

**PERFORMING IDENTITY AFTER YUGOSLAVIA:
CONTEMPORARY ART
BEYOND AND THROUGH THE ETHNO-NATIONAL**

by

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Performing Identity After Yugoslavia: Contemporary Art Beyond and Through the Ethno-national

Thesis directed by Professor Kira Van Lil

Abstract

This project suggests readings of contemporary performative artworks from the South Slavic region that look beyond the ethno-national identity of the artist to examine intersectional identities in play, expressions of war memory and trauma, and repudiations of the often essentializing gaze of the international art market on artists currently working in the post-Yugoslav space. While issues of ethno-nationalism are certainly a part of identity construction in post-Yugoslav society, and a result of the identity politics of the globalized art world that these artists entered into after the end of socialism in Eastern Europe, it is reductive to relegate the works thusly without addressing the intersectional nature of both self- and social-identities. Whether rejecting or reifying signifiers of identity from the Yugoslav period, recalling family histories and traditions, celebrating or lamenting reinvigorated religious practices, or examining hybrid cultures and life in the diaspora– the performative practices of artists from the South Slavic region are indicators of the identity work being taken on by the artists themselves, as well as their publics. This project proposes a methodology that could be employed to study the contemporary art production of regions that do not have a unifying culture, but that have been understood to have a monolithic cultural identity by the essentializing gaze of the art world in the former West.

To the memory of victims of political violence.

A reflection:

“The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the ‘state of emergency’ in which we live is not the exception but the rule... The current amazement that the things we are experiencing are ‘still’ possible in the twentieth century is not philosophical. This amazement is not the beginning of knowledge—unless it is the knowledge that the view of history which gives rise to it is untenable.”

— Walter Benjamin, from *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, 1940.

“History that repeats itself turns to farce. Farce that repeats itself turns to history.”

— Jean Baudrillard, in *Libération*, July 1995.

“Beyond the fiction of reality, there is the reality of the fiction.”

— Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism*, 2012.

“Being in a violent country, you cannot act as though violence is not happening. And that's why I think art has to somehow create a balance. It is a space when you are working in art that is non-commercial, that is outside of all this brutal loss, then you can create art that might create some meaning. And that meaning might help us to ask difficult questions, and maybe try to find answers to those questions. Art does not give answers, only poses questions.”

— Doris Salcedo

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*This project is dedicated to B, C, and SZ, for your endless support in this process.
Send the haters all my love.*

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INTRODUCTION

Looking Again: Learning to See South Slavic Contemporary Artists Seeing Themselves

Frame

In many ways, the recent production of art in the South Slavic region is tied to the conflicts that took place between 1991 and 2003 as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia transitioned from a political and cultural space to a space of memory, its geography subsumed by the republics that used to lie within its boundaries. For artists that live or have lived in Yugoslavia, the challenge of identity is paramount as they navigate artistic practice in newly constituted countries that bear the mark of ethno-national divisions and retain the scars of a brutal and recent war, yet simultaneously have been made “new” by the introduction of neo-liberal capitalist governmental and economic structures and reestablished connections with the West. The question of identity construction has also been one of the most frequently raised in the discourse of contemporary East European art history, and moreover, in all discourses that theorize the cultural production of post-socialist Eastern Europe.

The case of artists from the South Slavic region has proven particularly difficult to conceptualize in the larger trajectory of post-socialist contemporary art as a result of the unique way in which the transition away from socialism was made in Yugoslavia. As a multi-ethnic state with five dominant nationalities and eight ethnic minorities, Yugoslavia’s disintegration into the successor states formed after the Dayton Agreement in 1995 was more complex and violent than in Central Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia), in the Baltic region (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), or

in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.¹ While the effects of the transition away from socialism created similar conditions across the former Eastern Bloc, such as large-scale unemployment, a crisis of values and identity, a resurgence of nationalist groups and nostalgia for the former political and economic structures, and a resentment for Western capitalism, the level to which this was experienced in Yugoslavia is different in that these conditions only arose after a period of brutal disintegration.² This period took place between 1991 and 2003; the war was not a continuous presence at all times in all parts of the South Slavic region, but rather an array of conflicts which are collectively referred to as the Yugoslavian Wars of Secession. This overarching category includes events such as the Siege of Sarajevo, the War in Bosnia, genocide at Srebrenica, the ethnic cleansing of Kosovo, the NATO bombardment of Serbia, and ultimately the involvement of international forces for peacekeeping and justice.

¹ A note on terminology: Here I have defined four of the five major areas that made up the Eastern Bloc before 1989 (excluding the German Democratic Republic), as well as the names of the countries that make up these geographic groupings. This general area will be referred to as “the Eastern Bloc” or “Eastern Europe,” or when being discussed in the context of post-Wall geopolitics- “the former East.” In the case of Yugoslavia and its successor states- Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia, I will use the term “South Slavic region” to denote the geographic and cultural area that constituted the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. I will use the terms Yugoslavia when referring to the nation as it existed before 1991, and Yugoslav(s) for a person/people who lived in Yugoslavia. I avoid the term “former Yugoslavia,” in favor of South Slavic region, as I believe the use of ‘former’ to be outmoded. The terms South Slavic region and “post-Yugoslav space” are used to denote the general geographic area that used to make up Yugoslavia, after 1991. The “Balkan region” has a distinctly different meaning, which relates to both cultural and geographic qualities; this term is charged with a distinct kind of Balkan Orientalism (See Todorova’s *Imagining the Balkans*), and is racially charged, unlike the geographical referent “South Slavic region.” Scholars who use the term “Balkan” or “Balkanized” occasionally mean this use to evoke the stereotypes of “Balkanism,” and to ‘other’ the people of this European cultural region. Moreover, this term frequently is used to denote the entire Balkan peninsula-not just the countries that used to make up Yugoslavia- and for these reasons it will not be part of my geographical terminology for this study.

² Jelena Tošić, “Re-imagining Balkan Diversity Beyond and ‘Straight-Through’ the Ethno-National,” in *Routledge International Handbook of Diversity Studies*, edited by Steven Vertovec (New York: Routledge, 2015), 151.

Scholars have theorized that the transition from a multi-ethnic nation with a loosely fixed national identity of its own, to a landscape of autonomous ethno-nationalist nation states by way of ethnic warfare and intense nationalist agendas also sets Yugoslavia apart from conditions of transition elsewhere in Eastern Europe. As a consequence of these conditions, in the post-socialist, post-war period the works of artists from the former republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are frequently characterized by their relation to issues of ethno-nationalism, especially when analyzed by Western scholars.³ While these issues are certainly a part of identity construction in post-Yugoslav society, and a result of the identity politics of the globalized art world that these artists entered into after the end of socialism in Eastern Europe, it is reductive to relegate the works thusly without addressing the intersectional nature of both self- and social-identities. Grappling with memories of the violent disintegration of a multi-ethnic state, and the consequent dissolution of a Yugoslavian national identity which had attempted to horizontalize ethnic, religious, class, and gender differences through communism, I argue that the artists working in the post-Yugoslav space use their works to engage viewers in dialogues about pre-war identity and experience as well as to create new narratives about belonging. Whether rejecting or reifying signifiers of identity from the Yugoslav period, recalling family histories and traditions, celebrating or lamenting reinvigorated religious practices, or examining hybrid cultures and life in the diaspora– the performative practices of artists from the South Slavic region are indicators of the identity work being taken on by the artists themselves, as well as their publics.

³ A further clarification on temporal terminology: In this project, the term “postwar” refers to the period beginning in December 1995 after the Dayton Agreement was finalized, despite the fact that conflict continued in parts of the South Slavic region until 2003.

In this study, my aim is twofold– first, to revisit analyses of works by artists from the South Slavic region which locate ethnic tensions as the primary motivation behind artistic choices in works that deal with war memory and trauma, as well as self- and social-identities in the post-Yugoslav space and in a theoretically unified Europe. Second: to include analyses of works from younger artists and artists whose works have not yet been included in art historical scholarship. I support my readings of these works with artist statements, curatorial essays from exhibitions in which they have participated, and primary source materials gathered by art historians and curators who have relationships with the artists.⁴ My critique of previous readings of many of these works is that by associating artistic identity-work with ethno-national agendas, scholars and curators have privileged the biography of the artist, and particularly their ethnic origins among the many other factors that create a self-identity. I hope to demonstrate the impossibility of classifying artistic practice strictly along these lines when identity can be embodied in many richer ways, ways that I argue in many cases have yet to be uncovered for these works.

Method

In his essay “The End Of Yugoslavia: On Social Utopias and Artistic Realities,” art historian Zoran Erić contests that the artistic practice from South Slavic artists after Yugoslavia is socio-specific: these works constantly reflect, analyze, question, and

⁴ Jonathan Blackwood and Amy Bryzgel, of Robert Gordon University and the University of Aberdeen, respectively, have contributed a great wealth of accessible primary source materials from their interactions with contemporary artists in the South Slavic region. Bryzgel’s research on her blog and academic database *Performing the East* (performingtheeast.com) has been invaluable to the construction of this thesis project.

deconstruct the issues of self- and social-identities in the post-Yugoslav space.⁵ There is no singular event or grand narrative that can explain the experience of the Yugoslav people before, during, or after the wars, but rather a multiplicity of memories that are as complex as the highly stratified nation itself. For this reason, I refrain from presenting historical context as a monolithic introduction to any of the works, sections, or chapters. This is a strategic choice, as it is my intention to avoid the pitfall of deconstruction; re-constructing another narrative of history that privileges the position of any one artist or of any of the multitude of communities whose experience is tied up in the creations and readings of these works. I will present suggestions where applicable for locating one's reading of the piece historically, and with respect to critical literature, as a series of discursive footnotes. My bibliography also contains an extensive pool of sources on historical matter from a variety of disciplines outside of art history and visual culture, especially works by cultural anthropologists, social and political scientists.

As for the conception of the interrelation between identity performance and performative art practice, my understanding of this is contingent on the interrelation of several theoretical frameworks within the fields of performance theory, feminist and queer theory, trauma theory, and political science. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's conception of rhizomatic structure has influenced my methodology in this project significantly, especially insofar as I suggest that a splintering of memory and experience around an event can create a multiplicity of meaning.⁶ Judith Butler's and Amelia Jones' works on

⁵ Zoran Erić, "The End Of Yugoslavia: On Social Utopias and Artistic Realities," in *Passage Europe: Realities, References: A Certain Look at Central and Eastern European Art*, Hegyi, Lóránd, ed, PG#S., (Milan: 5 Continents : Musée D'art Moderne de Saint-Etienne Métropole, 2004), page 89.

⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); Francois Zourabichvili, Gregg Lambert, and Kieran Aarons,

performance and gender identity have framed my understanding of how and why artists perform identity in this context, especially with respect to subaltern groups in the post-Yugoslav Space.⁷ Through my readings of Butler, I maintain an emphasis on *becoming* in my discussions about identity, resisting the imposition of fixed identity markers on any of the artists or works I take on.⁸ I reference political theorists Ernesto Laclau and Benedict Anderson's works to frame my discussions of nationalism, Laclau's "Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity," has been indispensable for the insight and theoretical frame it provides to understanding politicized identity performance of ethnic minorities.⁹ Because my study not only addresses the reproduction of memory, but more specifically the recalling of traumatic memory, I have relied on scholar and curator Jill Bennett's text *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*.¹⁰ These sources will be discussed in further detail in individual chapters.

Furthermore, this study is intended to serve as a case study, the artworks that I examine and the methodology that I adhere to exemplifying a multidimensional analysis of

Deleuze: A Philosophy of the Event: Together With the Vocabulary of Deleuze (Plateaus: New Directions in Deleuze Studies. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012). Deleuze and Guattari conceive of a "rhizome" as a method that allows for multiplicity and non-hierarchical arrangement of information and ideas. This structural concept opposes methods that rely on binaries and hierarchies, which Deleuze and Guattari refer to as arborescent structures in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In this study I strive to reject and complicate binaries such as East vs. West, innocent vs. guilty, victim vs. aggressor, and to privilege the multiplicity of memories rather than historicizations of events that suggest a single narrative.

⁷ Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Thinking Gender. New York: Routledge, 1990); Amelia Jones, *Seeing Differently: A History and Theory identification and the Visual Arts* (Abingdon, Oxon England New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁸ Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 519.

⁹ Ernesto Laclau, "Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity," *October*, Vol. 61, The Identity in Question (Summer, 1992), The MIT Press: 83–90.

¹⁰ Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art* (Cultural Memory in the Present. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2005).

the art production from the South Slavic region in the post-socialist, post-war period. While this study adopts a broad and inclusive approach, it does not presume to represent a comprehensive narrative history of post-Socialist, post-Yugoslav South Slavic art.¹¹ However, I hope that the analyses herein can represent an important contribution to the already existing research in the field by bringing together works and ideas that have not previously been published in such a context. I conceive of my work in these chapters not unlike that of a curator– selecting and situating works into contexts that can provide a reader-viewer with access to new perspectives, providing a lens that allows for dynamic rather than fixed understanding of the possibilities of meaning.

