

PRESS RELEASE # 2 | Prague, March 27, 2018

## reSITE & Airbnb host Urban Tech Pioneers, the second salon on tech innovations and quality of life

Today, reSITE is hosting five international guests and tech innovators from living, mobility, quality of life and startup scenes at the second sold-out evening salon from our collaborative “My City / Your City” series. The event aims to stress the potential of technology for cities and the quality of life. The Prague volume, happening at the SmetanaQ Gallery, is curated by reSITE in partnership with Airbnb.

### #reSITEsalon

After the first successful volume organized in Berlin, reSITE brought together guests from five countries to discuss innovative and creative business models with positive impact on quality of life in cities. **Rui Coelho**, Head of Invest Lisboa agency, joined us from Portugal, to speak from the perspective of a city policy attracting tech innovations. **Szilvia Walter**, Co-founder of EVA – Extended Visual Assistant, one of Europe’s Top 50 startups – came from Budapest. **Sofia Gkiousou**, Airbnb’s Public Policy Manager EMEA joined us from London. **Martin Pejša**, Founder of Creative Dock, represents the local startup scene that has overgrown the borders of the Czech Republic. The event is curated by **Martin Barry**, reSITE’s Founder, originally from New York and a relentless ambassador of creating lovable cities for the next generation.

### Inspiration from the speakers

*“The year 2030 is roughly 4,400 days from now. In urban planning thinking, this isn’t the future, this is tomorrow. There is little doubt that cities will continue to be humankind’s greatest invention, nor is there doubt that we will continue to populate our cities at unprecedented rates. The question is how we will harness technology, sharing and innovation to serve people, provide equity and improve our quality of life,”* reSITE’s chairman Martin Barry opens the discussion.

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**Beware of two-speed adoption of technologies**

Rui Coelho, Executive Director of Invest Lisboa, points out how neglecting technologies can become a threat to democracy and well-being of our societies. *“The massive growth in the sharing economy demonstrates a growing need for flexibility, simplicity, easy access, lower costs and sustainability. The innovative companies and startups – the business community – were fast in taking advantage of technology to the development of new business models in response to those new consumer desires. Now, what about the political community and academia? Can politicians learn something from the sharing economy to deal with climate change and growing inequality and other increasing challenges our societies will face in the future?”*

**Empowering locals and utilize our resources better**

Airbnb uniquely leverages technology to economically empower millions of people around the world to unlock and monetize their spaces, passions and talents to become hospitality entrepreneurs. *“Around the world we’ve seen how home sharing has opened new economic opportunities for local families and their communities, while transforming the way people experience cities. We are excited to partner with reSITE to explore with tech pioneers in this space how the sharing economy can help cities across the region to empower locals and use existing resources more efficiently,”* describes Sofia Gkiousou, Regional Public Policy Manager for EMEA of Airbnb

**Unlocking new possibilities to upgrade the quality of life for millions**

Szilvia Walter, whose startup EVA develops a breakthrough tech solution for the blind and visually impaired as a wearable navigation tool, has a big ambition: erase the distinction between blind members of our society and people with vision. By enabling smart and safe urban mobility, she wants to offer accessibility to new places and the freedom of independence to those who are defined by fear to mobility. *“The awareness of Smart Cities’ potential has grown exponentially over the past few years. States, provinces, countries, cities, and national governments realize that they can positively alter the lives of millions of urban residents with technology. Smart City solutions leverage IoT (Internet of Things) technologies to address the urban challenges such as safety and security, traffic congestion and aging infrastructure.”*

**Technologies enable the quickest trial and error learning pattern ever**

*“What is going to happen in the future, we cannot tell, but to find out, we test different options,”* says Martin Pejša, Founder of Creative Dock. He describes how his growing firm navigates the fast changing landscape to draw conclusions about the future development of industries Creative

Dock works in. *“We test a lot of different business models and in our case, it is always the consumer who is right. We provide them options to choose from. And people’s feedback is where we take conclusions to influence the future development of infrastructure and our next projects.”*

### **Let’s focus on smart citizens**

*“Sharing has become fundamental to our lives from an economic, ecological and social perspective. As space and resources become scarcer, how can we more intelligently and inventively use what we have to provide maximum benefit? Our collective goal should be to make sharing accessible, make it easier to turn good ideas into startups, and utilize technology more for the benefit of all citizens, to bring more equity, and improve more lives.*

*Technology enables a city to grow sustainably, governments to manage their services and infrastructure more efficiently, businesses to connect faster to the global economy, and citizens to have high-speed access with more power to participate in municipal governance and improve their own lives. For it to work, cities need to encourage their citizens become early adopters of new technology and need to give them the tools and Internet speed to do so. Finally, let’s stop calling it a ‘smart city’ and simply call it smart planning,”* summarizes Martin Barry.

