

Evasion of Temporality

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Abstract

Temporality is normally tied to a political transition. Abrupt transitions of politics give birth to many emerging as well as disappearing forms in space. Most of them are known and repeated globally, as shanty-towns, camps, zones, disaster settlements, sometimes cities, temporal borders and spatial arrangements, check-points, customs areas or tents. All of them are normally seen as a B version of high architecture, or high urbanism, an exception to the stable and obedient arrangement of space. And normally, the acceptance of a temporal solution is an acceptance of lowering standards. At the same time there is a strong belief that it is an appropriate method with which to reach the next level in the future that comes with the promise of stability. This scenario depends on accepting a priority of limited time over available space. The temporal solution depends on accepting a deadline of its own expiration, the end of its own incapability to be stable.

At a point of expiration, the Serbian case proves to be a special one. Its transitional political leadership did not accept its own temporality. The current impasse in the public realm is the result of the repeated resistance of a deadline to its own duration. The project of denial proved larger than the project of acceptance of temporality. Milošević's transitional power never fossilized into architectural monuments or ceremonial urban schemes because the scale of his spatial politics was not urban but territorial, and was mainly concerned with carving out, expanding and cleansing to create Serbian national space. As a result this abstinence gives birth to the emerging populist architecture – a bastard child of glitzy-corporate and folk-nationalist architecture called in this paper 'Turbo Architecture'. Its origins were temporary, but now with the fall of Milošević its presence is permanent and is now the unlikely archaeology of the contemporary Serbian city.

The problems of temporary transition have now resulted in the evasion of temporality.

As an old system of collective ideology transfers into a neo-liberal universe, this array is best seen in the flow of architectural commissions for new banks, condominiums, shopping centres, TV stations and commercial office space. Belgrade as the capital city can be read as a series of temporary evasions. This is played out on an individual level as each new politician evades the dysfunctional institutions in order to place a mark on the capital. The accumulation of temporary evasions through time creates a culture of evasion as the main process of building the city.

Almost thirty years after the death of Tito and half as much time passed from Milošević's failed and quasi Titoistic rise to power, Serbian nationalism, Balkan wars and severe tragedies, crimes, territorial and political influence of Belgrade shrank from the main South Eastern Europe capital to only one of several re-surfacing capitals of the recently and curiously named Western Balkan territory. This dynamic territory now is a political purgatory in hopes to join the European Union. As a result, a network of Balkanized cities has emerged, positively casting new light over the shadow of crisis and different roles are taken on the first-come first-serve basis. While Zagreb, capital of Croatia, does everything to solidify long-time non-governmental action deep into the current government, Tirana of Albania making its GDP higher than Bosnia's as well as inventing architectural promotion to Dutch progressive design firms, Belgrade has now become known as a "Sin-City" in the sphere of the spatial practice still reminiscent of cultural tourism. Dušan Grlja describes as "some kind

of carnival-like place: loud and flashy crowds of good-looking people swinging in a haze of tobacco and alcohol fumes; night life on river-boats, spiced with the smell of grilled meat, where turbo-folk music meets deep-electro, and gypsy brass bands play alongside hard-rock groups; a whole street crammed with bars one after another called “silicone valley” due to the amount of plastic surgery implants that you can see on the women there; clubs, beer-joints, street cafes, city squares – all saturated with a wild, almost manic and erotically charged atmosphere.” The description goes on to further speculate that the image of the city we are getting is not accidental, nor informal, but that this image of the “sin-city represents a good part of the official tourist attraction. True enough, the New York Times, in its Travel section, which usually caters world as a beauty to a waking metropolitan mankind ready to fly anywhere, writes “*Belgrade Rocks*” and depicts the city as a destination for night-life, drinking, partying, having fun with a following rational: “*This night, with Mr. Milošević on trial in The Hague and Belgrade's doors open to the West, it's only the lights from [an] open-air dance floor that flash in the night sky. The club's thudding sound system, not bombs, sends ripples through the river.*” [Full text at <http://travel2.nytimes.com/2005/10/16/travel/16belgrade.html?ex=1158897600&en=a66ae756161e2d8f&ei=5070>] Or take this travel report from the same section written earlier in 2002 which gives another chilling, but similarly related rational: “*Visiting Belgrade is an especially strange experience for an American. Before Sept. 11, Serbians liked to point out the five or so NATO-bombed buildings in the city center and ask Americans, with more curiosity than hostility, "Why did you bomb us?" During a brief visit... the comments I heard were more along the lines of, "Now you understand."*” [Full text at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?sec=travel&res=9D04E7DE1F3FF937A15751C0A9649C8B63>] Common sense may tell that there should be no place for worry because “any publicity is good publicity” from which promoter, New York Times by default on the winning side of the geo-political struggle, even helps Belgrade, the promotee, to capitalize on what it has and what is lacking even at the metropolis of the metropolises. This can only mean two things: one that Belgrade as a city has something that a New York metropolis is at the loss, and that Belgrade can save New York itself from a serious trouble of not being able to “rock” that hard any more. Unrelated, but simultaneous presence and lecture by the foremost Dutch messiah, Rem Koolhaas, visiting Belgrade for the first time in 2003 said to a hungry audience gathered for a four hour brainstorm organized by the Serbian Ministry of Culture how to improve Serbian identity, that Belgrade should not try to be a B or C version of a Western European capital. Belgrade should capitalize exactly on the ability to lower [urban living] standards and offer this knowledge as a service to places that have higher standards than they are necessary.