Chapter Outline

As a collection, the chapters in this study address some of the main issues being taken on by artists from the South Slavic region, being sensitive to multiple perspectives and complicating the tendency to privilege narratives of ethno-national agendas in the analysis of individual works. I will begin in the first chapter, “Disruptions, Slippages, Fragments: The Yugoslavian Wars of Secession and the Production of Inscribed Memories, Inscribed Spaces, Inscribed Bodies,” by examining the effect of war memory on the identity-work taking place through the performative works of artists that are currently

¹¹ A note on the selection of artists and artworks: All of the artists included in this study are living, and all of the works were made after 1993, most in the mid-2000s. While I have tried to present artists from each of the major ethnic and ethno-national groups present in the South Slavic region, the concentration of each is understandably not totally equal, considering the scope of this project. Most of the artists whose works I examine were born in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia, the three largest ethnic groups as well as the countries where most of the warfare took place. In addition to artist from these three countries, I have included artists from elsewhere in the successor states who are still residing in the South Slavic region, as well as many who are working in the diaspora in Western Europe and abroad.

working in the post-Yugoslav space. My goal is to demonstrate that many of these works represent the slippages in utterances of self-identity that takes place as part of the processing of traumatic memory. The focus of this chapter is primarily internal, as I examine artists seeing themselves and their publics within the South Slavic space, artists working through their own memory and experience.

In the second chapter, “‘Art Has To Be National, An Artist Has To Be National’: Leaving the Second World and Entering the ‘Other’ Side,” I address works that are related to production of social-identities, on behalf of the community or the collective, especially as it relates the entrance of artists from the South Slavic region into the globalized art market in the post-war period. While many of these works do deal with war memory, which is expressly the territory of Chapter I, they do so in a way that reflects a performance for the ‘other’- in this case, for the West. My analyses in this chapter are critical of the tendency of the Western art world to ask, or to require, that artists from the South Slavic region make work the cultural particularities of the Yugoslavian dis-integration (violence, loss, ethnic tension, nationalism) in order to be considered a relevant representative for their homeland in international exhibitions and in the active historicizing of contemporary art and artists.

Chapter I

Disruptions, Slippages, Fragments: The Yugoslavian Wars of Secession and the Production of Inscribed Memories, Inscribed Spaces, Inscribed Bodies

Frame

The pervasiveness of war memory in the post-Yugoslav space is addressed by Bosnian artists Adela Jušić (1982, Sarajevo, PR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) and Lana Čmajčanin (1983, Sarajevo, PR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) in their collaborative video performance *I Will Never Talk About the War Again* (Figure 1). In the video, the two artists promise each other not to talk about the war anymore, repeating the same sentence over and over, increasingly becoming more and more agitated with their speech. The work exaggerates the reality that more than fifteen years after the Dayton Peace Agreement that ended the war, many people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the South Slavic region generally still reflect daily on the war as part of a performance of a group social-identity of collective victimhood.¹² In the words of curator Marina Gržinić, this video performance is an “obsessive performative statement that exposes the circularity conditioning the social, economic and political texture of Bosnia and Herzegovina today.”¹³ On her website Jušić quotes an article by Matthew Webber written about this piece as an artist statement:

“The point is that in reality Bosnian artists have no choice. Not only does everyday conversation in Bosnia continually return to the war, but even attempts to escape this are doomed to failure. Such is the ubiquity of images of the war, in

¹² Robert M. Hayden, *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans: Studies of a European Disunion, 1991-2011* (Balkan Studies Library, volume 7. Leiden: Brill, 2013), 301-327.

¹³ Marina Gržinić, “Politicizing and Rewriting Counter Histories: For a New Politics of Empowerment and Interventions,” Text written for *Film Mutations: The Festival of Invisible Cinema*, 2014. Accessed March 28, 2016. <https://adelajusic.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/here.pdf>

documentaries, magazines, and art, that they are caught in a double bind. Mention the war, and they are accused of playing the victim; make art about something else, and this is a positive decision to ignore the carnage. There is no escape – not talking about the war is, by omission, talking about the war.”¹⁴

This “double bind” that Webber describes is the same one that forces artists to exist between the expectations of the international art market that their work should address the themes which have become essentialist characteristics of the region with their work, namely ethno-national issues and war memories, and the expectations of their own ethno-national groups in the home space, to remember and forget in a series of highly conditioned performances, both public and private. For artists like Jušić and Čmajčanin, who were children when the war took place, these expectations can be particularly claustrophobic. How does one perform a cultural memory that one barely personally remembers? Though these artists are not technically members of the post-witness generation, their experience of the war and their relationship to it in their performative practice is conditioned largely in part by older family members and by the culture of war memorialization that is taking place both within and outside the post-Yugoslav space.

Method

In this chapter I broadly examine the effect of war memory on the identity-work taking place through the performative practices of artists who are currently working in the post-Yugoslav space. My goal is to demonstrate that many of these works represent the re-

¹⁴ Matthew Webber, “Don’t Mention the War,” *Zymbol*, Issue 5. Reprinted on Adela Jušić’s website. Accessed 28 March 2016. <https://adelajusic.wordpress.com/2015/06/27/dont-mention-the-war-article-by-matthew-webber/>.

alignment of self- and social-identity that takes place as part of the processing of traumatic experience and memory. I have divided my discussion of these works into five distinct groupings that represent major thematic categories of the artistic production of this region and period. With the exception of two crucial works created in the mid-nineties, during the war (one, a performance by Slaven Tolj from 1993- during his service as a soldier in Croatia's military, and an installation by Sanja Iveković first shown in 1994), the selections included in this chapter were created after 2002 and are thus situated firmly in the post-war period. As previously noted, it is not my intention to provide a comprehensive breakdown of every work that could be read as representative of these characterizations- but rather to provide a few key illustrations that can help create an opening for new readings and access to a larger pool of possibilities of meaning. I am specifically focused on presenting the works of younger artists and artists who have been less exposed to the international art market, in order to broaden the existing view of art production from this region and to create a space for their voices to speak, outside of the frame that has characterized the works of many of their predecessors and contemporaries.

In the first grouping I analyze works that deal with the temporality of memory and geography. The works in this first grouping are created by artists who currently live in the successor states, and are exploring a past that no longer has a spatial or historical reference point or demarcation. These works especially reference childhood or young-adulthood, the impressionable period during which many of these artists experienced shifting borders and the construction of memories tethered and untethered to the condition of life in a warzone. The second grouping of artworks deals similarly with war memory, but delves more deeply into the trauma of adult experience of conflict, especially as filtered through media such as

television broadcasts and photojournalism. These works frequently utilize a fragmented, splintered mode of depicting memory. The coupling of these two sections is intended to suggest that while reading the ethno-national affiliation or location of an artist during the war can provide insight into the position from which their memory is articulated, the significant factor of age and ability to understand and process memory is often overlooked as a primary contributor to the intersectional identities of artists in this context.

The third grouping interrogates the problematic nature of monolithic readings of ethno-national identity by examining works that explore diaspora identities, hybrid cultures, and the space between cultures after Yugoslavia. As a collection, the works in this section represent investigations into the experience of minority ethnic groups and other marginalized peoples in the South Slavic region during the war and the post-war period; including the Roma, refugees living domestically in the successor states as well as those who have relocated to Western Europe and abroad, and the LGBTQ community. Significantly, these works of social and institutional critique are created by artists who come from the populations being represented as well as from the dominant ethnic groups of the region, representing a highly diverse range of perspectives and prerogatives.

The final two groupings investigate performances of heteronormative gender identity. A particularity of the works from the South Slavic region that take on issues of gender and sexuality is that they often focus on gender representations that demonstrate strongly ingrained gender binaries. I hope to demonstrate through my analysis of these works that the Yugo-socialist self-management principle of “brotherhood and unity,” coupled with the wartime rhetoric of ethno-nationalism and responsibilities to family and country have produced a highly specific iconography of gender identity performance that

artists both reify and transgress in their post-socialist and post-war practice. Together, these brief analyses aim to present a more complete picture of both the possibilities for a rhizomatic understanding of identity and identity-work, and the effects that resemble disruptions, slippages, and fragmentations, exerted by the Wars of Secession on the memory and identity of contemporary artists of the South Slavic region.

On the Role of Identity in the Yugoslavian Wars of Secession

There is no beginning or end to the story of the Yugoslav peoples, but a network of memories and identities that have become bound together by history, and have still to untangle fully. It is useful to begin this chapter's brief discussion of issues at the core of the Wars of Secession by stating that the identity marker "Yugoslav" was a liminal state of being, a slippage in identification that meant abandoning ethnic, religious, linguistic, socio-economic, urban-rural, and traditional gender markers as part of the turn towards a collective Yugo-socialist identity. From its founding in 1945 as a non-aligned socialist state until the late 1980s, Yugoslavia was functioning as a multi-ethnic country comprised of six republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia; and two provinces: Kosovo and Vojvodina. Despite historical dissimilarities and disagreements, the three primary ethno-religious nationalities present in Yugoslavia: Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), were living in relative harmony. The three groups had similar languages and cultural practices, their main difference being ethnically affiliated religious practices. Serbs are traditionally Orthodox Christians, Croats are Roman Catholics, and

Bosniaks are Sunni Muslim; although as result the official doctrine of atheism imposed by socialism, the majority of the population defined themselves as secular prior to 1992.¹⁵

When the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was founded, census records still required citizens to identify themselves by their ethnicity, the national identity marker “Yugoslav” was only added to national census poles in 1961.¹⁶ This category of identity was primarily adopted by the following core groups: citizens who were deeply invested in Yugo-socialist ideologies, urban residents, the young, those from nationally-mixed parentage, and persons from minority nationalities within their republic.¹⁷ The Yugoslav Non-Aligned Movement’s values of “brotherhood and unity” were at the core of Yugoslav identity, and these values did successfully serve to vindicate long-held nationalist sentiments for a time, making the disintegration of the multi-ethnic state and the rise of nationalist ideologies that eventually supplanted communist rule that much more devastating.¹⁸ The myriad ethno-national identities of Yugoslavs were much older than the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia itself, and the government struggled throughout the roughly forty-eight year history of the nation to integrate these groups into a cohesive political and cultural unit. After the death of President for Life Josip Broz Tito in 1980, the wave of political changes sweeping the Eastern Bloc began to be felt in Yugoslavia, ultimately culminating in war over territory and sovereign status for successor states

¹⁵ Noel Malcom, *Bosnia: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 221.

¹⁶ Dusko Sekulić, Garth Massey and Randy Hodson, “Who Were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia,” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (February 1994), 84. This study provides valuable examples of data from census records and anthropological case studies that investigate self-identification as Yugoslav. The conclusion of the authors of this study is that only a relatively small people in the South Slavic region ever identified as Yugoslav during or after the disintegration of the nation. This article also offers concise conclusions as to why the Yugoslav identity construction was never formed concretely.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 83-97.

¹⁸ Hayden, *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans: Studies of a European Disunion, 1991-2011*, 90.

whose ethno-national groups felt that they constituted a nation and deserved a national home. The move from an ethnically mixed population to an ethnically homogenous one was achieved by creating a space in which it was unsafe for people of minority ethnicities to live through a variety of tactics to suppress diversity, from changing the language used on television and on road signs to militarizing civilian groups to kill or cast out their former neighbors.¹⁹

Contrary to what has been often suggested by the Western media, the underlying nationalist sentiments in Yugoslav culture were not “rediscovered” in the time preceding the Wars of Secession, but had lain semi-dormant during the initial period of economic and social progress that Yugoslavia experienced under the government of Josip Broz Tito. Throughout the short history of the nation, there were many recorded instances of ethno-national groups attempting to preserve their identities in legal and illegal, subversive and activist, violent and non-violent ways, despite the horizontalizing effect of Yugo-socialist policy.²⁰ Historian Maria Todorova describes the formation of identities in the Yugoslav space (before, during and after the war) as being constructed in opposition to each other.²¹

Citizens who identified as Yugoslav did not abandon the ability or tendency to define

¹⁹ David Bruce MacDonald, “The Importance of Being European: Narratives of East and West in Serbian and Croatian Nationalism,” in *Multiplicity of Nationalism in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Ireneusz Paweł and Andrzej Marcin Suszycki (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2010), 239-256.

²⁰ Arnold Suffan, “Yugoslavism versus Serbian, Croatian, and Slovene Nationalism: Political, Ideological, and Cultural Cases of the Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia,” in *Yugoslavia and Its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s*, ed. Norman M. Naimark and Holly Case (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2003), 136.

