Public space as a cohesive force:
the landscape intervention in post-conflict city, Mostar

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01 Introduction – Mostar as a post-conflict city
Rather than beginning and ending cleanly, conflicts are inherited and either perpetuated or transformed by successive generations. Today, many areas still suffer from the effects left by post-conflict situation or even being in the war.
However, the public life in reality is not as good as the told story. The reconstruction of the old bridge and other bridges did not really lead to connect people, as people still stay in their religious side boundary. Obviously, the once most religiously mixed city turns into a divided city today in both physical and mental aspects.
Public spaces in poor quality: former HIT Square

Heritage in abandoned area: Old train station
Hence, the general problem this project dealing with is: the mental division between people and the loss of memory between inhabitants and city.

We can’t design our way out of conflict, but the way we build neighborhoods can either help or hinder polarized communities, and public space is one point to start.

Objective
This project seeks to mitigate the mental division of the city and promote the construction of a cohesive society by redesigning and improving public spaces as landscape intervention.

Research Question
How can the historical and social value of public spaces in Mostar be enhanced by landscape interventions to mitigate the mental division between people?
02 Working Area —— Two border lines as one reunion
Two potential lines:

Important role in city structure

Border lines

Carriers of memory
Important role in city structure

City development time line

1474: the name "mostar" first mentioned
1552: mosque first
1566: Old Bridge finish
1834: first church
1878: ruled by Austria-Hungary
1891: railway
1918: World War I ended, became part of Yugoslavia
1939-1945: World War II
1968: diving competition started
1977: new railway station
1993.4: Mostar divided
1993.11: Old Bridge destroyed
1995.12: Dayton Agreement
2004: Old Bridge reconstruction fishing

Before 1468
1468-1878: Ottoman period
1878-1918: Austria-Hungary period
1918-1992: Yugoslavia period
1992-1996: Civil War
1996-2018: Reconstruction

Urban area development time line

15th century
16th century
17th century
18th century
19th century
20th century
21st century
Important role in city structure — development backbone

15th century

16th century

17th century

18th century

19th century

20th century

21st century

Neretva River in valley area

Railway along boulevard in west

15th-19th century: mainly along the Neretva river and Radobolja river
limited to the topography and nature resource distribution;
flood risk, rainfall risk, military protection, agriculture, water source, weather and trade route;
pattern of "mahala", the traditional housing complex

20th-21st century: mainly focus on the large area on west bank
no more rely on agricultural production;
first railway as an opportunity started the development of that area
Border lines—gathering line before the war

Hot spot before the war

Different activities in river area

Urban life along boulevard
Border lines— as frontline and risk area during the war

Risk area during the war

Boulevard as front line

Temporary bridge crossing the river
Border lines — division line after the war

Boulevard (front line) in Mostar

Ethnic change during the war

45000
15000
6000
30000
1000 Bosnian
1000 Croatian

Hot spot currently
Border lines—mental division line after the war

HIT square before the war

HIT square now
carriers of memory—the symbolic language

1. Some old pieces of the original bridge now lie on the pebble beach and serve as places to sit. Bridge ruins/stones lay out on the bank of the river, they appear to blend in with the landscape rather than call attention to themselves.

2. After the war when the Old Bridge was demolished and before there was a stand-in bridge, there was a springboard from which people could dive into the river.

3. After 1992 bridges were ruined, new temporary bridges were built at different site. Many only left basement construction today, but the Bunur Bridge, pedestrian bridge right now, is the only one turn into a permanent bridge.

4. After Austro-Hungary period, plane tree avenues became well-known feature of connecting town to the city, reaching to the center as well as future sports & recreation center and new parks.

5. Diving platform in city swimming pool, where diving and swimming competition was held in the past.

6. During Austro-Hungary period, industrial progress grew quickly, partly due to the important railway. Mostar as an important stop connected railway from Sarajevo to Dubrovnik.

7. Graffiti on the wall made in Street Art Festival.
Two potential lines for reunion:

**Break the border**

breaking the border is for people to get out of one's religious and ethnic territory and communicate with other side;

**Collection of collective memory**

varrious spaces, activities and heritages on these two lines makes it a more pratical site to bring back memory.
03 Strategy & Principle

- **History and Memory Visualization**
  - Complete missing piece: Aim to keep the complete volume of the ruined buildings, emphasizing the space as architectural space.
  - Emphasize exist piece: Aim to highlight the remain ruins, exploring the historical value behind the ruins and invite people to form physical or visual connection with ruined piece.

- **Multiple Activities**
  - Young generation participation: Aim to create attractive and creative space for young generation to communicate, a platform for them to understand each other.
  - History education: Due to large ruined area, places and buildings with historical value are not able to convey the related history to the public, the city and public should find back their past.

- **Public Space Continuity**
  - Higher accessibility: More route should be opened to get the riverbank, cross the river and cross the neutral zone.
  - Pedestrian friendly space: A pedestrian friendly network would invite more people to go to public space and also enjoy their street life.

- **Follow Original Pattern**
  - When deal with the area ruined to the ground level, attention should paid to the original fabric pattern, aiming at recreating similar urban images.

- **Use of Material**
  - Specific materials can reflect to the events and objects in the past, using materials is a way to keep the memory of something.