Thus, if we want to look at Belgrade’s contribution to the creativity of the subversion of city standards, first we need to present the optimism and confidence that Tito had generated [extracted from many problems of course] and left in heritage to urban planners and architects, and then render a void created by the dearth in the public realm and results of politics of Slobodan Milošević towards the city. What happened? How did the culture of optimistic urbanism, which built new cities for the national liberators became the culture of evasive and creative politics of violation and solidification of temporality? The day and night for the shrinking Serbian capital.

Tito’s grave is a white minimalist box planted in the central space of the so called: “House of Flowers” built in the posh district of Belgrade where most influentials, like Tito, acquired urban villas and lead bourgeois life. A modernist museum dedicated to the fabricated date of Tito’s birth, 25th of May, holding a collection of gifts, as well as personal collection of his suits, including wigs, is located near-by. Originally a must-do site visit for all school children and workers in the ‘60s and ‘70s of Socialist Yugoslavia, the museum now temporarily hosts both fashion shows and contemporary art exhibitions.

Even though Tito opened the spatial practice to the new challenges of building cities like New Belgrade and New Zagreb, mainly made to house the partisan liberators, still his true achievement was more on capitalizing on the special political situation in Yugoslavia, being outside of both West and East pacts. His leadership in creating the movement of Non-Aligned Countries made a global impact to Serbian architects and engineers, hungry for opening commissions in Africa, Latin America and especially Middle East.

In fact, both Serbian and Croatian architects and engineers followed Tito's paved road to the world of new commissions in the Third World. Including works in all non-West and East bloc countries the expertise was often exported to the Middle East, especially in Iraq during the entire decade of the '70s and the '80s. The full-color catalogue of Belgrade-based Energoprojekt, the Socialist version of a Skidmore, Owings & Merrill corporate architecture firm, proudly presents projects like Al Khulafa Street Development in Baghdad from 1981-83 and the Presidential Palace Complex in Baghdad. With these designs that combined a late modernist corporate style with a twist towards neo-oriental in relation to Edward Said's studies in Orientalism. Energoprojekt architects paved the way for other infrastructure projects, soon-to-be invaded by the US, including underground bunkers and hideouts, not included in the catalogue.

Energoprojekt is the sole phenomenon that could house architectural talent created on the formula of heavy industry expertise times design savvy corps, tailored towards undeveloped societies which had basic needs in infrastructure, but which, thanks to Tito and the Non-Aligned movement could achieve more with basics than usual. A few conditions in former Yugoslavia made this method a working one, the main one being that Energoprojekt model played a solution to the difficulty of running individual architectural offices within Yugoslav communist system. Yugoslav communism did not allow conditions for private businesses where architectural ones belonged. Socialist corporations like Energoprojekt provided a cushion for the practitioners employing basically everyone who proved talented during the studies and guaranteeing for the safe stream of institutional commissions. This effectively abolished a need for a talented and promoted Serbian architect to have an office and as such, bow to systematic course of architectural catering to the outside, like the Non-Aligned countries, in the great need of both technical and conceptual expertise.

The most famous and most productive architects out of this system are the couple Bakić, Dragomir and Ljiljana. Finishing their architectural degree at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade, they first worked with Alvar Aalto in Finland and then earned collective employment at Energoprojekt back in Belgrade. Soon they were funded to travel to the Middle East and observe the new situation opening for the new and young talents of Yugoslavia offering what the West could never realize in the Third World Country: Generosity in Design Expertise and technical guidance for much less. Thanks to Tito's logic of institutionalizing the impossible, Bakić's had an open field layed out in front of them to design some of the most prominent structures in Nigeria and Zimbabwe. The couple even moved their office and residence to Harare during the '90s and decided to abandon it during the nationalistic developments both in Serbia and Zimbabwe.

