

DOCUMENTARY PROJECT PRESENTATION DOSSIER

SPRING IN PROSFYGIKA!

Prosfygika stands as living proof that what states across the world have failed to achieve is, in fact, possible: solidarity, empathy, sincerity, collective living, growing stronger through adversity, becoming a source of hope, breathing together, flourishing side by side, and demonstrating that nothing is impossible. It is both an example and an inspiration.

Under Türkiye's increasingly authoritarian regime, people have been silenced. They can scarcely hear their own voices anymore. Fear has locked people inside their homes; they can no longer take to the streets, raise their voices, or openly rebel. Faced with the housing crisis, economic hardship, uncontrolled price increases, femicides, child abuse, the struggles of mine workers, unemployed teachers awaiting appointments, imprisoned journalists who strive to do their jobs with integrity, retirees unable to pay their rent, the despair of university students, political prisoners held in jails, and the silencing of artists and writers, people are no longer able to fill the streets with their outcry. Once, the streets were pathways to hope; today, they are spaces marked by fear and threats to personal safety. Going outside has become a source of anxiety, because taking to the streets in defense of one's rights has become the first step toward imprisonment. People express their fears and hopelessness silently, through their eyes. Yet when they witness the courage of those who still dare to protest, they begin to question whether they are truly alone and to realize how many others share their existence and their struggle. How many are we? It was precisely this question that gave birth to the idea for this documentary.

Prosfygika means hope. Prosfygika means spring. Prosfygika is a center of humanity. It is a vast community that overturns the very notion of utopia by condensing its reality into a small corner of the world.

The Prosfygika Community demonstrates, particularly to the peoples of Turkey, that hope still exists. It proves that an alternative model is not only possible but already alive and enduring with unwavering determination. It shows all peoples that together we can overcome every obstacle and succeed, proving the vital importance of solidarity and mutual care. If only the state structures within which we live could take inspiration from communities such as this. At the very least, they could improve dysfunctional systems and bring well-being and prosperity to their people.

The documentary explores the formation and history of the Prosfygika Community, its women's movement, children's assembly, health center, kindergarten, housing initiatives, and many other structures whose operations reveal an exceptionally organized and coherent system. Prosfygika is far more than a warm home; it is a neighborhood built upon genuine solidarity, empathy, and sincerity. Regardless of religion, language, denomination, or political belief, it offers newcomers both shelter and hope. Here we witness a level of solidarity rarely found elsewhere in the world. Even amid wars and upheavals, Prosfygika proves that humanity has not disappeared. It is a place of spring. It reminds the people of Turkey that hope and renewal are much closer than they may think. By joining hands, Prosfygika demonstrates that we can reclaim our hope and fearlessly raise our voices in the streets. Prosfygika Spring is a beacon of hope for the people of Turkey.

1. PROJECT IDENTITY

Documentary Project Creator: Çağla Ağırgöl

Documentary Project Consultant: Ahmet Bozkurt

Title: Spring in Prosfygika

Genre: Social Documentary, History & Architecture, Human Rights

Duration: 60–90 Minutes (Feature-Length Documentary)

Languages: Turkish, Greek, English (Multilingual Narrative)

Themes: Urban commons, collective living, self-organization in the face of state oppression, and hope.

2. PROJECT SUMMARY

In the heart of Athens, within Bauhaus housing blocks scarred by bullet marks, a collective community formed by people from 27 different nations is proving that “another world is possible.” Through hunger strikes and collective resistance, they confront gentrification projects and state pressure while defending a radically different vision of society.

3. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

This documentary aims to present the Prosfygika Community as a living example of a solidarity network, sincerity, and collective coexistence that many states around the world have failed to create. In particular, it seeks to demonstrate that hope still exists—and that “nothing is impossible”—in regions where authoritarian regimes have silenced public life and where stepping into the streets has become an act of anxiety and risk.

At a time marked by housing crises, femicides, child abuse, imprisoned journalists, and countless other social injustices, Prosfygika stands as a place of “Spring”: a living example that reminds people they can still join hands, raise their voices without fear, and reclaim their collective power. For the people of Turkey, Prosfygika represents a tangible embodiment of hope.