²¹ Maria Todorova, *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory* (Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 2004), 9; Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Rev. ed., new ed. London; New York: Verso, 2006) 6-7. This association recalls Edward Said’s theorization of Orientalism. Todorova’s contributions to the discourse of Balkan identity is discussed at length in Chapter 2. Benedict Anderson’s crucial text *Imagined Communities* has also been formative in my understanding of how ethno-national groups in Yugoslavia conceived of their identity as a nation, and more generally, it has informed by definition of the terms “national” and “nationalism” in this study.

themselves and others by their ethnicity, their religious views, their socio-economic status, the city they lived in or the privileges their work afforded them in the socialist hierarchy. Furthermore, while there is a long history in the South Slavic region of inter-ethnic co-existence, there is no pan-Yugoslav common culture or static definable identity, but rather a plethora of distinct cultural identities, histories, memories and experiences based on the intersectional nature of the identities of individuals.²² The culture and cultural memory of the Yugoslavs is in a constant state of becoming and unbecoming, constituted by performances in a social-temporal space.²³

Just as the performance of a Yugoslav national identity during the Yugoslavian period did not negate the existence of an ethnic, religious, or socio-economic/rural-urban identity that underlied it, the unbecoming of Yugoslav identity in the post-Yugoslav space does not negate an individual's experience as a Yugoslav. Privileging the memories of individuals rather than historical narratives that suggest a singular interpretation of events and identities, this chapter investigates constructions and slippages of self- and social-identities in the post-Yugoslav space by asking: What roles do intersectional identities, war memory, and trauma play in the identity performances communicated through contemporary artworks?

Space and Time: Temporality of Memory and Geography

²² Sekulić, Massey, Hodson, "Who Were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia," 95.

²³ Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 520. In this study, I adapt Butler's theories about performances of gender, arguing that identity more broadly is constituted by a series of performances, self-identifications, and slippages in these inactions.

In this section, we will begin by looking deeper into the multiplicity of memory produced by experiences of living through the Yugoslavian Wars of Secession, specifically as they relate to memory and geography. Many of these works are related to childhood experiences, about family and the home space, and about memories that are not necessarily tied to memory of nation. Nela Hasanbegović's (1984, Sarajevo, PR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) video work *Story About A Fish* (Figure 2) is a good starting point for discussions about war memories that are untethered to the conflict itself. Amy Bryzgel, one of the foremost scholars in field of East European performance art studies, describes the memory behind this work as told to her by Hasanbegović in an interview:

“When I met with Nela Hasanbegović she told me a story. She was ten, and she was hungry. It was during the time of the war, Sarajevo was under siege—completely surrounded and blocked off from the rest of the world – and there were shortages throughout the city. Nela wanted fish for lunch, but there was little possibility of making that dream a reality. Instead, the future artist drew a fish, cut it out, and served it with real potatoes for lunch for her mother and grandmother. Years later, as a professional artist, she recreated this story, by having a ten-year-old child draw a fish and put it together with her dinner, while Nela recorded it on video. It is this subtle sensitivity that the artist had since childhood that seems to underscore much of Nela's mature work.”²⁴

According to Hasanbegović's retelling of the memory performed in the video, the performative action recorded for the piece is actually a re-enactment or re-presentation of a childhood memory. This slippage of time, a temporal shift that reproduces a memory, is a common theme in South Slavic contemporary artworks that deal with war memory. In this piece, the artist uses her own memory to re-present one of the aspects of having lived

²⁴ Amy Bryzgel, "Nela Hasanbegović," *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 21 April 2016, <http://performingtheeast.com/nela-hasanbegovic/>

through times of conflict that are most difficult to communicate to those who have not experienced it. This simple childhood memory represents both an intimate reality and a cultural reality, both of which in this condition deal with war but not warfare, and are linked to the experience of living through the Siege of Sarajevo as a small child.²⁵

Šejla Kamerić's (1976, Sarajevo, PR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) *Dream House* video and installation work, created in 2002, also uses a temporal shift to facilitate to viewers a look at the lived experience of refugeeism. The time-lapse video is projected onto a large screen which is partially transparent (Figure 2). The dreamlike, hazy projection depicts a small wooden cottage standing alone in a rural area. This image is overlaid with the audio of gentle breathing. As one watches the projection and listens to the meditative sound of measured breath, the house takes on a living quality. Though there are no residents of the home displayed, there are remnants of life; the telephone wires, satellite dish, and full laundry line all suggest that the house is inhabited. Accompanying the video is this text: "We are dreaming. They and I. Of different worlds, different circumstances. In our dreams, I am not a refugee shelter, they are not refugees. I am home, and they are people living in the home of their dreams."²⁶

With this text we come to understand that Kamerić's dream house is a not a vacation home in the country, one possible interpretation for those without experience in refugee camps, but rather a barrack building used as a refugee transit center in Rakovica,

²⁵ Branka Vujanović, "Aspects of Art-Working in a Bristling Reality," *Sarajevo Culture Bureau: Art, Culture & Cultural Policy from Bosnia-Herzegovina*, blog, Accessed March 28, 2016, <https://sarajliacult.wordpress.com/2014/08/03/aspects-of-art-working-in-a-bristling-reality/>.

²⁶ Daniel Birnbaum and Nikola Dietrich, *Portikus 2004-2007: Book of a Sleeping Village* (Köln: Walther König, 2008), 115.

near Sarajevo.²⁷ The image of the dream house at once slips from being conceived of as part of a dream or memory re-presented by the artist to a collectivized space of loss and uncertainty; conversely, a necessary space where dreams can be a lifeline to a world beyond war. *Dream House* makes intimate the reality of life as a refugee in the liminal space of wartime, and it does so without commenting on ethnic warfare or the particular conditions of the war in Yugoslavia.

Ibro Hasanović's (1981, Ljubovija, PR Serbia, SFR Yugoslavia) 2013 video work *Pieter Brueghel in the Letters of my Father* also transgresses war memory that is tied to the experience of conflict, investigating intimate moments between family and in the rural communities during the period of the war. Hasanović's piece is a video made from segments of a "VHS letter" that his father sent him during the war, in late November 1993.²⁸ In the video there is no evidence that warfare was part of the reality of daily life in the small town being recorded by Hasanović's father, as the scenes recall a winter's day like any other (Figure 4). Children are playing in the snow, teenagers skiing and milling about in front of a building socializing, adults and children race down a steep hill on a tandem sled. The unsteady and unprofessional quality of this film heightens the perception that it was intended to be reserved for the family archives, an informal document of a winter day that could later serve as a memory aid to remember life in that particular moment.

²⁷ Charles Merewether, "Unfinished Business: 'Dream House' and 'Bosnian Girl,'" Reproduced on the website of artist Šejla Kamerić. Accessed 21 March 2016.

<http://sejlaameric.com/writings/unfinished-business-dream-house-and-bosnian-girl/>

²⁸ Bojana Piškur, "30 Nov '93 - Pieter Brueghel in the letters of my father," Essay for Ibro Hasanović's piece of the same title, October 2013. Accessed 15 June 2016, http://www.ibrohasanovic.com/texts/Bojana-Piskur_30Nov93.html. I was unable to ascertain in my research where Ibro Hasanović was at the time that his father sent him the video, but he now lives and works between Kosovo and France, so it is possible that he was living as a refugee in 1993, as he was twelve years old.

Thinking about the original audience of this home video: Ibro Hasanović and other family members who were not in Ljubovija, the context is immediately connected to their experience of war even though the warfare is not depicted in the video. Attempting to argue that this piece is not colored by the artist's experience of war aestheticizes and depoliticizes the reality of the original use and meaning of the video footage. Though this video is an account of the cheerful sights and sounds of a small town gathering together to enjoy the fresh snow, it also archives the reality that during wartime the minutiae of life does not come to a halt– teenagers still gossip, children still play and parents still find ways to retain memories of their children's upbringing for them to reflect upon as adults. This act of play is thus a record of individual and social memory as a historical imperative. The artist reinforces this concept by looking for the historical or the universal in the memory of his own childhood, facilitated by his father's home video letter. Hasanović alludes in the title of the piece to Netherlandish Renaissance painter Pieter Breugel's wintertime scenes, canonical works of Western art that record another historical moment of children playing in the snow under totally different circumstances than in Hasanović's video. This slippage urges viewers to recognize that geographical space, time, socio-economic status, or the fate of one's nation have little to do with the commonalities between intangibles like play and war across human experience.²⁹

In addition to works that thematically depict slippages and manipulations of temporal boundaries of memory, geographical liminality is often explored as a way to externalize memory, situate self-identity, and reproduce collectivity. People of the South Slavic region have historically had a complex relationship with borders, which have been in

²⁹ Piškur, "30 Nov '93 - Pieter Brueghel in the letters of my father," Essay for Ibro Hasanović's piece of the same title, October 2013.

flux since before the First World War, the impetus for the creation of the first unified South Slavic state in 1918.³⁰ The artists featured in this study have experienced numerous becomings and un-becomings of borders in their geographic space from the fall of Eastern Bloc in 1989 to today. Borders in the South Slavic space have shifted even more dramatically and rapidly during the war and in the post-war period, between the early 1990s and early 2000s, resulting in conflicts over shared space, questions about integration into the European Union, and many issues with citizenship and mobility.

Borjana Mrdja's (Borjana Mrdja (1982, Banja Luka, PR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) 2010 performance titled *Border*, uses a scar on the artist's hand to investigate the mutability of borders (Figure 5). Mrdja's scar was created in 1985 when she was burned with a hot clothes iron, coincidentally around the same time that Yugoslavia was experiencing its initial steps towards disunion. The artist found a formal resemblance between her scar and the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2010, which she marks out in the performance with a ballpoint pen. Mrdja calls this the "burden of the border," which Bryzgel's interpretation per her conversations with the artist is a way to conceive "the invisible border that each of us bears in the form of our own personal, individual identity, which is mapped onto our social, cultural, national and ethnic identities, in addition to the meanings of those identities that are imposed upon us from outside."³¹ As the artist's scar healed between 1985 and 2010 there were many gradual changes in its shape and quality, but these changes are imperceptible without a record of the marker of the border to

³⁰ Malcom, *Bosnia: A Short History*, 156-173. This initial unified state was not SFR Yugoslavia, but a precursor state known as The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes that came into existence during the interwar period and lasted through the first half of World War II.

³¹ Bryzgel, "Borjana Mrdja," *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 30 February 2016, <http://performingtheeast.com/borjana-mrdja/>.

document the state of the scar in a particular temporal space and space of memory, a map. The act of recording is what makes the imaginary real, as is the case with political acts that make invisible borders divisory in geopolitical landscapes and make them definitive to self- and social-identities.

Lana Čmajčanin's *Blank Maps Series*, five distinct installation works created in 2014, similarly examine the demarcation of geographical borders and how this cartographic space is translated to political space. With the installation *551.35 — Geography of Time*, Čmajčanin takes on the concept of palimpsest, displaying thirty-five maps which have defined the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina across more than five hundred years of history as a layered projection on a large lightscreen in a dark gallery space (Figure 6).³² The maps represent the re-drawings of borders since the Kingdom of Bosnia was annexed to the Ottoman Empire in 1463, and include maps of borders drawn under the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and the SFR Yugoslavia, as well as the current borders as determined by the Dayton Agreement.³³ The maps are printed on a transparent medium such that their overlapping on the lightscreen creates a web of borderlines, taking on a vascular quality; the center of the image, territories that have been disputed the most, darkening like a clot. Displayed this way the borders do not appear distinct and monumental, but weak, shifting, and unstable. The viewer of this installation is given the role of performing the piece, questioning the validity of borders which were once

³² Jelena Petrović, "551.35 — Geography of Time." Reproduced on Lana Čmajčanin's website, written 2014. Accessed 29 March 2016. <http://www.lanacmajcanin.com/projects/item/132-551-35-geometry-of-time>

³³ Alenka Trebušak, "Lana Čmajčanin: Blank Maps," Curatorial Statement for exhibition of the Blank Maps series at Art gallery of Tobačna 001, Ljubljana, Slovenia (November 2014). Reprinted on the artist's website. Accessed 8 May 2016. <http://www.lanacmajcanin.com/news/item/106-blank-maps>.

truths and situating their own truths among the slippages present in the palimpsest. In this piece temporal groundings are disrupted along with the dominance of ideologies and political powers over geographical areas and spaces in time.

Significantly, Lana Čmajčanin is one of the youngest artists featured in this study. Her body of work, along with the work of Hasanović, Hasanbegović, and Mrdja who are also featured in this section, interrogates war memory and post-war identity in ways that are critical of the lasting effect of conflict in the present moment. However, these artists deal in slippages and fragments of memory rather than in performances that recall war memories tied to the conflict itself, mainly because that was not their experience of the war. Additionally, this generation of artists working in the South Slavic region have had to overcome an unprecedented lack of institutional support for their work in their country, and inherited a domestic art market that is basically non-existent.³⁴ Jonathan Blackwood has worked extensively with Čmajčanin and many of her fellow young artists in the region, and lays out the terrain that these artists are building their careers on in his 2013 article, “Variable Geometry: Contemporary Art in Bosnia & Hercegovina.”³⁵ In this text Blackwood describes the many structural obstacles that artists in Čmajčanin’s generation face in making work in domestically and participating in meaningful exchanges with the international art world, an issue that I address more thoroughly in the second chapter of this project. In summation of this section, I would like to note that this younger generation of South Slavic artists, those who are part of the post-witness generation or were children

³⁴ Jonathan Blackwood, “Variable Geometry: Contemporary Art in Bosnia & Hercegovina,” Reproduced on Lana Čmajčanin’s website, written 2013. Accessed 9 March 2016. <http://www.lanacmajcanin.com/library/item/99-variable-geometry-contemporary-art-in-bosnia-hercegovina-by-jonathan-blackwood-2013>

³⁵ Ibid.

or young adults during the Wars of Secession, possess important messages to communicate that are often overshadowed by readings of their work that lump them together with older artists who are working from a different pool of experience in the post-Yugoslav space. Meaningful channels of dialogue between scholars and curators both in the South Slavic region and abroad will be necessary in years to come to insure that these artists are encouraged to continue making their work, and efforts to examine such works as performances of identity distinct from their artistic predecessors will be paramount to this undertaking.

