

Graduation Plan_{Master of Science}

Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building
Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Ana-Maria Vasilache
Student number	5152445

Studio		
Name / Theme	Methods of Analysis and Imagination/ Positions in Practice: Towards Democratic Built Environments in Belgrade, Serbia	
Main mentor	dr. Jorge Mejía Hernández	Architectural Design
Second mentor	ir. Pierre Jennen	Building Technology
Third mentor	dr. Aleksandar Staničić	Architectural Research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>The choice of studio was primarily based on an interest to counter the predominantly Western-centric contexts of my personal academic and work projects completed to date. Therefore, having been born and raised in Bucharest, I have seen very direct parallels between the Serbian and Romanian contexts, both in terms of political and social development. Given these similarities, I believe the studio will help gain an insight into the production of contextualised designs in Post-Socialist or Post-Transitional European states.</p> <p>Additionally, I have developed an early-on fascination with the architectures produced within the former European Socialist States. As a result, some of my theoretical Bachelours level work has been concerned with this interest. However, most recently, I explored my curiosity regarding mass housing projects developed by State Socialist regimes during the M.Sc. 2 History Thesis Course, where my work underlined the role of socialist housing in women's bodily and psychological control in Bucharest.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	A Living Archive of Urban Nostalgia
Goal	
Location:	Block 23, New Belgrade

The posed problem,	The community spaces in Block 23 have changed function and or decreased their level of public access after the collapse of market socialism in the early 1990s paving the way for the contemporary phenomenons of <i>anomie</i> and <i>nostalgia</i> among the elderly population.
research questions and	How can the architecture of community spaces reduce the phenomenons of social disconnect? How can the phenomenon of <i>nostalgia</i> be linked, understood, utilized and mediated through the provision of community spaces?
design assignment in which these result.	The project proposes the creation of new community spaces, also known in this context as <i>mesna zajednica</i> spaces, that offer the possibility for social reintegration. For this purpose, the project analyses the failures of the initial community spaces that transgressed their initial function to the detriment of the residents of Block 23. In tracing a clear link between <i>nostalgia</i> , <i>anomie</i> and the architectures of Block 23, the project proposes a design based on spatial configurations that feel familiar and personal to the residents by analysing the particularities of the individual housing units and proposing the extrapolation of the spatial typologies identified on an urban level.

Process

Method description

The project proposal is heavily based on understanding the ethnographic patterns encountered in Block 23 as a means to produce an architecture that allows for spatial and typological familiarity despite high internal layout flexibility. Within this context, the *mesna zajednica* rooms act as a crucial community element directly affected by the change of regime, their disappearance being a clear signal of and visibly linked to the rise of social withdrawal.

Therefore, the project hypothesises that community spaces (*mesna zajednica* rooms or other communal facilities) have changed function and or decreased their level of public access due to the collapse of market socialism in the early 1990s, the lack of structural flexibility and the impersonal and indistinguishable character of the spaces. Conversely, the dwelling units in Block 23 are still considered successful due to the ability to provide flexible internal spaces and a personal character, both generated by the availability of private ownership.

In analysing this hypothesis, we distinguish three levels of inquiry marked by an increase in spatial privacy: the communal grounds, the communal facilities (*mesna zajednica* rooms) associated with each block, and the individual housing units. Each spatial typology is analysed on three distinct levels by employing:

1. historical research methods regarding the effects of the political transition on these

spatial typologies and tracking the historical changes that affected them

2. material culture research methods tracking the structural flexibility and adaptability of the construction types

3. praxeological research methods underlining the (in)ability to personify the spaces through analysing patterns of interaction

The initial research already conducted at these levels supports the hypothesis above. Therefore, the analysis of the individual dwelling units becomes crucial for understanding key spatial configurations associated with the residents' lifestyles and daily rituals. These spatial configurations, therefore, become cues for extrapolating the project's functional requirements on an urban scale.

Future research steps will primarily be concerned with a phenomenological inquiry into the nature of disused spaces on site as a means to understand the positioning and atmosphere of the spaces assembling the proposed project. To this end, the design process will be furthered by employing massing and precedent studies, spatial distribution research, material studies that allow understanding the character of the spaces analysed and ethnographic studies of everyday rituals, developing narratives of use.

Literature and general practical preference

Literature:

Boym, S. N. (2001). *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books.

Breacher, B. *The New Order of War*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Derrida, J. (2006). *Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. New York: Routledge Classics

Jacobs, J. (1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House

Koolhaas, R. (1994). *Delirious New York*. New York: The Monacelli Press.

Lefebvre, H.(1975). *What Is the Historical Past*. New Left Review, 10(90).

Lefebvre, H.(1996). *Writings on Cities*. New York: Blackwell Publishers.

Le Norman, B. (2006). *Designing Tito's Capital*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Stierli, M. & Kulic, V. *Towards a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia 1948 – 1980*. New York: Museum of Modern Art.

Venturi, R., Scott Brown, D., Izenour, S. (1972). *Learning from Las Vegas The Forgotten Symbolism Of Architectural Form*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.

Wilson, J. L.(2014). *Nostalgia: Sanctuary of Meaning*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Publishing.

Precedents:

Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center – Renzo Piano Building Workshop

Guggenheim Helsinki – Bruther

Nest We Grow – Kengo Kuma & Associates

Pavilion of Reflections – ETH Zurich

Military History Museum – Studio Libeskind

Très Grande Bibliothèque – OMA

Reflection

1 What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

The Methods and Analysis and Imagination graduation studio aims to form a cohort of students acutely aware of the particularities of designs focused on promoting and preserving democratic values in the built environment. Therefore, the studio underlines the use of the meaningfulness, appropriation, and integration conceptual triad as an inherent design element. Given this, the proposed project addresses the particularities of public life in a Post-Transitional context, where political changes have acutely impacted social interaction. At the same time, the issue of location (in this case Belgrade, Serbia) relates to the wider context of the Architecture Master track by providing to and improving on an already extensive body of knowledge regarding the architectures of Balkan states with their specific developmental particularities. The project, therefore, becomes an exploration of the connection between politics, public life, architecture and urban planning. As initial analysis has already revealed, it becomes apparent that the architect's role in such a context becomes thoroughly analytical, allowing architecture to generate a holistic response to present environments that is quiet and balanced rather than upending and overturning.

2 What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

The project can be thus inscribed into a vast body of work generated by the heralded failures of the grand modernist ensembles. However, it also proposes the issue of shift in interest, from a Western-Centric context of particular socio-economic backgrounds to a Post-Transitional context where architecture oftentimes is assimilated with regimes and structures no longer in place. The move past functionalism into more phenomenological architectures becomes, therefore an issue of great interest, both professionally and scientifically. At the same time, phenomenons of social disconnect and withdrawal especially prevalent in elderly populations have become even more acute within the field of architecture with the start of the pandemic. My project, therefore, aims to provide a holistically integrated solution for a context located at the confluence of these two significant fields of architectural research.