

## **Warchitecture: Transforming the urban memory of violence**

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### **Abstract:**

In a globalized World where shrewd selection of targets in conflicts bares astonishing cultural impact, redesigning buildings after destruction carries even more weight; it may be grasped (and approached to) as the architect's way to critically respond to political violence, restoring cultural identity of the violated city and/or giving it a new one. Failure to embrace a concrete attitude regarding such complex cultural and political context may lead to undesired spatial effects, such as sharp polarization of cities through erasure of cultural diversity, segregation of functions, ethnic homogenization of disputed territories, creation of "defensive" architecture, etc.

My seminar addresses these issues by analyzing spatial composition of reconstruction projects that sought to restore memory of an urban space, and at the same time, respond critically to political violence inflicted upon it. I focus on characteristic social and political climate of post-war Yugoslavia, predominately cities of Sarajevo and Belgrade, whose destruction was marked by many theoreticians as ground zero in formation of *urbicide* as brand new scientific discourse. The object of this inquiry are urban and architectural projects that managed to surpass the obstacles and, despite inhibiting perplexity of historical, social and symbolic contexts, offer designs that make positive change toward reconciliation.

This seminar sets frame for more comprehensive research whose goal is to create the "vocabulary" of architecture of the disaster – the set of spatial design elements used by architects to address the urban memory of the past, in order to create cities for better present and future. It is expected of this research to contribute to debates on importance of urban memory as the key component in post-war architectural design in the coming years, especially in societies deeply polarized with civil conflicts, such as Ukraine, Syria and Middle East.