Bakić architects were all that a state apparatus needed to simulate an equivalent status of an architectural practice in Socialist Yugoslavia vis-à-vis a European or an American modernism. But it was not all that architectural society needed from the state, which has now promoted its products only as a business to the Non-Aligned Movement of countries and neither to the Western Europe nor Anglo-Saxon critical world. True enough; in Kenneth Frampton's influential history of Modern movement in Architecture, there are no mentions of any of the South Slav examples other of their deprivations and conservatives of Western Culture of the works by Josip Plečnik, a Wagnerian pupil, well to do in his native Slovenia. No mention of visionaries like Nikola Dobrović who built in Prague as well as Belgrade and Dubrovnik with his most original style influenced by the philosophy of Henry Bergson, nor mentions of the work of Milan Zloković, a bourgeois, who was the most creative in introducing early European modernism on the Belgrade urban landscape. Therefore, couple Bakić can be seen as finally one of the first systematically accepted and supported architects, well educated and with best intentions, however suffering from a lack of critical history and theory of architecture in Serbia, which would bring closer their critical position in shaping new architectural visions with a newly acquired might of the Titoist masterfully created state of international influence and domestic satisfaction with

raised esteem. In another words, the generation of Bakić's had it all, with all optimisms related to construction industry as the main carrier of the special socialist message, but could not rely on the first world recognition of the same efforts, because among other things and as paradoxically it may sounded, it was too pure to be true.

That international social goodness was of course deviant by default because Tito's non-aligned movement reached where neither American/English nor Russian super influence good go so easily: Middle East, Africa and Latin America. How could anyone, even at the caliber of Charles Jencks or Kenneth Frampton, not to mention Bruno Zevi or even utopian Doxiades ever swallow Yugoslav architectural experiments in Libya with Guadafi, Iraq with early regime of Saddam Hussein as well as architectural solidification of shady bussines in Zimbabwe through one the most cruel and the most established dictator Robert Mugabe. How could leftist theory on the rise at the time ever absolve even partially further Yugoslav engineering for Iraqi atomic shelters, Egyptian equals, etc. etc. In their early careers, Bakić architects traveled first to Finland to work with Alvar Aalto, already in his later period, but also traveled to Kuwait and the Middle East for an expedition which is equal to travels that Aldo Van Eyck has made to Africa coming back with similar energy to expose new habitation knowledge to the late modern architectural audience. Bakić's sponsor and employer, Energoprojekt was there still to accommodate in new jobs that there was not much research published after all the trips Yugoslav officials made during Tito's best year, and that in a way this was not the mission of the most influential socialist corporation which mission was to fix hard infrastructure of the Third World, and not to theorize about it. Again, the lack of theorizing of the void of knowledge of such efforts to the audience beyond just being back in Yugoslavia and can be taken responsible for the lack of general cultural knowledge of one of the most sincere engineering operations taking place at the time of the '68th uprising in Western Europe.

Tito allegedly knew that promoting the Yugoslav architectural model in building new cities was of the lower importance from spreading the work about the new Socialist experiment in Self-management and self-organization as a method, and not as a result. In a way why Tito's structures did not fully support not only Bakić architects, but also other Croatian, Bosnian and Slovenian counterparts is because his project was still the territorial project of establishing Yugoslavian identity through existing difference, and not the constructed sameness through architecture.

Energoprojekt was a solid guarantor for any of such projects opening up in the geo-political fields where USA and USSR could not show their face. Its strength at the same time masked the need for an independent architectural, or urban practice, which could develop autonomously and keep its portfolio intact from political projects. In a way, as much as Energoprojekt empowered Serbian talents like Bakić's to build it did them a disservice, because no autonomous architectural practice could be counted globally as a meaningful one, and critical. Take the example of Oscar Niemeyer, who did have all the benefits of the Socialist state, Kubitckek and Brasilia at the time, but did make a move and left, for France as a solo architect, designing and building with few restraints for the leftist circles in some power.

In great opposition, we can now look at Slobodan Milošević, whose grave was arranged impromptu in the garden of his family house in Požarevac, Serbian town depressed to Belgrade. If Tito never cared for the roots and worked progressively to seduce the masses and have him lay within their territorial space like the posh Dedinje of Belgrade, Milošević opted for the come-back-home sanctuary, to be buried in the garden, below a family tree. This ground loving enterprise, so not that much different of other nationalist leaders in the past, who end up coming back to their own backyard as viable spaces for contemplation, is telling of Milošević's role in the spatial practice in the former Yugoslavia.

