INTRODUCTION: 20 FEB, 2018
Tue, 10 am, ONA
aot@arch.ethz.ch
www.topalovic.arch.ethz.ch

PROJECT FOR PUBLIC LANDSCAPE

BEOGRAD UNBUILT

ASSISTANT PROF Milica Topalović
TEAM: Hans Hortig, Karoline Kostka, Metaxia Markaki,
Ferdinand Pappenheim, Thaïs de Roquemaurel
PLACES: 18 students
INTEGRATED DISCIPLINE: Planning
SEMINAR WEEK: Integrated, 17–24 March,
cost frame B
**Project for Public Landscape—Beograd Unbuilt** will focus on the urban body formed by Belgrade’s many green islands and open spaces enclosed within the built fabric. Emerging in the city from diverse historical circumstances and geographical backgrounds, today many of these public landscapes remain in a precarious state: some are deeply anchored in the collective memory but have become largely obsolete in the present; others are encumbered with private interest, considered only placeholders for development to arrive.

Belgrade extends across three distinct ecologies. At the confluence of Sava and Danube, the floodplains of the two rivers meet the folded landscapes of the Šumadija Upland, and the vast Pannonian Plain. Since the early nineteenth century, the growing city has infringed upon once open lands. These include old public destinations in urban forests and nature areas such as Topčider and Avala, modernism’s representational green spaces such as the Park of Friendship, the forgotten WWII memorial grounds, and even haphazard wastelands leftover in the field of recent informal construction. Flanked by nature reserves and flood plains, the interrupted riverbanks along the Sava and Danube are riddled with recreational areas, leisure facilities and former industry.

Stabilised over long historical period as essential urban “voids” within the evolving city fabric, these enclosed landscapes have materialised the paths and symbols the city’s public rituals, its power geometries and its geographical necessities. Today, each of these landscapes represents a complex and specific urban form intertwining ecology with leisure, power and memory.

With the most recent major paradigmatic passage from socialist to post-socialist era, like much of Belgrade’s built-up urban space, these green islands in the city are once again changing profoundly. Having fallen victim to the post-socialist “memory wars”, shrinking public sector and economic hardship, their uses and meanings in most cases keep eroding together with their green bodies. Socio–spatial practices of the post-socialist city have yet to discover ways in which the many neglected destination points, monuments and fading landscape architectures, now hidden in the green, can be reinhabited in the present time.

Together these public landscapes create a major and necessary urban project for the city of Belgrade. Amidst often conflicted political interests projected in urban space, the idea of public landscape can begin to serve as crucial common ground. In the light of the city’s ravenous development, both formal and informal, we propose to rethink once again the meaning of the UNBUILT, and envision its contemporary form.

The core of the research and design studio will be an integrated field trip to Belgrade during the seminar week. We will explore the city and conduct in-depth surveys on a range of public landscapes, in order to arrive at first project hypotheses for the selected sites. Public events and reviews will be held in both Belgrade and Zurich. The studio will result in a common book of drawings and images, and physical models.