Trauma and Violence: Fragmented Memory

The second grouping of artworks in this chapter will also investigate war memory, but here we will examine works that deal with trauma as experienced and presented by artists who were adults at the time of the Yugoslavian Wars of Secession. Many of the artists whose work is examined here have lived experiences conversely as soldiers or refugees, and have seen the conflict firsthand, or as filtered through the media such as television broadcasts and photojournalism. Owing to trauma experienced during the period of conflict, many works utilize a fragmented, splintered mode of depicting such memories and experiences. The majority of artists featured in the following sections in this chapter were likely the most affected by the tendency of those in the globalized art world as well as in their own communities to read these works as expressions of ethno-national identity rather than as part of a rhizomatic network of performances of self- and social-identities stemming from common but highly stratified experiences of trauma.

Scholar and curator Jill Bennett explores the relation of traumatic memory and contemporary art in her book *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, acknowledging the long history in both visual and performance art of engagements with affect and of immediate experience of memory.³⁶ Bennett suggests that works that deal with trauma are not representational of the event itself because they collapse the past by the recalling of events and the present by invoking current feelings related to these memories, such as in the temporal shifts we have previously discussed and the fragmented memories relayed in works we will analyze in this section. Her understanding of the function of the performance of memory is contingent on the idea of the memory as an image as defined by Gilles Deleuze: accessible to more than one subject and “constituted through an engagement with differential positions, colliding in the present.”³⁷ The memory image thus has a rhizomatic quality; rather than simply expressing an artist’s inner trauma in such a way as to make it available to a viewer to spectate on, it finds a way to create active and generative connections.³⁸

Bennett also contends in this text that the production of art that deals with sense memory of trauma is a culturally situated practice which is inevitably tied to social and cultural histories, and always requires framing against a backdrop of cultural knowledge.”³⁹ While I understand this to be a useful way to look at South Slavic contemporary art sensitively, in my study I will stress the need for readings of these performances that go beyond and through social and cultural histories, not gathering

³⁶ Jill Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art. Cultural Memory in the Present*. Stanford (Calif: Stanford University Press, 2005), 24.

³⁷ Ibid., 44-45.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid. 26.

around the ethno-national associations that are often the pitfalls of readings that look at these performative works of war memory and trauma as if they were representational of those experiences. Keeping in mind that these works are not representational, even when they may utilize tactics of a re-presentation of memory, is important to the goal of separating the artists' self-identity (especially insofar as this is often conflated with a monolithic ethno-national identity) from our main reading of the work. When aware of these strategies for reading artworks that can be read as performances of trauma, it is my understanding as it is Bennett's that the process of making and viewing artworks that deal with war memory, both visual and performative, can engender new languages of trauma that go beyond an illustrative function to create affective responses that are thought provoking, emotive, and produce a form of empathy that goes beyond the subject.⁴⁰

The 2011 experimental film *Do You Intend to Lie to Me?* by Mladen Miljanović (1981, Zenica, PR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) reproduces the experience of being interrogated for war crimes, a fictionalization of a real experience for many people in the South Slavic region during and after the war. The film was made without the knowledge of the main subject and Miljanović's collaborator in the work: Veso Sovilj, an artist and a professor at the Art Academy in Banja Luka who the artist studied under and considers a mentor.⁴¹ Miljanović recruited real members of the Republika Srpska Special Police to participate in the film as well, which documents Sovilj's arrest and detention, and a subsequent questioning that was filmed by police without his knowledge (Figure 7). The film is at once cinematic and lo-fi/experimental, portions of the film are high quality aerial

⁴⁰ Ibid., 24.

⁴¹ Mladen Miljanović, Statement for "Do You Intend to Lie to Me?." Accessed 9 June 2016, <http://www.mladenmiljanovic.com/DO-YOU-INTEND-TO-LIE-TO-ME>.

shots while others have the effect of watching a recorded interrogation on a closed circuit evidence recording. During the course of Sovilj's time as a detainee the police ask him twenty-six questions which force him to reveal details of his life on camera, as the video cuts to images of the lie detector results from his statements.⁴²

Do You Intend to Lie to Me? is a work about a reality of wartime that is not a re-staging of the artist's personal memory, but a fantastic imagining of a high-profile interrogation that was assisted by law enforcement officials who routinely did perform arrests and interrogations of this type. The staging of Sovilj's arrest as an experimental film was assisted by the Ministry of Culture who communicated the artist's requests to Minister of the Interior, who allowed Miljanović to use elite forces and a police helicopter in the film. The ethical issues surrounding Sovilj's seizure as well as the allocation of government resources towards such a project were aspects of the piece that troubled the artist, but that he felt lent a dramatic element to film that forced viewers to question the reality of what they see.⁴³

Radenko Milak's (1980, Travnik, PR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) 2010-2012 series of twenty-four grisaille watercolor paintings, titled *What else did you see? – I couldn't see everything!* also implores the viewer to reassess traumatic memory experienced or filtered through the media. The works in this series are the only paintings that I have chosen include in this study, but in my analysis I would like to focus on their

⁴² Bryzgel, "Mladen Miljanović," *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 9 June 2016, <http://performingtheeast.com/jasmina-cibic/>. An example of the types of questions that are asked in the film is concisely relayed on Amy Bryzgel's archive: "One of [the questions] relates to his invitation by German artist Klaus Rinke to come to Dusseldorf. This occurred at the same time that he was called up for service by the Serb Army, so the artist remained in Bosnia. This fact determined the remainder of the course of his life, so in the interrogation, he is asked whether he regretted not accepting Rinke's invitation, to which he replied that he did not know."

⁴³ Ibid.

performative rather than material quality. Milak spent two years producing these twenty-four near-identical studies of a singular photograph by Ron Haviv, an image the photographer captured in Bijeljina in 1992 of a soldier in a Serb paramilitary unit kicking a woman in the head as she lies defenseless on the concrete (Figures 8 and 9). In an interview with Max Dax of Art Collection Telekom, the artist divulges that he became “completely fascinated by these photos in a dark, schizophrenic way.”⁴⁴ Creating these translations of Haviv’s image that vary in slight measures from the original, fragmenting the traumatic memory further with each visual retelling of the event, was a way to process the trauma and perform the affected sense memory.

This image was significant for Milak’s translations because of its highly public nature. In the context of the Yugoslavian Wars of Secession it has been likened to Robert Capa’s *Falling Soldier*, and was brought along with other images from Haviv’s portfolio from this war as evidence to the International War Crimes Tribunal in the case of the indictment and conviction of Serbian leaders.⁴⁵ It is an image that has become crucial to the formation of collective victimhood, and has come to stand symbolically for the atrocities committed by soldiers against civilians during the conflicts in the South Slavic region.

⁴⁴ Max Dax, Interview: Radenko Milak, Interview series for Art Collection Telekom exhibition *Fragile Sense of Hope*. Published October 22, 2014, Accessed 3 July 2016, <http://www.electronicbeats.net/art-collection-telekom-presents-radenko-milak-on-the-allure-of-disaster/>.

⁴⁵ Branislav Dimitrijević, Curatorial statement for exhibition of Radenko Milak’s “And what else did you see? – I couldn’t see everything!” at Gallery-Legacy of Milica Zorić & Rodoljub Čolaković, Belgrade, February 2012. Accessed 1 July 2016, <http://www.eng.msub.org.rs/a-sta-ste-jos-vidjeli-nisam-mogao-vidjeti-sve>. Jean-Luc Godard’s 1993 film *Je vous salue Sarajevo* also explores this image, using dramatic movement around cropped details of the photograph accompanied by a low voice-over of Godard reading a text that confronts the exploration of warfare, brutality, and political reality in art.

Especially so for the depravity of ethno-national paramilitary groups such as Arkan's Tigers, the unit which the soldier in this image represents. Susan Sontag references the role Haviv's photo played in creating an awareness about the Yugoslavian Wars of Secession in the Western media in her book *Regarding the Pain of Others*. Sontag is critical of what "documentary" images like Haviv's and Capa's communicate, stating: "In fact, the photograph tells us very little – except that war is hell, and that graceful young men with guns are capable of kicking overweight older women lying helpless, or already killed, in the head."⁴⁶ Milak, too, is critical of what the image is communicating; the title of the piece is a quote attributed to Haviv, who when asked by a journalist to describe the photo ("What else did you see?"), he replied: "I couldn't see everything!" The photographer's inability to see everything, even as a witness to the event, speaks to the impossibility of images communicating or representing objective truth because of their fragmentary nature.

The final two works in this section, like Milak's performative paintings, question the role that media plays in social and collective memory construction around traumatic memories. In *War Frames* (1999), a multi-modal series of video stills, installation and web projects, Zoran Naskovski (1960, Izbiste, Vojvodina Province, SFR Yugoslavia) curates a collection of images and videos from state television broadcasts from channels catering to a Serbian majority during the Wars of Secession. Naskovski frequently chooses odd and even morbid pairings of famous American movies and children's television shows with breaking news headlines or air strike alerts, which appear as minor interruptions to the otherwise quotidian programming (Figure 10).⁴⁷ With a click of the mouse, in the gallery or as presented on Naskovski's *War Frames* website, one can surf between videos like changing

⁴⁶ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin, 2003), 81.

⁴⁷ *War Frames* can be accessed digitally at <http://www.warframes.com/>.

channels on a television. The result of changing channels, however fragmented the collection of images are, is the same. The programs are all interrupted by the reminder of conflict, a reality for citizens who were trapped in their homes and glued to their televisions for news about the bombardment of Serbia by NATO forces in 1999– the year that *War Frames* was created.⁴⁸

Artist collective DOPLgenger's 2012-2015 experimental video series, *Fragments* is formally similar to Naskovski's *War Frames*, using media broadcasts metaphorically and physically to address the pervasiveness of conflict in the memory of the years when the Wars of Secession were taking place as a series of conflicts spread across the South Slavic region.⁴⁹ The *Fragments* series has several different iterations that take the forms of installations, projections, and printed documents and digital images, the common thread being that all utilize archival footage from the years of conflict (Figure 11).⁵⁰ Rather than drawing on the juxtaposition of war memory and cultural memory that is untethered to conflict as Naskovski does with *War Frames*, *Fragments* overwhelms the viewer with imagery across multiple platforms for viewing in the space in which it is presented. The content tends to be information heavy, and the overload of meaning communicated renders the framing of the content impossible, reducing it to white noise. The experience of viewing works that are difficult to visually digest as a result of being barraged with too much information can replicate the processing of traumatic memory. In Dr. Henry Krystal's study "Trauma and Aging: A Thirty Year Follow Up," the Holocaust trauma expert and survivor

⁴⁸ Suzana Milevska, "The Readymade and the Question of the Fabrication of Objects and Subjects, in *Primary Documents: A Sourcebook for Eastern and Central European Art since the 1950s*, ed. Laura J. Hoptman and Tomáš Pospiszyl, 190-191 (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002).

⁴⁹ DOPLgenger is an artist duo comprised of two film/video artists from Belgrade, Serbia: Isidora Ilić and Boško Prostran.

⁵⁰ I have included images in the figures section from the piece *Fragments #4*.

concludes that adult catastrophic trauma often manifests as an affect that mimics the presence of seemingly unavoidable danger.⁵¹ This is the feeling produced by both *War Frames* and *Fragments*, a sense of inevitable destruction as brought on by the oversaturation of war memory. The content as well as the medium of these works speaks to the inscription of war memory on the self- and social-identities of those who lived this experience.

Diaspora Identities, Hybrid cultures, and the Space Between Cultures

Our discussions of war memory and trauma thus far have looked beyond and through readings that focus primarily on the ethno-national identity of the, without compromising the overarching goal of this study: to seek new readings that do not fall back on these associations, this section attempts to provide much needed visibility to artists and works that deal with the experience of minority ethnic groups and other marginalized peoples in the South Slavic region during the war and the post-war period; including the Roma, refugees and peoples living in the diaspora, and the LGBTQ community. The dominant and established understanding of how ethno-nationality functions in performative works, as part of an intersectional conception of identity, often leaves out the experiences of many of these groups. These works included in this section therefore take on elements of social critique, and are created by artists who come from the populations

⁵¹ Henry Krystal, "Trauma and Aging: A Thirty-Year Follow Up," In *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, edited by Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 76-99.

being represented as well as from the dominant ethnic groups of the region, representing a highly diverse range of perspectives and prerogatives.