His deep entanglement with the overall crisis of the Balkans as nations kept cities in official status-quo of development while the remaining anachronisms of the former official socialist planning were made conveniently weak to be violated. That means that any action in the city to fill this void was subversive by default, not by choice. As a result subversions of this dying system came from the self-organized popularitarians, nationalists and emerging entrepreneurial class, which was the strongest in its will to capitalize on violating [and mocking] the loss of socialist and communist values in urbanism and architecture. Because

these various entities joined forces to build the new city, Belgrade's main contribution to global subversion of planning is producing diversity of evasive interpretation of zoning, specifically in creative violation of architectural typologies.

This also made possible for Energoprojekt to keep accepting commissions from the Middle East without an attitude, like for the military in Iraq and for the representative architecture of the early Saddam Hussein's regime. Money was too good to be rejected and it confirmed the business speculation that the Third World does not need an intermediary and that it can do or build things on its own, even if they are sinful or propelled by the economy of sinning like prisons or alike.

Additionally, in the sphere of influence, a few other things have changed. Eyal Weizman remarked that Milošević's power never fossilized into architectural monuments or ceremonial urban schemes because the scale of his spatial politics was not the urban but the territorial. This politics was mainly concerned with the carving out, expansion and cleansing of a Serbian national space. Indeed all throughout the Yugoslav secession wars, the city of Belgrade, where the Milošević government was located and where it was bombed into submission by NATO in 1999, was firmly held by his (far too acquiescent) political opposition. Milošević's nationalist rhetorics celebrated an ideal countryside of Serb villages and the traditional values he thought they embodied; his spatial politics was exemplified by liberating latent psychic forces beyond the capability to harness and control them. The Bosnian countryside, a familiar European mountain landscape, littered with burnt-out and deserted hillside-villages, and Sarajevo, a multi-ethnic city systematically destroyed by forces composed mainly of the rural population that surrounded it, are the material vestige of an ideology that brings rural to urban into violent confrontation, and also definite redefinition of the city as we know it. Balkanization – as this phenomenon has come to be known – is thus a spatial-political concept, endowing fundamental social notions of conflict and enmity with spatial processes of territorial fragmentation, and the shattering of social space into a multiplicity of enclaves that are internally homogenous and externally hostile to each other. The process of national fragmentation has unleashed as well a new class of close-to-power, shady real-estate entrepreneurs, and their emergent populist architectural styles as a substitute for the official architecture and urbanism.

"The man without passion," as Slobodan Milošević was called throughout the Balkan crisis by international journalists, did not choose to build Belgrade. For better or worse, he lost the chance to solidify his era of power in architecture of his capital. There are no grand urban proposals to be found, no government buildings, no new cities, and no style that is identifiably "his" akin to the stripped-down neo-classical architecture of Stalin or Ceausescu in their origins of ideological and national power. Of his peers, Milošević is closest to his political soul mate and Iraqi ally, earning the nickname: "Serbian Saddam." Still, in spite of what many believed was quite a complimentary nickname, no palaces nor treasures like Saddam's are to be found.

With regard to architecture and Belgrade, Milošević could have done much better with his considerable power. Instead, when he gained control, he was known for blocking Tito's immense modernist axis spanning the width of New Belgrade. The axis that Tito planned to be a monumental empty space for the workers, Milošević filled in with layers of military flats, shopping malls and shady corrupt construction ventures. After the NATO bombing in 1999, Milošević's promotional drive to "reconstruct" the country (mimicking Tito's campaign after WWII) preferred spending state money on memorial plaques inscribed with his name, rather than on infrastructure. Still, of the few commissions Milošević ordered, only two materialized that we can call complete. His first was a 1994 subway station for a capital immersed in war and that did not even have a subway system. The analogy is extended: the station without a subway system is named "Vuk Karadžić" for the founder of modern Serbian, a language without a nation. The station's design acts as a double necropolis deep below the surface of the street, the only remains of the scrapped subway system and a foreshadowing of Milošević's larger failures to come. His second building project, a monument said to commemorate the "victory of Serbia over NATO," was erected in 2000, one year after the NATO victory over Serbia. Not only did the oxymoronic "Victor" display severe spelling errors on the plaque that condemned the

Western powers of crimes against Serbia, its white concrete lantern, containing an "eternal light" powered by electricity, was built at a third of its projected size in a stripped neo-Stalinist style. The monument was quickly as debased as Milošević's own political rating: the eternal light was switched off with the popular uprising of October 5, 2000, and the lantern became a graffiti plastered fixture in the park that Tito first laid out during the optimistic age of political non-alignment with either the West or the East.

