

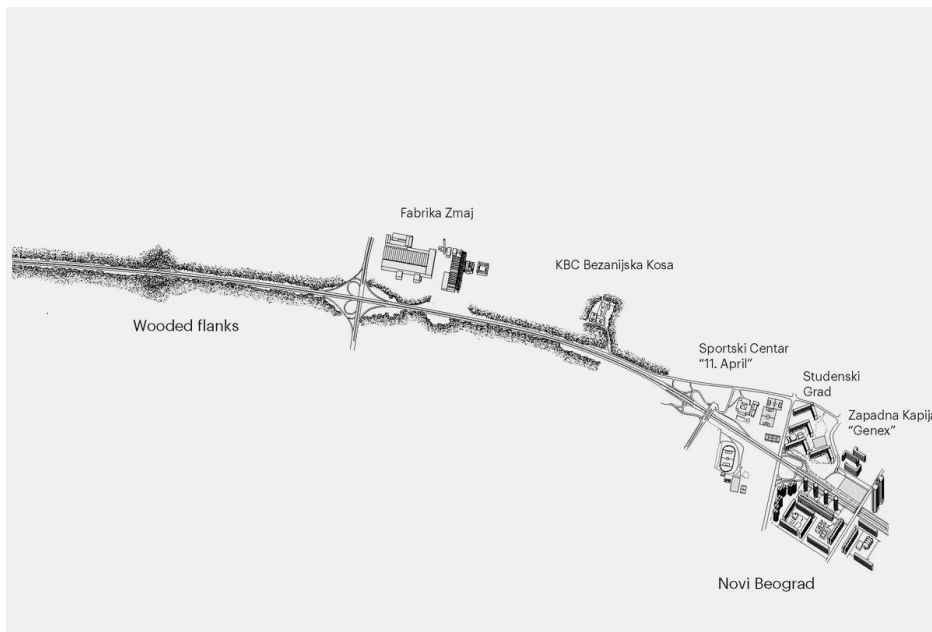
Kraj Kao Zmaj

# Highway Neighbourhood: Mediating Public Encounters

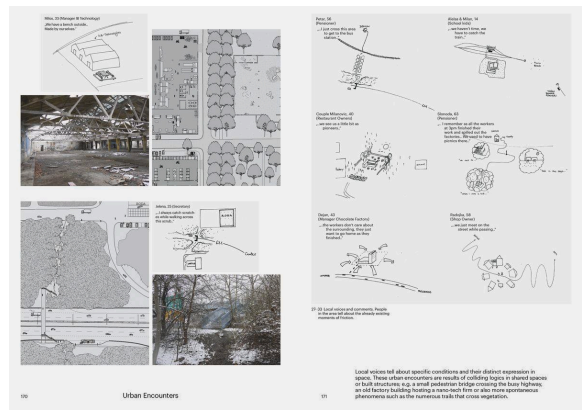
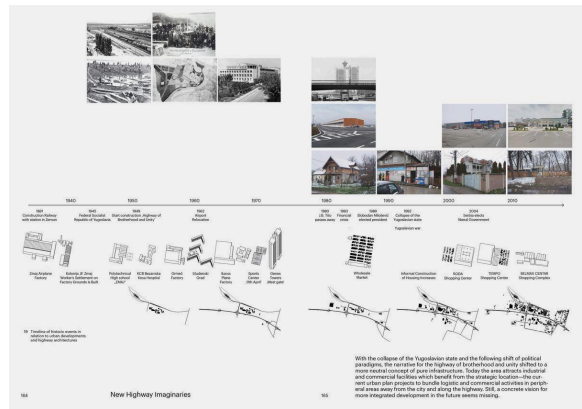
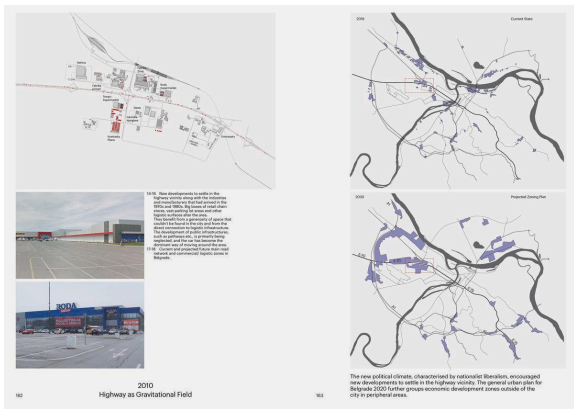
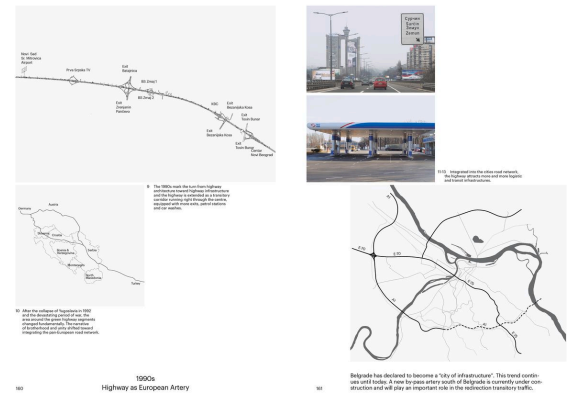
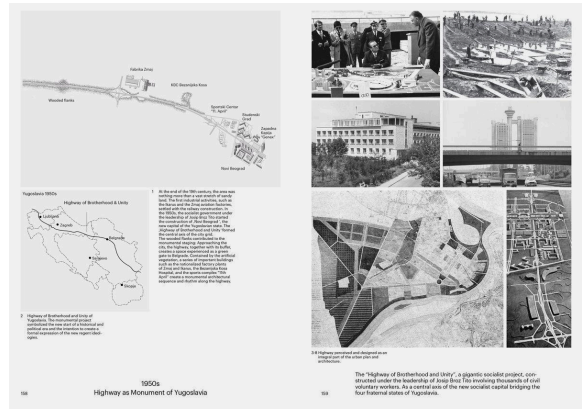
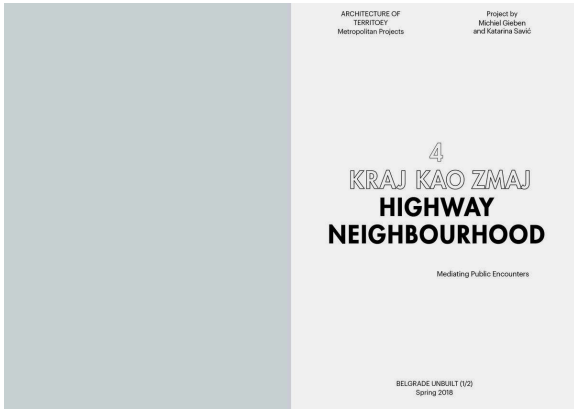
Michiel Gieben and Katarina Savic