- **Interact with Ruins**
  - Redesigned ruined area could be the new public space, and by interacting with ruins, people are gradually mitigate the fear memory of the ruined scene.

- **Memory Gardening**
  - A moderate way to provide the public a monument for remembering the past, and also invite the public to participate and grow their own landscape.

- **More Public Space**
  - More high quality public spaces are need to attract and guide people gather together.
(Mental aspect) The public landscape would involve the narrative reflecting to the city history and public memory to help public rebuild the connection and memory of the city. The way showing the narrative need be easy to understand, by which people can quickly evoke the memory and history and further bring some thinking.

(Use aspect) Traditional and new activities will keep attracting people and as these experiences are repeated, public spaces become vessels to carry positive communal meanings, the connections between individuals begin to be rebuilt again.

(Physical aspect) Public spaces should be easy to get to each other, locals should have abundant and accessible public spaces to go to. In the long run, the continuously connected public space network would gather and lead people to step over the mental division line.
Toolbox---principle

**PUBLIC SPACE**

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  - history education
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Monuments in the city

The Cross shows an implicit but inevitable control of the whole city

A bomb blast destroyed a monument to fallen soldiers of Bosnia's Muslim-dominated wartime army on the boulevard
ruined buildings beside the park, between the big square area and the park

ruined buildings and parking lot, between the boulevard and river bank and bunur pedestrian bridge

ruined buildings on the famous Old bridge river bank
Material from demolished ruins
Materials like brick recycled from demolished buildings are reused for pavement of the path.

Ruins as public space
The original structure of the beam is kept for vines and hanging plants.

Ruins as public space
Based on the construct of the remained stairs, a new platform on the second story is added to the ruined building. A new stage area is created in the building for performance.

Use of material
- interact with ruins
- memory gardening
- more public space

Example point: park area
demolished ruins
Ruined buildings are demolished to create more paths crossing this area for better connecting boulevard with the river bank.

ruins as public space
Currently, there are some peddlars on the sidewalk selling goods. The ruined construction would provide a place for small market.

sports space
It is now a strip shaped parking lot, but it is better used as public space to attract more people to the river bank and cross the bridge.

Example point: neutral area
ruins as public space
Room with vegetation to create public and private sitting place.

constructions on ruins
Platforms on different height and direction provide the places to have a sight view of the old bridge area panorama.

complete constructure
The ruined building is repaired and a new construction is added to the roof part. This building contains a big open space that can be used as exhibition or perform area.

Example point: Old Bridge river bank
River bank potentials

Symbolic elements along the river:

- Diving platform
- Cave
River bank—Donja area

- basement of temporary bridge
- Pješački
- basement of unknown temporary bridge
- Bridge Kamenica

1992-1994

2019
Proposed design in Donja area
River bank—Donja area

grid boardwalk along the river bank, providing comfortable walking experience and also allowing vegetations grow through it.

boardwalk along the steep river bank, providing new accessible path to the site and platform on lower level.

the temporary bridge in the past would be rebuilt again to connect two sides of the bank.

Reconstruction of Bridge Kamenica
River bank—Donja area

Reconstruction of Bridge Kamenica
Boulevard potentials

west boulevard

east pedestrian

Pedestrian street in east

The boulevard in west
Boulevard—potentials

Ruins and current land use on Boulevard
Boulevard—history

Historical change of Boulevard
1) a better pedestrian network
2) following the "CIRO bicycle route" project, creating a fluent bicycle route towards the old train station.
3) re-playing its historical, cultural and social role as central public spaces
Boulevard—pedestrian boulevard
Boulevard——pedestrian boulevard

CIRO railway + CIRO track at old train station = proposed pavement pattern

planetree line + planetree line at street = proposed planetree line
Boulevard — pedestrian boulevard

- fir/spruce/pine
- planetree
- maple/ginkgo
- oak

planting scheme
pavement pattern
Old station museum

- wooden seats
- museum glass roof
- bike route
- steps
- grassland
**Memory Planting Step**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pick a seed ball from the marked seed box. The seed you choose might represent your emotion and memory during the past period: before the war till now.</td>
<td>Watering it and wait for its blossom. You can use the flower/leaf/fruit of your plant to make tea that treats with the memory emotion and feeling.</td>
<td>After the planting bed is full with plants you may choose to make your plant a hanging plant hanging on the steel structure of the wall, then more room in the planting bed for others’ plants and also be able to keep your memory and enjoy the tea from it.</td>
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**LOVE**
- *Rosa rugosa*
  - Generally, a red rose is an unmistakable expression of love. Florence is in Summer May-June.

**HAPPINESS**
- *Tussilago Farfara*
  - It’s visited by honeybees, providing pollen and nectar. Florence is in Spring February-May.

**SORROW**
- *Calamintha officinalis*
  - The Bosnian name for this plant comes from a Turkish word for sorrow and is traditionally used for treating the disease behind which lies depression. Florence is in Summer July-September.

**FEAR**
- *Glechoma hederacea*
  - This plant was in the ritual of fear elimination or another type of shock which appeared after a traumatic experience. Florence is in Spring April-June.
Profitable institutions and stakeholders
ruined wall

tables and seats

bricks pavement recycled from ruined buildings

planting beds with wooden seats

steel constructions

Memory planting lab and hotel garden
THANK YOU!