Selma Selman (1991, Bihac, Bosnia and Herzegovina) is an artist who uses her performative practice to explore the intersectional nature of her self-identity and to disturb the way that her identity markers are perceived in her home space. Selman's body of work is primarily concerned with performances of identity work that explore her lived experience as a member of the Roma nation, a Bosnian, and a woman in the post-Yugoslav space, addressing pervasive stereotypes and essentializing beliefs about Roma life and history that are commonly held by her Bosnian neighbors.⁵² Selman's 2013 video performance *Do Not Look Into Gypsy Eyes* is named for a cultural euphemism about the danger of making eye contact with Roma women, which was historically believed to result in being cursed (Figure 12). As a member of this underrepresented population, Selman attempts to provoke her audience through confrontation about this racist and hurtful stereotype. In the video performance, Selman makes prolonged and direct eye contact while stating her ethnic identity: "I am a Roma Woman." In addition to her contestation of this gendered stereotype in South Slavic cultures, she is also performing both her Bosnian and Roma ethno-national identities through her use of language in the video. She uses the common language of Bosnians of all ethnicities with which to communicate, rather than the common language of the Roma peoples in the area she comes from, though both Serbo-Croatian and Romani have many regional varieties and dialects that connote identity. Selman takes on her highly stratified self- and social-identities as a subject in her work,

⁵² Selma Selman, born in 1991, is the youngest artist featured in this study. To date there are no English-language academic publications that take on Selman's work. As of August 2015, she is currently working on her MFA at Syracuse University in New York. Her website provides some information about her biography and works: <http://www.selmaselman.com/>.

attempting to communicate with a public who would otherwise characterize her strictly along the lines of her class and social status as a member of the Roma nation.

Tanja Ostojić's (1972, Belgrade, PR Serbia, SFR Yugoslavia) 2004-2011 video performance series *Naked Life* also deals with issues of discrimination against the Roma population in Europe. Ostojić is not ethnically Roma, but much of her work deals with issues of social and political exclusion of peoples in Eastern Europe and in the diaspora, and she has been using her platform as an artist that has attained widespread international success to direct attention towards the cause of equal treatment for the Roma people.⁵³ Since the political restructuring that took place after the end of the Eastern Bloc, many national and local governments in the EU and the SFRY successor states alike have put policies in place to expel Roma peoples from the country, to remove Roma children from their parents and place them in residential schools, or to force Roma peoples to change their customs and culture, ways of living and earning money.⁵⁴ As a consequence of the discrimination that the Roma peoples living in the former East have faced, and their marginalization as a stateless nation, they have been one of the most drastically affected by

⁵³ Laurel McLaughlin, "Marriage and Other Migrations," Interview with Tanja Ostojić for Slought.org Advocacy Blog, published 18 November 2015. Accessed 12 May 2016, https://slought.org/blog_posts/marriage_and_other_migrations; Amy Bryzgel, "Tanja Ostojić: Marriage, Migration, Markets, Misunderstandings." *Gww*, March 23, 2015. Accessed 12 May 2016, <https://visualcultureaberdeen.wordpress.com/2015/03/23/tanja-ostojic-marriage-migration-markets-misunderstandings/>; Tanja Ostoji and Walter Mignolo, "Crossing Borders / Development of Diverse Artistic Strategies," *Social Text Journal online*, Accessed April 22, 2016. http://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_article/crossing-borders-development-of-diverse-artistic-strategies/.

⁵⁴ István Pogány, "Pariah Peoples: Roma and the Multiple Failures of Law in Central and Eastern Europe," *Social Legal Studies Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (September 2012), 375-393; Melanie H. Ram, "Europeanized Hypocrisy: Roma Inclusion and Exclusion in Central and Eastern Europe," *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (July 2014), 15-44.

political changes which have in large part excluded or persecuted them rather than attending to their needs.⁵⁵

Ostojić's *Naked Life* performances all follow the same format: the artist reads aloud to the audience the stories of individual cases of injustices against Roma individuals, families, and Roma refugees as a group, with each document detailing a hate crime, a deportation, a false accusation of criminal activity, an unlawful eviction or a racially-motivated murder, she removes one layer of her clothing (Figure 13).⁵⁶ The process of becoming naked during this performance refers to the reality that the Roma people are constantly stripped of their human rights and rights as a nation. While this piece relies on the physical vulnerability of the artist undressing on camera and often in front of a live audience, Ostojić does not display emotional vulnerability in these works, relying on the extensive research on this topic to inform her expressions. She speaks on these human rights offenses with objectivity and clarity, allowing the viewers to draw their own memory and experience into their understanding of the facts that she presents. Though Ostojić is performing an important action as an ally of the Roma people, it is not clear in the research, curatorial statements, and interviews that analyze the *Naked Life* series the extent to which she has engaged with Roma individuals and communities. This creative decision to remain separate from the group about which she is speaking is a component of the piece could be investigated in further studies, especially considering young Roma artists like Selma Selman who are concurrently making performative works that deal with similar issues.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ McLaughlin, "Marriage and Other Migrations," Interview with Tanja Ostojić for Slought.org Advocacy Blog, published 18 November 2015.

⁵⁷ In my research I was unable to locate any evidence that in the making of the *Naked Life* series Ostojić has had any contact with communities or individuals of Roma ancestry.

Sanja Iveković's (1949, Zagreb, PR Croatia, SFR Yugoslavia) 1994 installation *Resnik* is likely the earliest piece created that takes on the condition of refugeeism during the South Slavic conflicts from an outside perspective. Iveković's work in the mid- to late-1990s were primarily performances about the harsh conditions of war in the South Slavic region. As a central figure in the Croatian art community, it seems that she felt compelled to make artistic commentary on war, extreme nationalism, and refugee camps, although these subjects are not present in the majority of her body of work, which is largely dedicated to exploring the commodification of femininity.⁵⁸ With *Resnik*, Iveković takes a highly conceptual approach to addressing the condition of war refugees at the Resnik camp near Zagreb, presenting a contemplative space to consider this experience.⁵⁹ The installation takes place in a dark screening gallery, the video projection the only source of light. The room is filled with a variety of potted tropical plants of different heights and textures (Figure 14). In many cases this work has been presented for a length of time that allowed the plants to begin to wilt and die over the course of the exhibition, such as in Iveković's 2011 MoMA retrospective: *Sweet Violence*.⁶⁰ The video projection alternates every ten seconds between footage of a desolate winter landscape, filmed from the window of a moving vehicle, and the appearance of words which form a fragmented network of associations. Words like "obscene," "deceptive," "water," "other," and "future," evoke the dissociative mental processes of adult catastrophic trauma, atrocities and losses become

⁵⁸ Kimball, Whitney. "Sanja Iveković at MoMA: That Backward Feminist From Croatia." *Art F City*, published 8 February 2012. Accessed 29 January 2016, <http://artfcity.com/2012/02/08/sanja-ivekovic-at-moma-that-backward-feminist-from-croatia/>.

⁵⁹ The Resnik refugee camp housed about two thousand refugees, the majority of whom were Muslims who were displaced from their homes by Croatian and Serbian nationalist forces.

⁶⁰ Roxana Marcoci and Sanja Iveković, *Sanja Iveković: Sweet Violence* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2011), 143.

insurmountable to process and are abstracted to block out pain. The wall text authored by Iveković explains that the piece is meant to simulate the traumatic experience of a refugee, but I believe the real strength of this work is its ability to create networks of memories and associations that locate the processing of the refugee connotation as the responsibility of the viewer. Rather than being representational of memory, *Resnik* insists that the memory work is performed by the viewer, further splintering the memory into responses that move beyond an illustrative or narrative mode.⁶¹

Another artist who utilizes digital media's capability for exacting the impression of fragmented memory, Zlatko Ćosić's (1972, Banja Luka, PR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) 2010 video work *Only The Chimney Stays* addresses the artist's personal experience as a refugee living in the diaspora. Ćosić left Belgrade for the United States in 1997, and is based in St. Louis, Missouri, the singular location with the most refugees from the Yugoslavian Wars of Secession in the world. In *Only the Chimney stays*, Ćosić uses photos and video that depict both of his homes: Banja Luka and St. Louis (Figure 15). Images of green hills and rain falling on a lake are interspersed with black and white photographs of ancestors, documents from the United Nations that permit travel as a refugee are juxtaposed with photographs of destroyed rural homes. The six-minute long video is overlaid with a poetic text in the form of short, staccato statements, some memories and others feelings and impressions of memory.⁶² Ćosić considers this work a recollection of his personal experience as a refugee, stating that his liminal status of "belonging neither here nor there," is reflected in the disrupted and fragmented quality of

⁶¹ Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, 24.

⁶² Camille Phillips, "St. Louis Artist Zlatko Ćosić On His Exhibition 'Still Adjusting,'" St. Louis Bosnians, online news, published January 23, 2014. Accessed March 29, 2016, <http://www.stlbosnians.com/st-louis-artist-zlatko-cosic-on-his-exhibition-still-adjusting/>.

the video and audio.⁶³ For audiences in the United States who interact with his work, this piece offers a glimpse of Ćosić's identity-work as a Yugoslav refugee in the United States, a process of becoming that the artist understands as a negotiation between self- and social-identities in both countries, as a network of slippages expressed through images that have significance as markers of his identity-work.

The final work in this section is singular in that it represents both issues related to a marginalized population in the South Slavic space, as well as an underrepresented theme in the art production of artists from this region. *East Side Story*, a 2006-2008 video installation by Igor Grubić (1969, Zagreb, PR Croatia, SFR Yugoslavia) deals with the oppression of the LGBTQ community in the Successor States. In recent years there have been many disturbing incidents of violence towards individuals who identify as queer in Central and Eastern Europe, where same-sex marriage is illegal and some aspects of gender and sexual expression are still criminalized offenses. This two-channel video installation documents the beatings of participants in two separate gay pride events, one in Belgrade in 2001 and one in Zagreb in 2002, by members of a neo-Nazi group that were staging a counter-demonstration. The video performance presents footage of the demonstrations on one channel, while on the other several dancers performed choreographed movements as an interpretation of the violence (Figure 16).⁶⁴ During the initial period of watching the video, I found it totally impossible to reflect on the dance portion at all, when on the other side of the screen crowds are screaming nationalist anthems, grabbing random passer-bys

⁶³ Zlatko Ćosić, Artist statement for *Only the Chimney Stays*, artist's online portfolio, published 2010. Accessed 21 June 2016. <http://www.eyeproduction.com/projects/otcs/index.htm>.

⁶⁴ Lyla McDonald, "Igor Grubić, *East Side Story*," Tate Modern Collection, Summary and Suggested Reading, published January 2010. Accessed 12 May 2016, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/grubic-east-side-story-t13651/text-summary>.

and throwing them to the ground, when tear gas is being released into a group of young men who have jumped and beaten one man unconscious, and police who stand aside seem totally unable to prevent the violence from continuing.

Both works use the body to locate the trauma and violence, the brutal protest footage presented on the left side of the screen as well as the graceful movements of the dancers on the right. The effect of trying to pay attention to both portions of the video creates a total dissonance. Violence against fellow members of one's nation that differ only in their expression of gender or sexuality seems illogical after the years of almost constant violence that people in this region endured during the wars. Yet still, there are groups in the South Slavic region whose lives are not valued as a result of one factor of their highly stratified identities. Grubić brings visibility to human rights abuses against the LGBTQ community, an act of social critique that draws viewers attention away from the type of violence that is stereotypically associated with the history of region, and alerts them instead to contemporary problems which have moved beyond and through the ethno-national.

Performing Masculinity: Re-enactments

The final two thematic groupings that I investigate in this chapter deal with performances of identity which explore heteronormative gender roles, especially as they are connected to gendered nationalisms and stereotypes. Contemporary art from this region, from the Yugo-socialist period to the present day, has been particularly bound up with explorations of gender and most of these works rely on the media of performance and

video.⁶⁵ Representations of gender identities in these works often fixate on the highly essentialized and deeply ingrained male/female binaries that situate men as protectors, soldiers, heads of family and state, and women as stewards of the home, children, and of traditional cultural practice, as sexual objects over which men have ownership. My analysis of the following works takes into account the wartime rhetoric of ethno-nationalism and responsibilities to family and country which have contributed to the production of this culturally specific iconography of gender identity performance that artists both reify and transgress in their post-socialist and post-war practice. To reiterate the mission of this study, my analyses of these works will move beyond essentializing views that place ethno-national identity at the forefront of identity performances.

The three works that I have chosen to frame my discussion of the performance of heteronormative male identities are all portrayals of men as soldiers, a locus of masculinity that exists at the intersection of gender and nation. Historian V. Spike Peterson's writing on gendered nationalism contends that patriarchal social relations have historically been utilized as a way to construct enduring forms of social organization, group identity and cohesion.⁶⁶ The hierarchies of gender and nation are thus linked to each other in a process of dual reinforcement, in a nation that values the supremacy of "insiders" over "outsiders," the hierarchy of masculine over feminine is also valued as a tactic to maintain this

⁶⁵ The following sources are crucial works that have informed my understanding of the art historical trajectory of works created by artists from the former East that deal with representations of gender. Susan Gal and Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Gender after Socialism: A Comparative-Historical Essay* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).; Bojana Pejić, Erste Stiftung, eds. *Gender Check, a Reader: Art and Theory in Eastern Europe* (Köln: W. König, 2010).; Sabrina P. Ramet, ed. *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).