4. SYNOPSIS

The story begins with the historical legacy of eight Bauhaus housing blocks constructed between 1933 and 1936 for refugees who arrived in Athens following the 1922 Asia Minor Catastrophe. In 1944, these buildings became a stronghold of anti-fascist resistance, and their walls still bear the bullet scars of those struggles. Today, they are home to more than 400 people from 27 different nationalities.

At the center of the documentary lies the community’s radical resistance against a state-backed plan to evacuate the neighborhood and transfer it to private interests under the banner of “urban regeneration” and gentrification, supported by a €15 million European Union-funded project. The most striking chapter of this struggle is the hunger strike undertaken by

community members Aristotelis Chantzis and Suzon Doppagne, who risked death itself in defense of life and collective survival.

Through an intimate exploration of the neighborhood's collective bakery, health center, women's assembly, and children's house, the film reveals how what is often dismissed as utopia has become a lived reality.

5. THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

Memory and Architecture: The documentary examines the relationship between the functional principles of Bauhaus architecture and the bullet marks left by the resistance of 1944, marks that are preserved and honored as symbols of dignity and collective memory.

Self-Organization (SY.KA.PRO): At the heart of Prosfygika lies a model that rejects leaders, hierarchies, and state funding. Instead, twenty-two solidarity structures are administered through direct democracy, assemblies, and collective decision-making processes.

International Solidarity: The community embodies a culture of revolutionary internationalism, extending from Palestine to the Zapatistas, from Kurdistan to Rojava, forging bonds of resistance that transcend borders.

Transformative Justice: Rather than focusing on individual blame and punishment, Prosfygika promotes a vision of justice rooted in collective responsibility, dialogue, criticism, and self-criticism as mechanisms for social transformation.

6. VISUAL AND NARRATIVE APPROACH

Spaces of Contrast: The film draws upon the powerful visual tension between the imposing presence of the Police Headquarters (GADA) and the Supreme Court on one side, and the flourishing collective gardens and children's play spaces on the other.

Texture and Detail: Inspired by the photographic work of Kleopatra Haritou, the documentary pays close attention to the material traces of past lives: broken shutters, bullet-pierced walls, and the shifting patterns of daylight moving through stairwells and corridors.

Testimonies: The narrative is built through the voices of neighborhood residents, hunger-striking activists, members of the women's assembly, and the children who grow up within the community. It also includes testimonies from international activists who arrived in solidarity and ultimately became part of the neighborhood itself.

Archive and Present Day: Black-and-white archival footage of the 1945 EAM demonstrations is interwoven with dynamic contemporary images of the "Hands Off Prosfygika" marches. Everyday life within the neighborhood unfolds alongside these historical and political layers, creating a dialogue between past and present.

7. KEY COMMUNITY STRUCTURES (CHARACTER SPACES)

Berkin Elvan Collective Bakery: Named after Berkin Elvan, the young boy killed during the Gezi protests in Turkey, the collective bakery is the beating heart of the community.

Producing hundreds of loaves of bread free of charge every day, it embodies the principles of mutual aid, collective labor, and shared sustenance.

Women's Structure: Serving as both a refuge from patriarchal violence and a space for empowerment, the Women's Structure collectively organizes and redistributes domestic labor while fostering solidarity, safety, and self-determination among women within the community.

Oncology Guesthouse: Established for the relatives of low-income patients receiving treatment at the hospital directly across the street, the Oncology Guesthouse demonstrates that housing is not a commodity but a fundamental human right. By providing shelter free from commercial pressures, it transforms care and hospitality into acts of collective responsibility.

8. CONCLUSION

"Spring in Prosfygika" is not merely the story of a neighborhood; it is the story of a living center that proves humanity has not disappeared.

At a time when social fragmentation, displacement, and authoritarian governance increasingly shape everyday life, Prosfygika stands as a powerful testament to the possibilities of collective organization, solidarity, and democratic self-management. It demonstrates that communities can create alternatives where institutions have failed, and that hope can become a tangible social practice rather than an abstract ideal.

Through the experiences, struggles, and aspirations of those who inhabit this remarkable place, the documentary invites audiences to imagine new forms of coexistence and collective responsibility. It reveals how a community built upon mutual aid can transform resistance into everyday life and turn the idea of another world into a lived reality.

By reminding both governments and citizens of what an organized and determined people can achieve together, "Spring in Prosfygika" promises to leave viewers with a profound sense of awakening, inspiration, and possibility.