It is no wonder that intellectuals today in Belgrade see architect Milošević in the same light as Fidel Castro of Cuba - preferring architectural self-castration in order to capitalize on political and policing power. Milošević may have learned from Castro, however his ultimate failure can be read as the reverse of Castro's successful hold on power. Castro was in fact Tito's and not Milošević's ally. The lesson that Milošević missed was the dictator's classic: if you promise the future of the glorious past you will have to build it to last, if you promise the glorious future alone you do not have to do anything. Two: never emulate your father [Tito] unless there is a biological connection.

In spite of the continued weakening of his ideology, Milošević was the most powerful politician in the Balkans. His disinterest in architecture opened a void for sources to flood in other than the top-down directives, enabling a sort of open-source, national-socialist anarchy, which he curiously knew how to navigate. His power was wielded not by public re-appearance, but by a steady flow of absence. The less Milošević spoke, the more he maintained control over the public.

In fact, the less Milošević built, the wider the gap opened for uncontrolled construction. The result is dearth in the public realm; aspirations of the city are nowhere to be found, but its space is thickening like an oversized village. In spite of the political and economic isolation during the last decade and a half as well as lost wars with Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and with the world over Kosovo, Belgrade has witnessed an explosion of construction. The estimates are that as many as 150,000 houses and buildings were built in Belgrade in the last decade and between 800,000 and 1,000,000 in all of Serbia. The quantity that evolved during this short time - 28 buildings built per day on average for 15 years - amounts to a brief, rapid history of a national architecture in the making. The intellectual elite, in opposition to Milošević, hated this architecture and in vain called for its removal. The main reason for such disdain was not so much its trashy post-modern appearance, a march of symbolic and empty rhetorical shapes, but the link of illegal construction to war and criminal activity which also gave birth to dominant cultural forms of how not only how to violate the norms, but also how to normalize the violations, how to become business as usual.

Therefore we are left with four dominant subversions in building that work within Milošević's isolating and passionless system. Each is an expression of a political opposition to the systematically emptied Tito's socialism. The first type is the bastard child of glitzy-corporate and folk-nationalist architecture identified in the following text as "Turbo Architecture", sponsored by neo-liberal movements coming out of deteriorated socialist age. Second is the vertical expansion of temporary structures subversively grabbing for air space that is identified as "Mushroom Houses" enabled by the immigration policies of Serbian Radical Party, most extreme nationalist movement, of Serbian minorities into the ethnical nest of Serbia proper. Third are blown out additions registered as radical preservation of post-war modernism identified as "Housing Upgrades" and supported by a mix of entrepreneurial liberalists subscribing to the centrist Democratic Party, local moderate nationalists and remaining mafia, which target migrating young generations' corps moving to the city to study from out of town. And last are pixilated landscapes of "Neo-Orthodox Landscape," single standing shrines, churches as well portable miniature churches, built as contemporary copies of Byzantium iconic architecture, which is supported both by the emerging extreme right wing parties, royalist movements and absolved by the official government structures as normal shift in ideology.

1 Turbo Architecture

Milošević's deceptive absence and lack of clear vision resulted in an alibi for an army of self-appointed saviors of lost values from the Serbian past acting in the city. Middle-aged architects, the frustrated generation that came second after Tito's first and most privileged generation to build the Communist city of New Belgrade, saw their chance to act. As Milošević bowed to popular participation in policy

making, which had been Tito's main taboo, architectural production derived from the taste of Newly Composed Folk Music or just Neo Folk, which arose in villages and suburbs as a substitute for authentic traditional values. Coincidentally, the first Neo-Folk building was constructed in the center of Belgrade in 1989, the year Milošević won elections in Serbia.

As a deviation of Neo-Folk from the late socialist times after 1989 into the times of wars and isolation Turbo Folk was born as the immense copyright-free collision of traditional and contemporary music forms into a colliding mix of forms. It also served as a basis for Turbo Culture and other cultural trends including crime, nationalism, fashion and make-up. Finally Turbo Architecture was Turbo's last and most concrete form. In fact, Turbo has neither negative nor positive meaning; neither value judgments nor volition are ascribed to it. Turbo is inherently a neutral term. Turbo depends on the context; it is fed by the existing circumstances to push just beyond limitations. In Serbia under the oil embargo, in an economy under sanctions and going backwards, Turbo marked accelerated decline - a perverse speeding up towards the approaching crash.

The most contested example of Turbo Architecture is the building of TV Pink Studios, the very place where Turbo Folk was produced and disseminated on the air to the public. The controversial station started in the early '90s allegedly under the control of Milošević's wife, Mirjana Marković, broadcasting pirate editions of feature movies and pornography. The building's form is a direct interpretation of the complexities of both Turbo culture and the television medium in the changing politics of Serbia, indirectly Milošević's unclaimed architectural baby. TV Pink arose from a collision of disparate elements, yet it was rendered monolithically, wrapped in aluminum and reflective glass foil. Turbo Architecture is at its peak here, employing many elements of Byzantine style alluding to a connection to this past, however rendered in steel, aluminum and glass materials that belong to a high-tech look. The dome is a semi-circular tower cut at the top to resemble the typical hat worn in Serbia during the First World War. Although it was built without official paperwork on the outskirts of Belgrade in the vicinity of Milošević's house, this building became a dominant cultural force in the broad mainstream.