⁶⁶ V. Spike Peterson, "Gendered Nationalism," *Peace Review* 6, no. 1 (1994): 77.

difference.⁶⁷ These linked hierarchies rely on women's biological ability to give birth to offspring and therefore insure a continuance of the nation's population, while men take on the opposing binary function of protecting women and children from outsiders. It is not surprising, considering that warfare is the utmost expression of the "insiders" vs. "outsiders" prerogative of patriarchally defined nationalism, that the works we will discuss in this section deal with performances of war memory and post-war identity exemplified by the role of the soldier, which is the defacto expression of male heteronormative identity in this case.

Slaven Tolj (1964, Dubrovnik, PR Croatia, SFR Yugoslavia) a Croatian artist who was serving in the Croatian military at the time of his 1993 performance *Valencia-Dubrovnik-Valencia*, and marked his self- and social-identity in the art space as a soldier by performing this commemorative action. Tolj was a working artist before joining the military, and in 1993, he came to Valencia, Spain straight from the war in Croatia to participate in the Youth Biennale.⁶⁸ Using his work as an opportunity to engage his audience in mourning fallen friends and colleagues and to process the trauma had begun to experience, he revised the Dalmatian mourning practice of sewing a black button onto one's clothing by sewing black buttons to twelve layers of clothing before removing them, finally sewing a button directly onto his chest (Figure 17).⁶⁹ The infliction of pain marked Tolj as changed by his experience in the war, and sets him apart from the audience who watches his act of mourning, the button placed on the chest like a medal of his identity as a Croatian soldier. The residue of this performance is a scar on Tolj's body, which also functions as a kind of memorial to his

⁶⁷ Ibid., 83.

⁶⁸ Bryzgel, "Slaven Tolj," *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 21 February 2016, <http://performingtheeast.com/slaven-tolj/>.

⁶⁹ Marcoci and Iveković, *Sanja Iveković: Sweet Violence*, 25.

act and speaks to the persistence of war trauma, inscribed on the individuals who are touched by conflict.

In *Shooting*, a 2002 performance by Boris Šincek (1971, Osijek, PR Croatia, SFR Yugoslavia), the artist also performs his identity as a soldier. Unlike Tolj, whose act was performed during the time when Croatia was at war, Šincek's work revisits his position as an officer in the military many years later by staging a situation in which he is shot again, in an artistic rather than military context (Figure 18). The work has been called a re-performance of American performance artist Chris Burden's piece *Shoot*, but due to a lack of published information on Šincek it is not clear to me whether or not the artist was aware of Burden's work at the time of his 2002 performance.⁷⁰ Burden's work *Shoot* was created in response to the Vietnam War, Šincek's calls to question the culturally constructed male body as an object of war, in relation to conflicts that were a part of the Wars of Secession experienced in Croatia. Šincek described the performance as being symbolic of the act of absolution of the guilt and defilement that Šincek "the man" feels with respect to Šincek "the warrior."⁷¹ This division between Šincek's identity as a civilian and his identity as a soldier is also gendered, his use of the term warrior denotes mythic connotations of

⁷⁰ Mark McGowan, Curatorial statement for *Scapegoat Society* exhibition at Sunbury house, London, January 2010. Accessed 12 July 2016, <http://www.youmanity.today/en/events-youmanity/scapegoat-society-at-sunbury-house.html>, and <http://www.nornprojects.org/>. The only source that references Šincek's connection with Burden's piece is the 2010 curatorial statement by Mark McGowan for the *Scapegoat Society* exhibition in London where Šincek's *Shooting* is listed as one of the works being displayed. It is unclear whether this was a second performance of Šincek's *Shooting*, the original performance having taken place in 2002, or rather there were images or videos of the original work displayed in this exhibition.; Additionally, more information about Burden's 1971 work can be found in the following article: Eric Kutner, "Shot in the Name of Art," *New York Times* newspaper, published 20 May, 2015. Accessed 12 July 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/20/opinion/shot-in-the-name-of-art.html?_r=0

⁷¹ Mario Kovač, Curatorial statement for *The Orange Dog and Other Tales (Even Better Than the Real Thing)* exhibition at multiple venues in Zagreb, 24-28 June 2009. Accessed 9 April 2016, <http://stari.kontejner.org/the-orange-dog-and-other-theses-even-better-than-the-real-thing-english>.

masculinity. The act of putting himself in the line of fire outside of the context of war, for Šincek, is identity-work in that it allows him to access a part of his identity that otherwise remains dormant as he has returned to civilian life.

Adela Jušić's highly personal video installation *The Sniper* (2007), uses a performative and narrative format to explore the memory of her father, a sniper in the Bosnian paramilitary who was killed in the early months of conflict in Sarajevo. Like Šincek and Tolj, Jušić is exploring the self-identity that one takes on when performing the soldier archetype, but in this work there is a slippage in the identity-work: the daughter performs the father's intimate memories of his role in the war. The video begins with the artist/narrator methodically reading entries in the form of dates and notes: "November the 2nd: 1 soldier, 1 truck driver. November the 4th: 3 soldiers."⁷² Jušić's narration is accompanied by a drawing of a red circle, which slowly spreads to cover an area onto which is projected a black and white photograph of her father, the image is slowly revealed as the narrative unfolds (Figure 19). The narrative and the imagery are resolved when the artist states: "December 3rd: My father the sniper, was shot by a sniper, into his right eye." It becomes clear that the red circle represents his fatal wound, the diary is a list of his targets, both are records of his life and death performing the role of 'The Sniper.'⁷³ While the artist herself was a child when the traumatic loss of her father and hardship of living through the Siege of Sarajevo were her reality, these experiences have undoubtedly inscribed her own self-identity with war memory that she accesses through the

⁷² Alessandra Ferrini, "Adela Jušić — The Sniper," Essay, Mnemoscape Moving Images archive, Published 19 June 2013. Accessed 19 March 2016, <https://mnemoscape.wordpress.com/2013/06/19/adela-jusic-the-sniper/>.

⁷³ Ibid.

performance of her father's social-identity as a soldier. War memory in any form is a complex subject to navigate for artists and their publics in the context of the South Slavic region, and as we are beginning to uncover- these memories are fragmented and rhizomatic, as is the processing of memory and trauma that is still taking place. While gender, faith, class, and ethno-nationality can be factors in the experience of warfare, many artist's experiences in combat as soldiers or as the families of soldiers are a marker on their self, social, and artistic performances of gender.

Performing Femininity: Purging

If the connecting thread between performances of male gender identity in the context of South Slavic contemporary art is the re-presenting or re-enacting of gendered nationalisms, women's work in this context represents another pole- that of purging these gendered nationalisms. The role of women in the nationalist rhetoric of wartime was to protect their ability to reproduce and to function as mothers to children and objects for the maintenance of the population of a nation, as well as protectors of cultural information and traditions. This primal conception of the function of women in society, based totally on their biological difference from men, stood in direct opposition to the Yugo-socialist ideologies that celebrated and encouraged women as equal contributors to industry, business, and politics.⁷⁴ The works of many female artists working in the post-Yugoslav space seeks to open a dialogue surrounding the mobilization of gendered nationalisms

⁷⁴ Jovanka Stojavljević, "Women, Culture and Yugoslavia Former" 3, no. 1 (2014): 36-41.; Ramet, *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States*, 11-89.

against women, and the possibility of forging new identities in the wake of the disintegration of the Yugoslavian multi-ethnic state.

Women at Work, Maja Bajević's (1967, Sarajevo, PR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) three-part performance and installation series co-created with female refugees from Srebrenica, critically questions conceptions of female agency that were propagated by nationalist rhetoric during and after the Yugoslavian wars of secession. In the first piece of *Women at Work*-, titled *Under Construction* (1999), Bajević and her collaborators worked in shifts from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon for five consecutive days, using the netting on the scaffolding surrounding the National Gallery of Bosnia, which was undergoing repair and renovation, as a surface to affix traditional needlepoint in the Bosniak style (Figure 20).⁷⁵The particular designs of the embroidery motifs being used are related to Bosniak kilim weavings, a vestige of the Ottoman influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The practice itself is considered a traditionally feminine skill, a type of knowledge that would be passed down from mother to daughter.⁷⁶ Because this traditional craft and its particular method of being taught has an association with rural communities, after the Wars of Secession, these weavings and embroideries had also become associated

⁷⁵ Kim Dhillon, "The Site of Production: Maja Bajević's New Work in Sarajevo," *N.paradoxa*, no. 16 (2005): 72-73.; The piece itself exists in several iterations which have been exhibited in different combinations since the initial, site-specific installation/performance: 1) The initial performance/installation itself. 2) The videos and photography that document the site-specific piece. 3) The individual weavings and their distribution, including the single retained piece of scaffolding/netting (Figure 3) and the three distinct embroideries that are stitched on it. For more information on the sale and distribution of these works, see Maja Bajević and Angela Vettese, *Maja Bajević* (Milano New York: Charta, 2008), 100-101 and note 3 on page 101.

⁷⁶ Bajević and Vettese, *Maja Bajević*, 100.

with women whose husbands had died during the war, as many began selling their handicrafts to support their families.⁷⁷

The use of this embroidery style in the piece calls viewers to question the role of women as bearers of local traditions and mediators of group identity, as the transmission of culturally appropriate beliefs, behaviors, traditions, and loyalties is conceived of as the responsibility of the mother.⁷⁸ Relocating this traditionally feminine cultural practice to a public space also draws to our attention the typically private nature of such activities, like many of the traditional gendered roles associated with women, which are located in the space of the home.⁷⁹ Bajević thus addresses traditionally male and female roles in the rebuilding of a nation by blurring boundaries between public and private space, repositioning the traditionally feminine role of imparting tradition into direct dialogue with traditionally masculine work of reconstructing urban space.⁸⁰ It is in this connection that we recognize a tension between performing memory and mourning, and actually reinforcing the gendered nationalisms at the crux of the logic that rationalized warfare for the various ethno-religious nationalist parties involved, a tension inscribed on the women and the women's work of Bajević's piece.

Can we understand Bajević's use of these women's work as a way to fight anonymity and essentialist views with another form of anonymity: a shift away from the biography obsessed art world and towards a discourse of collective victimhood? Without presuming

⁷⁷ Bojana Pejić, "Maja Bajević: The Matrix of Memory," *Textile: The Journal of Cloth and Culture* Vol. 5, Issue 1 (2007): 75; Bajević and Vettese, *Maja Bajević*, 100-101.

⁷⁸ Peterson, "Gendered Nationalism," 79; Gal and Kligman, *The Politics of Gender After Socialism: A Comparative-Historical Essay*, 27.

⁷⁹ Gal and Kligman, *The Politics of Gender After Socialism: A Comparative-Historical Essay*, 37-39.

⁸⁰ Bajević and Vettese, *Maja Bajević*, 100-101. This association is the one most often highlighted in the literature that discusses this piece, and is the main conceptual focus of Bajević's artist statement.

to know the intention behind Maja Bajević's use of female refugees from Srebrenica as collaborators, I argue that our reading of the piece is inherently colored by the dominant understanding of victimhood that has been put forth by both Bosnian national discourse and Western media representation.⁸¹ By blurring boundaries between public and private space, and strategically invoking essentialist understandings of gendered roles in national responsibility, the artist calls us to question what part we as viewers play in understanding the agency of women in wartime and in the culture that emerges post-war. This confrontation of gender roles in gendered nationalisms is brought into the gallery space in the form of an installation, which takes the form of both mediums of gendered practices: the scaffolding and the woven pieces from the performance component of the piece (Figure 21).

In Irena Lagator Pejović's (1976, Cetinje, PR Montenegro, SFR Yugoslavia) 2004 video performance *Registar*, the artist reassess the state of the culture in her native Montenegro, striking out portions of the traditional vows used for marriage ceremonies that she believes reinforces the subordination of women to their husbands. The portion of the vows that the artist took issue with was traditionally read aloud by the officiant, a practice in place since the Yugoslav era, comes from a poem by a Serb writer which describes a wedding as "the most important business deal of one's life."⁸² Refusing to see her commitment to her husband as a transaction, Lagator Pejović performed a one-minute action of going to the Registrar's office and asking for the sentence to be redacted from her

⁸¹ Elissa Helms, "'Bosnian Girl': Nationalism and Innocence Through Images of Women." In *Retracing Images: Visual Culture after Yugoslavia*, eds. Daniel Šuber and Slobodan Karamanić, 195–222 (Balkan Studies Library, v. 4. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012).

⁸² Bryzgel, "Irena Lagator Pejović," *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 6 July 2016, <http://performingtheeast.com/irena-lagator/>.

wedding ceremony, which was taking place the following day (Figure 22). Many of this artist's works deal with social constructs or realities of the post-Yugoslav space which are the result of unchallenged traditions or injustices that reinforce subjugation of various groups.⁸³ This intervention-action calls to question the pervasive expectations of conforming gender performances, and serves to disrupt the practice of uttering one's subjugation as part of a wedding ceremony.

