers an up-to-date snapshot of current thinking on urban environments.**

The City of Nice is no stranger to these deliberations. One of the five experts involved in l'Observatoire de la Ville is head of urban planning for the future Nice-Méridia neighbourhood. In addition, six Nice-based experts were interviewed as part of a consultation involving 24 outside specialists renowned for their innovative research into proximity and what it means for tomorrow. This grouping included local councillors, socio-professional experts and field workers. Presenting this exhibition at the Forum d'Urbanisme et d'Architecture therefore marks a further step for grassroots involvement in the overall debate. It also marks a determination to deliberate and work together to build urban spaces that are increasingly in line with people's preoccupations, aspirations and lifestyles. Proximity in every sense of the word.