Milošević looked away as Turbo Architecture became a dominant force to make up for the loss of a national identity. As with Turbo Folk music, the mechanism of this populist folk engine felt right for the situation because of its power to substitute for the actual world and authentic tradition. This is best demonstrated weeks after the NATO bombing of Belgrade in late spring 1999. Milošević saw his opportunity to become a builder by reconstructing the country like Tito after the Second World War. He went about this in his particular way: by pushing someone else to do what needs to be done and shielding himself from criticism. In a somber, brown interior of a TV studio adapted to look like an office, one could see day after day on prime TV news a group of architects and planners presenting drawings and computer renderings related to reconstruction. This is the peak of Milošević's transfer from political action into planning and sheer exploitation of two of the most effective tools in the Balkans: deception and demagoguery; two shared main characteristics of Turbo Architecture.

After Milošević's arrest and transfer to The Hague, the very same Turbo Architecture that had become so controversial was promoted as a new national style at The Venice Architecture Biennial in 2002. The official Serbian selectors projected national pride in withstanding the destruction of NATO - which was incredibly small compared to the destruction of Sarajevo or Vukovar - by promoting a catalogue of buildings erected during Milošević as a proof of endurance. The book itself has a front and back cover made of aluminum, like a bulletproof vest even outfitted with the trace of a half-penetrating bullet. Further, its protective sleeves are cast in light concrete to appear like a concrete block - a sign of continuing desire for construction in spite of the "West who wanted to destroy Serbia." This armored catalogue reveals and embodies Milošević's urban legacy that is devoid of passion and leaves behind a sense of crude pathetics.

It was not until the somber days following the assassination of Zoran Djindjić, on March 12, 2003, two years after Milošević's handover to The Hague Tribunal that an official attack on Turbo was unleashed and made real. On March 13, the hurt democratic powers of Serbia dispatched a destruction squad to remove a building that belonged to one of the men accused of the murder. The building that was to be leveled looked like a mix of new romantic architecture with high-tech elements. In other words it was a prime example of Turbo Architecture in Serbia, a fanciful stone clad, bold four-story shopping center.

All Serbian television channels aired live the pained efforts to destroy the building under duress. Although there were no apparent or recorded connections between Milošević and these criminal killers ensconced in the production of Turbo Folk, these images of clearing away the remains of heavy-duty Turbo Architecture were seen as an optimistic cleaning of the traces of Milošević's negligence and undoing of the city.

2 Mushroom House

Then take the example of the mushroom house, a tiny subversive housing type that proliferated throughout Belgrade during the crisis of the '90s. We can be thankful to Milošević for this architectural gift, even though he did not plan for it. When he won wide nationalist support in Serbia and started to engage in the wars in Croatia in 1991 and in Bosnia in 1992, the United Nations imposed sanctions on Serbia. The following period of time was marked by one of the highest rates of hyperinflation ever: in January 1994 prices rose approximately 62% per day. At the same time, as a result of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, a steady number of Serbian refugees and war profiteers flooded into Serbia. Milošević diverted them to Kosovo to increase the numbers of the Serbian minority there, but the plan failed. Instead, the outskirts of Belgrade were the preferred places for starting a new life. The extreme nationalist party led by the current prison-mate of Milošević, the Serbian Le Pen – Vojislav Šešelj, started offering better deals: for a small fee and a large bribe they offered city land, including sidewalks and land for future highways and commercial kiosk construction. The bastard type conceived between national-socialists, today's kiosks became tomorrow's houses, blocking streets and highways.

The mushroom strategy is simple, cunning, self-organized and wild. The typical mushroom builder is displaced and desperate. He comes quickly to the realization that a client-builder relationship is bound by equal ambition to expand in all directions possible, which the official system would not provide on paper. After obtaining "permission" to install a kiosk on a public land, usually in the layer between modernist slab housing blocks and the street a thin kiosk shell is either reused or rebuilt and plugged to electric networks. If the builder is quick, masonry walls are built from the inside while the commercial unit continues business as usual. A second level cantilevering as far as possible out and over is poured in place and soon the tiled perimeter resembling a roof is put up. Cantilevering up to 2 meters on each side the surface area of the captured space can go up to 100 square meters, the size of the elitist socialist apartment. This will become living space for a family, a home-office, or source of rental income. Distorted by the height of the gained interior space, the roof line resembles a mushroom, and so this is how the type got its name.

