



Mahalla in Samarkand, Uzbekistan

# UZBEKISTAN

## MAHALLA REPORT

Mahallas are an ancient form of „living together“, historically built around family ties and the daily life of the community. They are even integrated into the modern Uzbek constitution, which allows them to deal independently with all matters falling within their jurisdiction. Weddings, funerals, conflict resolution in the quarter and in the family, administrative activities and community celebrations take place in these neighbourhoods, which are still home to a large part of the Uzbek population. To date there are almost 10,000 Mahallas in Uzbekistan with an average of about 2,000 inhabitants. Depending of local culture, tradition, region and climate, various types of Mahallas developed over the centuries. But many Mahallas are disappearing due to high economic pressure, changed habits and lack of modern infrastructure.

### TEAM

Julien Bellot  
Victoria Easton  
Saodat Ismailova  
Tina Küng  
Meng Li  
Christian Portmann  
Nicolas Rothenbühler  
Giovanna Silva  
Julia Tobler  
Léonie Zelger  
Stefano Zeni  
Francesco Zorzi

A focus of our journey will therefore be the different types of Mahallas throughout Uzbekistan. On our journey along the Silk Road from Tashkent to the West we will not miss to visit important cultural sites and buildings in the cities of Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva. From the monumental Koranic schools of the 15th century to the Soviet reconstruction of Tashkent after the 1966 earthquake.

The social organization of the Mahallas and their various architectural forms are of high interest because they represent alternative models of urban society. At a time when the anonymous megacity and its ecosystem are literally reaching their limits, the need for an alternative is greater than ever. The example of the Mahalla can make an important contribution to this.

With photography and film, we will capture our journey and especially the Mahallas. The internationally renowned Uzbek contemporary artist Saodat Ismailova, whose film work revolves around the ancestral traditions of Uzbek society, will accompany and support us through the trip. The photographer and publisher Giovanna Silva will also be part of the journey and help us to capture these communities and their fascinating habitat.

### SEMINAR WEEK

14. – 22.03.2020  
Expense category E  
(max. 1200 CHF)  
max. 16 participants  
zelger@arch.ethz.ch