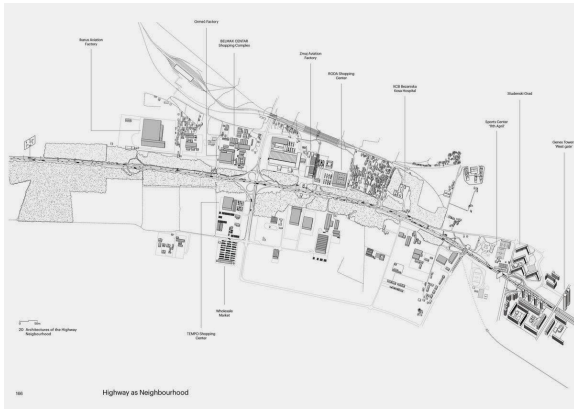


The “Highway of Brotherhood and Unity,” a gigantic socialist infrastructural project that stretched over 1,182 km across Yugoslavia, connecting its four constituent states, runs right through the centre of Belgrade. When the road was constructed under Josip Broz Tito in 1949, it was not merely a piece of infrastructure but a project charged with symbolic meaning and designed with aesthetic and monumental qualities. Bridging four fraternal nations, its course opened vistas of landmarks and cities, sometimes even lined with dedicated landscape elements. Where it passes the western outskirts of the metropolitan region of Belgrade, it is still flanked by a forested strip, forming a green gate to the city.



Conceived initially as a buffer zone along the highway, it is considered an economic area and houses several industrial activities in today's planning. The wholesale food market, an electricity plant and a large hospital are interwoven with the artificial vegetation. Although it is increasingly vital for the expanding housing neighbourhoods, the public land is hardly accessible, and its recreational value is only beginning to be recognised. The current development plan encompasses about 1000 ha with economic activities, public services and facilities, infrastructural connections and green areas for communal activities. The land intended for the construction of buildings is divided into distinct zones in relation to the position and typology of the building, the existing structure and special conditions of use.

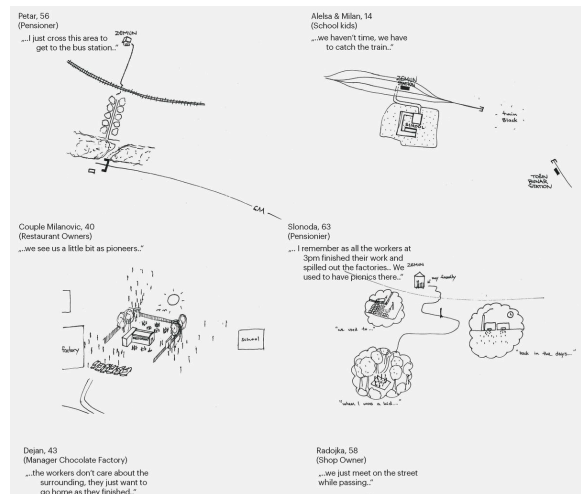




As one of the most critical infrastructural axes, the highway attracts industrial activity in its vicinity. The project Kraj Kao Zmaj—Highway Neighbourhood explores the mediating capability of a new kind of spatial encounters in-between spaces created by logistic and mobility infrastructures and economic interests. These encounters are transformed and reactivated to serve a growing Kraj Kao Zmaj highway neighbourhood's public and ecological dimensions.