The legal framework in the absence of systematic planning serves only to be violated systematically in as many steps as possible so it becomes normal. This set the norm for more 'official' construction developments that fully embraced the mushroom strategy and gave birth to a wider and deeper entanglement of mixed use. More prominent examples of mushroom construction followed for private residences, banks, gas stations and shopping centers.

The importance of the mushroom house is that it shrank and displaced geo-political borders to architectural borders and idea of zoning to reality of the pixel. Refugees from Bosnian and Croatian wars, flocking into Serbia made islands of their own space of survival through this speculative housing type. But more than that, by redefining the interior-exterior borders they embraced the opportunity left by the post-socialist void and created a new type that acts like a pixel in the new city.

3 Housing Upgrades

Housing Upgrades are essentially two buildings on top of each other, a large new one on top of a smaller older one. They are solidifications of various gray capital currently in operation through the Balkan region.

Immediately after the liberation of Belgrade in the WWII in a joint operation of Tito's partisan forces and the Russian army volunteers quickly built new suburban parts of the town to accommodate the

liberators. Dubbed as Russian pavilions, they were built following an automatic campus scheme, array of single standing pavilions on an empty field. However, what soon became an aggravation between Tito and Stalin in 1948 left the pavilions without clear property. Unclear ownership protected the pavilions from the sell-out of state property by Milošević in need of money for his army and police. Additionally, being a rare example of early civilian urbanism built by the military, the pavilions fell under a special preservation law for protecting cultural heritage. After the wars and NATO intervention in the '90s, these pavilions were one by one offered to private groups for development over a bribe and permits are issued as long as the developer preserves the original structure and secures permissions from current occupants. In effect the occupants condition their own rights to stay in privatized property in exchange for the air rights and a building on top of their heads. The success of the Upgrade is defined by how much the inventive interpretation of the permit multiplies the volume of the levels.

Depending on the position of the pavilion to the street new pillars are placed either next to the existing walls or distanced in space. After the columns are erected the new platform is formed on top of the pavilion's roof. The new building ground acts like an elevated tabula rasa for a new building above structurally not connected to the pavilion below. The process is taking place while the original floors are still populated. The Upgrade builders don't miss out to build at least two new levels before the new roof line is reached. Once it is reached a mushroom like mansard roof rises at least another two levels and it can go up to six hidden floors in the exaggerated roof section. The Upgrade also gains in width cantilevering to the edge of the bottom supports. Then the customization of the two original bottom floors can take place as the inhabitants sign permissions for the Upgrade in exchange for renovating their own floors. Many then project their own balconies in the between the pillars. The Upgrade is then painted in bright yellow or pink, an pervasive preservationist color of compromise of legality and appearance.

The extension of Russian pavilions is emblematic for the political transition in Belgrade from Milošević era to the democratic era. As Miloš Vasić writes in his book about the assassination of Zoran Djindjić, prime minister in power during the Upgrade Housing projects, the state was fragile because its large parts were still ruled by the cartel connected to crime and profits from the gray market. The Upgrade Housing projects were given permits under Djindjić government even though he made plans to strike on the crime. The information leaked and it was a motivation for his own murder in March of 2003. The hurt government responded following Djindjić's plan and Housing projects were stopped as well leaving some of them unfinished. Vasić writes that democratic powers had to deal with Milošević heritage of criminals for some time after he was arrested and sent to The Hague. This further fragmented former democratic opposition to Milošević to profiteers and others.

Political transition and blurriness of ideologies gave Housing Upgrades the legality and a license to radically interpret what is allowed on paper. Here legalization works beyond mere lowering of standards of urbanism to match the actual condition, the lowering of standards was deployed as the strategy outright and proved effective in increasing density.

As the first Upgrade was finished and the extension of the next house would start it was clear that the system, and not isolated incidents like the mushroom housings, were deployed. The same principle of vertical extension was used in an area of thirty buildings which gave it a modernistic character of great urban proposal. With the look of illegitimate architecture, the new objects were actually legitimate product of bizarre, but deliberate mishmash of transitional politics and entrepreneurial action.

4 Neo-Orthodox landscape

The massive St.Sava Shrine in Belgrade, central icon of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the anchor in the chaotic skyline is still under construction. Started in the middle '30s the work was stopped just after laying the foundations because of the WWII. After the war the shrine join many other national taboos that Tito kept tight under his reign. Immediately after Tito's death the work was continued with new money coming from the anti-communist diasporas mainly prospering in the US as well as later significant support of the Serbian anti-Milošević government. Even though it opened for service late in

the '80s its exterior was completed much later, in 2004, and the work on the interior including the iconographic inscriptions in the mosaic form are projected to last for another four decades to come.