Vlasta Žanić (1966, Zagreb, PR Croatia, SFR Yugoslavia) also performs a purging, destructive erasure of the gendered stereotypes she views as essentialist and confining. In *Maraschino Cherries*, a 2002 performance piece, the artist covers her naked body in the ingredients of a cherry cake, transferring a domestic performance to the surface of her body. (Figure 23). In this piece the artist questions stereotypical and essentializing female roles being wife and mother, roles that during the Wars of Secession were reinforced by gendered nationalisms and relegated many women who had previously held careers and responsibilities outside the home to the position of provider of emotional and physical support for children and the home against the war that raged outside. In these domestic spaces, attempts to shelter children from the violence resulted in the performance of a numbing pretense that the state of the country and of their private lives was "normal," as is expressed in works like Hasanbegović's *Story About A Fish*, constructed from the perspective of a child who lived the corresponding experience to Žanić's mother role. In *Maraschino Cherries* the artist slathers her body with a sloppy dough mixture contained in a plastic bucket, and delicately plants cherries atop her slimy limbs. Eventually she begins to mix the dough together, covering her face and hair, obscuring her body into a form made

⁸³ Bryzgel, "Irena Lagator Pejović," *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 6 July 2016, <http://performingtheeast.com/irena-lagator/>.

of raw cherry cake. With this performance Žanić forces viewers to confront the mother's inscription of her body with the needs of the family and community she protects, sacrificing her own needs and personality to achieve the heteronormative and symbolic role of the mother.⁸⁴ The artist manipulates a domestic activity that is intended to culminate in a sweet and enjoyable reward, purging the wholesomeness from the act and revealing it as an act that while generative for those she provides for, can be destructive of her self-identity.

Coda

In both the changing cultural space of the post-Yugoslav successor states, as well as in the diaspora, many artists have chosen to explore a range of commonalities and difference in experience of the war and pre-war Yugoslavia, thus circumnavigating ethno-national difference by accessing shared cultural memory or alternately by exploring marginalized identities. I hope to have elucidated through the juxtapositions I provided in this chapter that art does not have to be explicitly national to signify the national, and how simultaneously, the use of shared cultural signifiers have provided a way beyond and through issues of ethno-nationalism for many artists. By examining the effect of war memory in its many possible expressions on the identity-work taking place through these performative works, we have examined artists and their publics within the South Slavic space seeing themselves as inscribed by these experiences, working through their own memory and experiences to process trauma. Together, these brief analyses present a broad look at the contemporary artistic production of the region, and utilize explorations of

⁸⁴ Bryzgel, "Vlasta Žanić," *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 18 March 2016, <http://performingtheeast.com/vlasta-zanic/>.

performative expressions of identity and identity-work which seek to complicate monolithic and essentializing readings, which have been the norm in this discourse.

Chapter II

“Art Has To Be National, An Artist Has To Be National”: Leaving the Second World and Entering the ‘Other’ Side

Frame

Following her celebrated exhibition “The Artist is Present,” in 2010, Marina Abramović (1946, Belgrade, PR Serbia, SFR Yugoslavia) told journalist Sean O’Hagan in an interview with *The Observer*, “When people ask me where I am from, I never say Serbia. I always say I come from a country that no longer exists.”⁸⁵ Abramović’s sentiment expresses the slippage that artists like herself, born in or working in the countries that made up the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, have faced in communicating their self- and social-identities in the globalized art world. When caught between the expectations of the international art market that these artists entered into in the post-socialist period, and the expectations of their own ethno-national groups in the home space, to name identity in any way can be a highly political choice.

While Abramović is expressing in this quote that in theory she understands her cultural identity to be Yugoslav–tied to a nation state that no longer exists–her work has often shown that there is much more to her ethno-national identification. A prime example lies in Abramović’s Golden Lion awarded piece *Balkan Baroque* (Figure 24), first performed in 1997 at the Venice Biennale. The work, a visceral and sensorial homage to her broken homeland, has become one of Abramović’s most well-known pieces. In this work the artist performed the action of cleaning the rotting flesh from a pile of cow bones, a futile act of

⁸⁵ Sean O’Hagan, Interview: Marina Abramović, *The Observer*. Accessed March 29, 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/oct/03/interview-marina-abramovic-performance-artist>

cleansing. By the fourth day of the performance, bones she washed filled the small room that the work was installed in with a putrid smell. This Balkan grotesque as performed by Abramović reached the international art world with *Balkan Baroque* and has since become a common association for Western audiences when the subject of South Slavic art is broached. While the act of washing bones was a dramatic way to replicate the responsibility that Abramović felt towards communicating the trauma of violent conflict during the Yugoslavian Wars of Secession, which was taking place in some parts of the region when this performance was shown, it is also a gendered act. Women's work in wartime, especially in the context of the South Slavic region, is often associated with cleaning and healing, protecting the weak (children and the elderly) as well as cultural patrimony. As Abramović worked, she sang folk songs from her childhood. The sounds of these songs mixed with the music and spoken narrative of a three part video projection that depicts herself, her mother, and her father, which served as a backdrop for the pile of bones and the action of washing (Figure 25). The actions of Abramović and her parents in the videos are also loaded with signifiers of her Serbian ethnic heritage. She often speaks on her parents' family histories, in interviews and in her work; her mother from a powerful religious family aligned with the Serbian Orthodox church in Belgrade, and her father a Partisan war hero.

In this piece, there are many layers of signification that relate to Abramović's identity work in 1997; she is addressing several layers of her identity– born a member of the Yugoslav “red bourgeoisie,” mourning a nation that she no longer lived in and believes no longer exists, using ethnic signifiers of her Serbian heritage, playing the part of the Eastern European woman, through the gendered acts of washing, singing of folk songs, and

in the video dancing with a red scarf. Her gender, class, ethnicity, and particular locus of experience of the war all play into this highly personal example of art as identity work. These utterances of identity also serve to situate Abramović as an artist from Yugoslavia, a significant statement considering she had been displaying her artwork internationally and living abroad for nearly twenty years at the time of this performance. What pressures or needs did Abramović intend to meet with this work? And how do the international publics viewing this work interpret her identity performance as a result?

Method

This chapter aims to investigate constructions of collective identities for South Slavic artists presenting work in a globalized art world. Beginning with a discussion of the historical factors that lead to the Western interest in artists working in the post-Yugoslav space and the way that these artists were received, I hope to illuminate how cultural identity in this case has been constructed through a dialectic of difference with the West. Secondly, I will address a number of tactics artists have employed for addressing issues of nationalism and war memory which work against this predetermined version of South Slavic identity. On one hand, many artists have chosen to explore commonalities in experience of the war and the post-war condition, thus circumnavigating ethno-national difference by providing access to a shared pool of cultural memory. Other artists choose to use subverted or reinvented symbols of nationalism in order to confront stereotypes about ethno-national divisions directly.

I begin with a discussion of several such cases where artists manipulate symbols of nations in order to play upon established tropes about the dialectic of difference with the

West. The works in this section deal with proto-national symbolism, as well as objects from the socialist period; this section concludes with an examination of the material and symbolic use of flags in performance and installation works. Next, I examine how political performances have been appropriated by performance artists, from re-presentations and examinations of political changes to works that use tactics of activism. Finally, I address the continued practice of artists from the South Slavic region performing their ethno-national identity in the globalized art system. Here I address works that are critical of the Western art world's need to associate artists from the South Slavic region with their ethno-national identity and the stereotypes associated with the region as a result of the recent conflicts. As a collection, the pieces analyzed in this chapter challenge the established East-West binary and illuminate how collective and personal cultural identity is explored through works that address issues of nationalism, war memory, and re-union with the West through global politics and the art system.

Leaving the Second World

In November 1989, Eastern Europe was symbolically opened to the West with the fall of the Berlin Wall, and six months earlier, in May 1989, two contemporary artists from Yugoslavia were invited to participate in the landmark exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre*, often referred to as the first global exhibition of contemporary art.⁸⁶ *Magiciens de la Terre* brought together living artists from every continent, organizing their works by thematic similarities rather than by region or by medium. Beginning with this exhibition, artists and

⁸⁶ Andrea Buddensieg, "Itinerary of a Curator: Magiciens de la terre and After," in *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds*, edited by Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe, Germany Cambridge, MA London, England: ZKM/Center for Art and Media The MIT Press, 2013) 212.

curators in the West began to take on the project of integrating the work from artists working in Eastern Europe and other marginalized areas into the global art market in the United States and Western Europe. It is worth noting that both artists from Yugoslavia—Braco Dimitrijević (1948, Sarajevo, PR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) and Marina Abramović were at that time already living and working outside Yugoslavia, Dimitrijević in Paris and Abramović in Amsterdam.⁸⁷ While the selection of these two artists appears to reflect the curatorial goal of including artists “from the margins” of the Western art world, both Dimitrijević and Abramović were already working within that very system since the early- to mid-70s. A tokenizing approach to artist selection is just one of the many criticisms that *Magiciens de la Terre* garnered, but in the case of the Yugoslavian artists, I believe the choice of artists was less tokenizing than “safe,” in order to ameliorate post-Cold War fears about Eastern Europe. The choice reflects a desire for control over the type of work that would be exhibited from places well known to have a highly political tradition of artistic practices, due to the fact that Abramović and Dimitrijević were figures who could exemplify the artistic flavor of their home countries without necessarily confronting the public with conceptual material that would be disturbing or destabilizing to Western tastes. Indeed both artists presented works that were markedly tame compared to many of their other works before and after *Magiciens*.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Dimitrijević left Yugoslavia to earn his MFA at Saint Martin's School of Art in London in 1971. He later relocated to Paris and did not establish full time residence in Yugoslavia again. Abramović also left Yugoslavia for Western Europe in 1976, first traveling with her partner Ulay, a West German performance artist, and later relocating to Amsterdam.

⁸⁸ Abramović presented a sculptural work: *Boat emptying, Stream entering* (1989) which consisted of twelve pillow-like sculptures of rose quartz, mounted on a wall at varying levels meant to match with a viewer's head, heart and pubic bone. Viewers are instructed to lean against the sculptures. Allowing energy to be “transmitted in accordance with the beliefs of the Australian aborigines.” (*Magiciens de la Terre* online archive, Accessed 8 February 2016,

While most countries in Eastern Europe, including Yugoslavia, experienced many more years of internal conflict and drastic reworking of crucial political and economic infrastructures after the 1989 re-union of Europe, as a result of *Magiciens de la Terre*, the late 1990s and early 2000s saw many international curators devise exhibitions that could introduce artists from Eastern Europe, to their own local audiences. Many of these exhibitions sought to re-evaluate the boundaries established in the Cold War, and re-build connections with art systems in the former East.⁸⁹ A primary goal of many of these early exhibitions was to contextualize the art production of Eastern Europe within the Western art system, and to neutralize or mitigate the negative stereotypes. Rather than celebrating the immense amount of visually and conceptually diverse works that came from this period and geo-political area, the Western art system sought to “normalize” the East by forcing the artists and works from this period into a new kind of production, valuation, and critical system.

The first major exhibition of Eastern European contemporary art in the West, *Interpol* (1996) was a co-production between Russian curator Viktor Misiano and Swedish curator Jan Aman. *Interpol* ended in a scandal that mirrored the bias held by artists and publics in the Western centers of the art world about the artistic culture of the former East.

<http://magiciensdelaterre.fr/artistes.php?id=39#>). Dimitrijević presented two pieces: sculptures from the *Status Post Historicus* series, titled *About Two Artists, 1969-1989*, and large scale photographs from the *Casual Passerby* series which were hung on the facade of the Pompidou Centre. *About Two Artists, 1969-1989* featured four bronze busts: Leonardo da Vinci, Peter Someren, Albrecht Dürer, and Babe Enawad, presented with a corresponding text. The *Casual Passerby* portraits are photographs taken by Dimitrijević of anonymous people that he meets in his daily activities, celebrating the value of the anonymity and the individual in a culture obsessed with fame and cultural icons. (Magiciens de la Terre online archive, Accessed 8 February 2016, http://magiciensdelaterre.fr/artistes_pro.php?id=9). The aforementioned works lack the political quality that many of their other works foreground.

⁸⁹ Maria Hlavajova, “Towards the Normal: Negotiating the Former East” in *The Manifesta Decade: Debates on Contemporary Art Exhibitions and Biennials in Post-Wall Europe*, eds. Barbara Vanderlinden and Elena Filipović (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 153-165.

The main theme of the exhibition was “communication,” focusing especially on the communication between the artist and the audience, the former typically being absent from the experience of the artwork. Fifteen telephones were installed in the gallery to allow visitors to call the artists themselves and discuss the pieces or the context of their artistic practice. Despite the good intentions of this show to open up new channels of communication, especially between artists and publics from the East and the West, ultimately it was the violent performance by Russian artist Oleg Kulik that is what is remembered most about this exhibition.