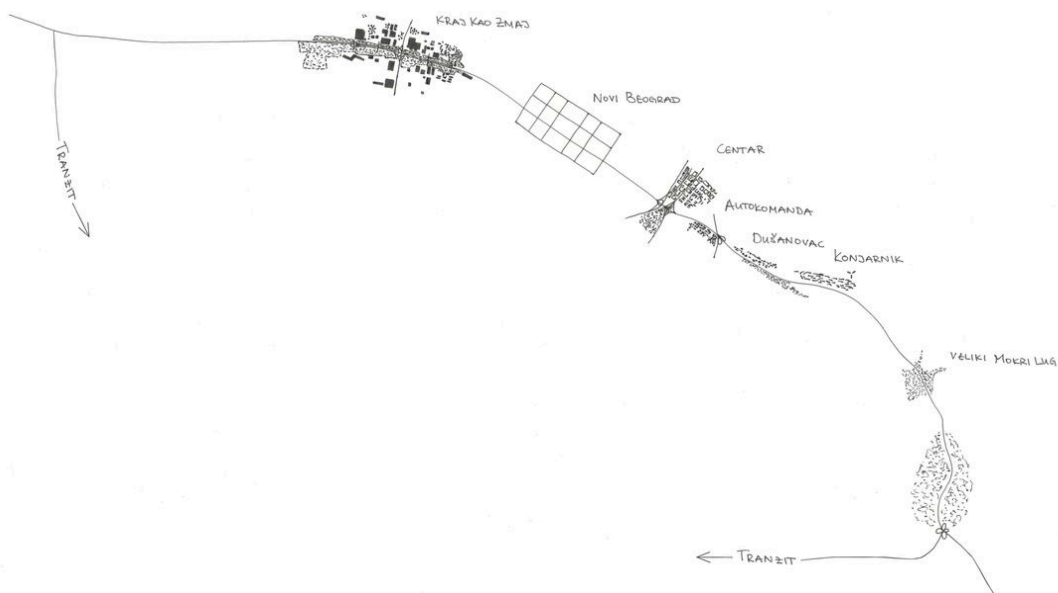


Local encounters and voices.





Kraj Kao Zmaj—Highway Neighbourhood.



Kraj Kao Zmaj—Highway Neighbourhood along Belgrade's central boulevard axes.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank everyone who helped us during the research and field studies in Belgrade. Special thanks to Kosta Dimitrijević and Teodora Spasić, students at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Architecture. We would also like to extend our thanks to the assistants of the faculty Pavle Stamenović, Maria Milinković, Natasa Janković and Ana Nikezić. Further, we thank Andreja Tutundžić and Dragana Ćorović from the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Forestry and Zaklina Gligorić of the Urban Planning Institute Belgrade.

## SOURCES

- "Highway as a Monument of Yugoslavia." Accessed May 2018. <https://www.4zida.rs/blog/novi-beograd-prenovog-beograda>
- "Highway Imaginaries." Accessed May 2018. <http://www.yukeops.rs/poslovni-objekti-2>
- "Istorijat." \*KBC Bežanijska kosa.\* Accessed May 2022. <http://bkosa.rs/o-nama/istorijat/?sr=lat>
- \*Kastela.\* Accessed May 2022. <http://www.kastela.com/2017/11/26/poljud-setrebaozvati-stadion-tito>

This work by Michiel Gieben and Katarina Savic was created as part of the design studio Beograd Unbuilt (1/2) at ETH Zurich in Spring 2018. The PDF is intended for educational purposes only. Its commercial distribution is strictly forbidden.

© 2025, Architecture of Territory

Architecture of Territory  
Professor Milica Topalović

TEACHING TEAM

Thais De Roquemaurel  
Hans Hortig  
Karoline Kostka  
Metaxia Markaki  
Ferdinand Rabe von Pappenheim  
Milica Topalović  
Adrienne Wilson

Prof. Milica Topalović  
ETH Zurich  
ONA G41  
Neunbrunnenstrasse 50  
8093 Zurich  
Switzerland  
+41 (0)44 633 86 88  
[www.topalovic.arch.ethz.ch](http://www.topalovic.arch.ethz.ch)