Originally the shrine was intended to be the biggest Orthodox Church in the world, bigger than its historical predecessor: Aja-Sofia in former Constantinople. This act of copying from the past medieval source makes St.Sava and all recently built Orthodox churches coming out from a similar mold. The cookie-cutter for the space of national Neo-Byzantium includes heavy and wide system of circular arches arranged to mimic what is called a "Greek plan" which then support the mandatory dome, a symbolic representation of heaven. Highly tectonic, no higher element cantilevers nor projects over a lower element, thus symbolizing stability and strong links to earth.

With such megalomaniac dream project it is the church and not the state that generates character of public and leftover places from Tito's era. Neo-Christian Orthodoxy has waited for the entire second half of the XX century of communist rule as a suppressed ideological empire, which now retaliates by rebuilding icons and copies of Byzantium church architecture everywhere it can. The, *main* Neo-Orthodox character is in denouncing Modernity, the politics of a clear and aggressive disclaimer against the International Style supported by Tito's state. It follows the trauma the generation of architects embarked into profession as the half century long Tito's modern city building went into decline.

This architect generation's heart was broken three times. The first time was when a post WWII generation of architects arranged with great luck to have steady socialist commissions for new cities like New Belgrade. The second time it was caused by the effects of Milošević's disinterest in architecture as a gift back to the many election that supported him in the beginning of his political power. As a banker, he was stronger in postponing war equity and breaking the rules of the economy rather than ever having courage to spend money on architecture.

The architects of the frustrated generation did not have a choice but to seek another background ideology as a sponsor, an ideology replacement in the slight hope that the long-time suppressed Orthodox-Christian values would take over and stand up as a patron in building the new culture in concrete and stone. However, the Serbian Orthodox Church was not as supportive as architects hoped; by default it was a belief that the Orthodox Church would come back as a soft cultural power, opposing the harsh communist-modernist alliance. However, the Orthodox Church's funds do not seem to come from the church's financial structure, as is the case with The Vatican. Real life proved that the funds flowed solely in one direction: to the church, and in return the church instead of being a patron is merely a vessel for architecture. Quickly, it became clear for anyone practicing architecture in support of romantic and national values that the Orthodox Church would not be the major source of funding because it is spending everything on its megalomaniac dream, not too differently from The Vatican's Middle-Aged dream of domination while building St.Peter's Cathedral in Rome. One would expect some negotiation through reformist methods, but that would take on a model developed by the West-wide protestant network. That could never be the case because the protestant ideology is even more detested by the fundamental Orthodox thinkers than The Vatican. With their hearts broken twice, there survived no emotion [let's take religious feelings as emotion for now] for promoting architecture based on local tradition in Serbia in order to advance in belonging to the world as a sensible nation, the so called 'true' Serbia. Thus the conditions made it possible that very same late modernist architects building office skyscrapers and the tallest buildings in the Balkans during the '70s like embraced the indifference and the aberration of the all too copied and quasi, neo-Byzantium style.

The Neo-Orthodox desire for architecture is scale less and it adapts any available techniques of its execution to complete a lost medieval dream. In 2005, a helicopter of the former communist army got airborne carrying an unlikely object: a small Serbian Orthodox Church, built in a harbor shipyard of Bar, Montenegro. The church was manufactured, pre-assembled, welded in painted steel in a form of a small chapel with a single nave and a miniature dome. After a short ride helicopter delivered the metal church to its destination, a mountain site around a disputed edge of Serbian Orthodox Empire and Montenegrin Orthodox Empire. Ordered, manufactured and delivered on remote site in haste the miniature Serbian Orthodox Church was quickly sanctified by a Serbian Orthodox priest council. One agent of power: the degraded Milošević's military was acquired by another rising agent of power: faith, and the merger took place. It was not that the faith looked for the military protection, the military

was looking for the new ideology to fill its crops emptied out from earlier Tito's communism. The merger was so important that the rules and cannons that Orthodox Church cherishes so deeply like the sense of time in an object of spiritual love, medieval materials, tectonics, appearance were all subverted to the metal church...by the Orthodox Church itself. The subversion of rules thus comes from the very agent that sets the rules. An icon of nationalistic origin merged with faith is efficiently reduced to a pixel of sanctity that is directly used to marking the edge of a territory. The territory, where throughout Milošević pathological reign and absence of passion, the lost passion itself was used to subvert its own rules coming out from the centers of faith like the Belgrade's St.Sava Shrine. Thus both the disputed territories including the cities became seen as the place where evasion is normal.