## **About the Speakers**

### **Martin Barry**

Founder and Chairman, reSITE, Prague, CZ/US

Martin is a landscape architect and the Founder and Chairman of reSITE, a nonprofit organization exchanging ideas for more lovable and livable cities. A visiting lecturer at the Paris Sorbonne-University Abu Dhabi, Martin is also a co-founder of City Crew, a global design, branding and ideas company. As a landscape architect, he has led multi-disciplinary teams on urban projects in North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. His projects at W Architecture in NYC have received dozens of awards. He is a Fulbright Scholar, a Fellow with the Design Trust for Public Space, and he was recently granted the President’s Award for Community Service.

### **Rui Coelho**

Executive Director of Invest Lisboa, Lisbon, PT

Rui Coelho is the Executive Director of Invest Lisboa, since its founding in 2009. He is responsible for the international economic promotion of Lisbon and support services for investors, companies and entrepreneurs. He kick-started the projects Startup Lisboa Business Incubator (Member of the Board) and the Reuse of Desterro’s Hospital, amongst others.

### **Sofia Gkioussou**

Regional Public Policy Manager EMEA, Airbnb, London, UK

Sofia Gkioussou works as Airbnb Regional Public Policy Manager. Based

in London, she concentrates on Central Europe, the Middle East and Africa, working with cities to open the door for new forms of tourism and educate policymakers about the huge potential of the “sharing economy” for sustainable economic and cultural growth. Sofia joined Airbnb after several years in the energy industry where she was working as a Policy & External Relations Manager concentrating on domestic energy efficiency programs, renewable energy and smart data. Sofia’s experience includes working with startups, helping them express their story to media and customers, and she continues doing independent and academic work on innovation and digital communities.

#### **Martin Pejša**

Fouder, CEO, Creative Dock, Prague, CZ

Before founding this international corporate innovation hub, Martin worked in large corporations – the last one was Vodafone where he acted as the business director leading more than 1000 people. Then he sold his apartment, took all his savings and founded Creative Dock with two associates. After 5 years on the market of building innovative digital services for corporations, Creative Dock has brought over 35 startups to the market. There are over 250 people working in Creative Dock in 8 countries.

#### **Szilvia Walter**

Co-founder of EVA – Extended Visual Assistant, Budapest, HU  
EVA is an EU Top 50 Startup winner currently prototyping AI glasses for the visually impaired. Szilvia’s startup represents a great example of social impact entrepreneurship by improving the quality of life of visually impaired clients. The AI glasses will be a solution for the 20 million visually impaired people in Europe. Szilvia’s role is to support the company in all financial aspects and fundraising, as well as business development. She brings more than a decade of experience in project financing on multiple levels, from SMEs to multi-billion HUF municipal projects. She holds a BA from Oxford Brookes University International Business School Budapest.

The discussion is held in English and moderated by **Linda Bartošová**, Czech Television reporter and anchor.

The event is taking place in the SmetanaQ Gallery space and includes a party and DJ. The Salon is open to social and tech innovators, policy makers, researchers, architects and designers, journalists, students, artists, cultural and municipal leaders, and everybody else who is concerned about a better future for our cities.

### **Program**

18:00-19:00	Welcome drinks
19:00	Welcome Address: Martin Barry   reSITE
19:10-20:30	Panel discussion with international guests
20:30-22:00	Cocktail Party and DJ Sasha Michailidis

WHAT: My City / Your City | Urban Tech Pioneers

VENUE: SmetanaQ Gallery, Smetanovo nabr. 4, Prague 1, third floor.

WHEN: March 27, 2018, 6 pm – 10 pm  
INFO: [Click here](#) | FACEBOOK: [Follow the event](#)  
POWERED BY: reSITE,  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH: Airbnb

## About reSITE

reSITE is a non-profit platform supporting the understanding and synergies of architecture, urbanism, politics, culture and economics. It presents the ideas and projects of internationally renowned experts to professionals and to the wider public, through events, media and consultancy. For the past six years, reSITE became a leading voice in Europe in the field of rethinking urban planning, architecture and urban development, attracting political leaders of inspirational cities to its Prague's flagship event. Being a bottom-up start-up, reSITE connects leaders across disciplines and brings a multitude of side events, debates, film screenings, exhibitions and bike rides for the general public. reSITE was founded in 2011 by Martin Barry, landscape architect, originally from New York.

[reSITE.org](http://reSITE.org)

Media contact: Radka Ondráčková | [radka@resite.org](mailto:radka@resite.org) | +420 605 350 814  
High-resolution photographs are available upon request.

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## About Airbnb



Founded in 2008, Airbnb is a global travel community that offers magical end-to-end trips, including where you stay, what you do and the people you meet. Airbnb uniquely leverages technology to economically empower millions of people around the world to unlock and monetize their spaces, passions and talents to become hospitality entrepreneurs. Airbnb's accommodation marketplace offers access to millions of places to stay in more than 191 countries, from apartments and villas to castles, treehouses and B&Bs. With Experiences, people can see a different side to a destination through unique, handcrafted activities run by locals, while a partnership with Resy provides access to the best local restaurants in selected countries. All of this is brought together in one easy-to-use and beautifully designed website and app.

Media contact for Airbnb: Bernard D'heygere  
| [bernard.dheygere@airbnb.com](mailto:bernard.dheygere@airbnb.com)