

## Keynote Lecture

Thursday, 7 November 2019, 4 pm, ZMO

### **Translatability and Open Architecture as Antidotes of Nationalism: A Response to the Travel Ban**

Keynote Lecture by **Esra Akcan** (Cornell University) as part of the Workshop "Spaces of Unnationalism", organised by Farhan Karim (ZMO).

This talk will offer the concepts of translatability and open architecture as antidotes of nationalism by drawing from the author's previous works and carrying their frameworks to a discussion of contemporary anti-immigration policies that are recent reflections of xenophobic nationalism. The presentation will be an activist performance against the recent "travel/Muslim ban," which prohibits the entry of citizens from Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen into USA at the most literal level, but also has longstanding histories and repercussions around the globe. By emphasizing translation movements in these countries, the presentation will contest these countries' inaccessibility with the acknowledgement that this gesture is bound to remain incomplete because of the same geopolitical order that confine scholars as well. It will challenge the clash of civilizations theory without turning a blind eye to either Western colonialism or local monarchic repression in the name of nationalism. As a response to the double marginalization of these countries whose modernist buildings are

excluded from both area studies based art history and history of modern architecture, and in order to expose the hypocrisies of the dominant geopolitical order, the presentation will exemplify mid-twentieth century buildings designed after national independence and before the historical junction of 1980, and those connected to Germany's transnational practice.

**Esra Akcan** is the Frieda Miller Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University and an Associate Professor in the Department of Architecture at Cornell University. She completed her architecture degree at the Middle East Technical University in Turkey, and her Ph.D. and postdoctoral degrees at Columbia University in New York. Akcan received awards and fellowships from the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, Mellon Foundation, DAAD and many more. Her latest publication is entitled *Open Architecture: Migration, Citizenship and Urban Renewal of Berlin-Kreuzberg by IBA 1984/87* (2018).