In Kulik’s piece, the artist performed the role of a vicious dog, invoking a common stereotype about Russians is that they are a violent, uncivilized, and animalistic people. He initially refrained from acting out against passerbys unless provoked, but eventually he began to lash out at people and other artists at will. Kulik even went so far as to destroy the work of Chinese-American artist Wenda Gu as part of his performance. The artists from the West in this exhibition reacted in total outrage, writing an “Open Letter to the Art World” published in *Art Press* magazine stating that Kulik’s actions were against “art, democracy, freedom of expression, and women.”⁹⁰ Igor Zabel published a rebuttal in the same magazine months later, standing up for Kulik’s actions and citing the long history of destructive and transgressive acts that shaped modern art practices and paved the way for contemporary artists to work in the ways that they do.⁹¹ Zabel also chastised the Western artists for interpreting Kulik’s actions as a “political act” rather than an artistic one,

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Igor Zabel “Dialogue” in *Art Press*, Paris 1997. Printed in: *Continuing Dialogues: A Tribute to Igor Zabel*. Igor Zabel, Christa Benzer, Christine Böhler, and Christiane Erharter, eds (Tranzit Series. Zurich : [New York]: JRP Ringier ; D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers [distributor], 2009).

pointing to these entrenched stereotypes about the East as the cause for the Western artists to be so critical of Kulik.⁹² Clearly, these efforts to “build bridges,” “establish connections,” “begin dialogues,” and “connect” between artists from the “post-Socialist” brand and their Western contemporaries, still had a long way to go.

In her essay “Towards the Normal: Negotiating the Former East,” Slovenian independent curator Maria Hlavajova details the aims of three of the primary Western institutional initiatives that continued the project of establishing connections where there were once divisions between East and West- the Soros Centers for Contemporary Art, the Syndicate List, and Manifesta: the European biennial.⁹³ For the purpose of this brief introductory analysis, I will focus on role on Manifesta in the construction of the East/West binary in the globalized art world. Like *Interpol*, Manifesta, a biennial that was designed specifically to link the entire European continent together through nomadic art exhibitions and conferences that would take place “outside the centers of the Western art world,” revealed the entrenched bias of Western curators. Although the biennial set forth with this specific mission, to date the only Manifesta exhibition that has taken place in the former East was *Manifesta 3: Borderline Syndrome* in 2003, which was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia. While the theme of the biennial was to question the idea of borders between East and West, and the curatorial program suggested that holding the biennial in Ljubljana was evidence of their dedication to the original mission of Manifesta, many artists, curators, and critics from the East felt that this choice was an “easy way out” of really addressing the still firmly fixed East/West binary. Igor Zabel, responsible for one of the essays in the exhibition catalog for Manifesta noted that “for Russians, Ljubljana IS the West!” highlighting the fact that

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Maria Hjavajova, “Towards the Normal: Negotiating the Former East,” 153-165.

Ljubljana is one of the most Westernized and cosmopolitan of the capitals of the former East.⁹⁴ This criticism of Manifesta's choice of a city that was symbolically "East" but in reality quite adjusted to the Western art world's ways was further echoed by one of the exhibition's most prominent works- the installation "EU and Others" by Sarajevo-based artist Šejla Kamerić. The piece divided one of Ljubljana's major pedestrian areas into two marked out paths, each bearing a sign proclaiming "EU" or "Others" were allowed to enter each of the two divided areas. Kamerić's piece and Zabel's criticism stems from what was in 2003 almost a decade long issue being dealt with by artists and art professionals in the East, trying to get the West to accept Eastern Europe's artists and cultural production on their own terms, rather than continuously relegating them to the "post-Socialist brand," a position of periphery to the West's center, and a distinction made and propagated in the Western art system.

With these examples of a few key exhibitions, I mean to demonstrate the West was the first to construct an identity of Eastern Europe in exhibitions, and the understanding of the artists and art practices that originate from the former East were structured primarily through a dialectic of difference with the West. As a consequence of this characterization, many of these exhibitions were criticized for reinforcing the same stereotypes that they sought to overturn, leaving critics and academics to wonder if the globalization of contemporary art has developed a framework that is useful or damaging for contemporary artists who work outside the Western centers of the art world. The entrenched East-West binary that most of these exhibitions propagated, even in their desire to present the former

⁹⁴ Ibid.

East as part of a united, globalized continent of Europe, only served to reify the binary in a theoretically unified Europe.

The European 'Other'

As I have demonstrated, Eastern European countries had to wait until the end of the 1990s to be admitted into the international community of contemporary art and to benefit from the redrawing of the East-West binary– a result of the discourse of 1980s and 1990s postmodernism and the end of the Cold War and effectively the Eastern Bloc.⁹⁵ The armed conflicts that took place in the South Slavic region during the mid-nineties were particularly damaging to the Western view of the state of the culture, and the manifestation of long-standing stereotypes of the Balkans as the European 'Other', seemed to be unavoidable in the mainstream media as well as in any international exhibition that took on artists from the South Slavic region.

Because of the physical location of this region in Europe, symbolically along the fault lines of Islam, Catholicism, and Orthodoxy, as well as Slavic and Turkic languages and ethnic groups, the liminal status of the Balkans–not easily definable as East or West–has been historically seen as an anomaly in pan-European culture.⁹⁶ Maria Todorova, author of *Imagining the Balkans*, defines the concept of Balkanism in relation to Edward Said's Orientalism, but opposed to it; stating, "unlike Orientalism, which is a discourse about an

⁹⁵ Diane Amiel, "Specifically Balkan Art: Does It Exist?," *Third Text* Volume 21, Issue 2, 2007: 137.

⁹⁶ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 15-17; Louisa Avgita, "Marketing Difference: The Balkans on Display," in *The Global Art World: Audiences, Markets, and Museums*, ed. Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Emanuel Araújo (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2009), 88-97.

imputed opposition, Balkanism is a discourse about imputed ambiguity.”⁹⁷ Todorova’s Balkanism characterizes the cultures of the Balkan region as semi-colonial, semi-developed, semi-civilized, and semi-oriental, and therefore violent, underdeveloped, patriarchal, and pervasively involved in inter-ethnic struggles.⁹⁸ These stereotypes, produced by the West and grounded in colonial hegemony, are often reproduced by the Balkan peoples themselves to create distinctions and divisions among different ethno-national groups in the same region.⁹⁹

It should be noted that the condition of ambiguity, the Balkan identity in flux, is a construction of the Western art and academic system and consequently is performed to varying degrees by artists that enter this system. In order to enter the system at all, especially in the early 1990s, an artist from the East had to establish their cultural difference in order to be allowed to represent the much mythologized “margins.” In Ernesto Laclau’s article “Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity,” the author provides a helpful model for thinking about identity construction of a subaltern group within a hegemonic system. He explains the interrelation and dependence between the dominant and subaltern, stating that the identity construction of both groups is bound up in the other:

“It is a well-known historical fact that an oppositional force whose identity is constructed within a certain system of power is bound up with that system; it may prevent

⁹⁷ Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 17.

⁹⁸ Avgita, “Marketing Difference: The Balkans on Display,” 90.

⁹⁹ Tošić, “Re-imagining Balkan Diversity Beyond and ‘Straight-Through’ the Ethno-National,” 151-158. In this article, from which this thesis takes part of its name, Tošić contends that the negative stereotypes of the region (war, crime, corruption, Islamophobia, and genocide as results of ancient hatred) are just as Balkanist, hegemonic, and simplistic and the positive characterizations of the post-Socialist period in the Balkan region, such as: prosperity due to free markets and privatization, citizens embracing and “learning democracy” or brave activists fighting ethno-nationalism, the main social evil.

the full constitution of identity, but, at the same time, it is its condition of existence. And any victory against the system also destabilized the identity of the victorious force.”¹⁰⁰

In this article Laclau gives several theoretical examples of the construction of the identity of an ethnic minority- a differential identity that can be fully achieved only within the context of the nation or state within which it exists, the only way to fully eliminate that difference within that context is total integration into it. However, if the minority identity is to remain intact, an active resistance to integration must be practiced such that the differential identity is always marked by a constitutive lack. Thus the universal is a symbol of interrupted completeness, and the particular exists only in the process of asserting differential identity and thus constituting a lack, becoming subordinated to and excluded from the whole.¹⁰¹ The whole construction of the East-West binary is based on this system of difference, but these slippages between universal and particular are even more pronounced in the case of the South Slavic region, which lies within the cultural space cannibalized by nesting Balkanisms.

Subverted or Reinvented Symbols of Nations

Many artists choose to approach the ambiguity that the South Slavic region can represent to Western European audiences by drawing upon symbols that communicate information about national or regional identity more or differently in their home space than they do to Western viewers. This artistic choice codifies the works such that the separation between the West and the South Slavic area is seemingly reinforced rather than

¹⁰⁰ Ernesto Laclau, “Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity,” *October*, Vol. 61, The Identity in Question (Summer, 1992), 88.

¹⁰¹ Laclau, “Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity,” 83-90.

deconstructed. However, this subversive practice can be seen as a kind of active resistance to the Western tendency to read these artists works strictly along the lines of their ethno-national identity. Artists who invoke this tactic have created a barrier that begs to be investigated between the meaning of signification in the Western art world versus their home spaces. In this section I will discuss several works that deal with such symbols: flags, written language, iconographies of power from the socialist period and beyond, and cultural symbols that now represent Yugo-nostalgia.¹⁰²

To begin with an example from an artist whose context we are now familiar with—Marina Abramović's *Balkan Erotic Epic* (Figure 26) a video work from 2006, explores Balkan proto-nationalist mythology which I argue has the tendency to be read very differently in the West due to Balkanist stereotypes. With pieces like *Balkan Baroque* and *Balkan Erotic Epic*, Abramović intentionally plays on the Western fascination with the Balkan 'Other' by over-emphasizing negative stereotypes that have come to be associated with the imaginary Balkans. In the case of *Balkan Erotic Epic*, Abramović utilizes the themes of hypersexualization and pagan ritualistic spirituality, two characteristics of the imaginary Balkans that the modern South Slavic region has had to battle against in the effort to become part of globalized Europe.

In the performance, women and men dressed as archetypical Balkan peasants perform fertility rituals that Abramović' learned through folktales of her upbringing and

¹⁰² Aleksandar Bošković, "Yugonostalgia and Yugoslav Cultural Memory: Lexicon of Yu Mythology," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (Spring 2013), 54-78; Stephanie Young, "Yugonostalgia and the Post-National Narrative," in *The New Order of War*, ed. Bob Brecher (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2010), 89.

brought to life through extensive historical research.¹⁰³ These rituals involve exposing the sexual organs to natural surroundings, as a way to bring both human fertility and natural fertility of crops into alignment. Abramović's use of proto-nationalism, or the underlying mythologies and cultural symbols that bind common groups that do not necessarily constitute a sovereign nation (i.e. the Balkans) sets up the same dialectic of difference that imposes the West in opposition to the cultures in this area.¹⁰⁴

Similarly, Nela Hasanbegović's (1984, Sarajevo, PR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) performance *Postscriptum* (Figure 27) relies on proto-national symbolism in the form of language. In the piece the artist writes the names of her family members on her body using Bosančica, or "Croatian-Bosnian Cyrillic," a form of ancient writing that predates the arrival of Islam into the South Slavic region.¹⁰⁵ This kind of text was used by the ancestors of many of the modern ethno-national groups in the region, so it can be understood to represent the past and the shared cultural history of a pan-South Slavic, pre-Yugoslav culture. This is specifically relevant to the rivalry between Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) and the Serbs and Croats in Bosnia that the Western media was insistent on representing in this essentializing binary during the Wars of Secession.¹⁰⁶ While Hasanbegović is ethnically Bosniak, her use of this cyrillic text could be read by a Western

¹⁰³ Marina Abramović and Adelina von Fürstenberg, *Marina Abramović: Balkan Epic* (Milano: Skira, 2006).

¹⁰⁴ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge England New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 46-79.

¹⁰⁵ Bryzgel, "Nela Hasanbegović," *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 4 March 2016, <http://performingtheeast.com/aleksandar-stankovski/.http://performingtheeast.com/nela-hasanbegovic/>; Nela Hasanbegović's website, works: *Postscriptum*, Accessed 4 March, 2016. <http://gordanaandjelicgalic.com/VIDE01.html> http://www.nelahasanbegovic.com/?wbf_id=23.

¹⁰⁶ Hayden, *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans: Studies of a European Disunion, 1991-2011*, 71-81. Chapter 4: "Muslims as 'Others' in Serbian and Croatian Politics" is a useful source for understanding the role that national and international media sources played in the spread of fear and hatred towards the Bosniaks during the Wars of Secession.

viewer as the modern day Serbian alphabet, which uses cyrillic characters, thus complicating the reading of her own ethno-national identity in the eyes of a Western viewer who would likely approach the piece without knowledge about the Bosančica text.

The use of elements of Yugo-nostalgia is another tactic that artists from the South Slavic region use to complicate ethno-national readings of their identity performance. In his article, "Yugo-nostalgia and Yugoslav Cultural Memory: Lexicon of Yu Mythology," Aleksandar Bošković concisely defines Yugo-nostalgia as "a regressive idealization of Yugoslav socialist past, and a critical intervention in both the contemporary post-socialist politics of memory and the politics of emancipation."¹⁰⁷ This use of Yugo-nostalgia as a form of intervention or resistance is crucial to my argument in this chapter. While the iconography may initially appear to be celebrating the Yugo-socialist past, in many cases it is a form of social critique that requires a specific cultural starting point to understand.

In Nemanja Cvijanović's (1972, Rijeka, PR Croatia, SFR Yugoslavia) installation *Paying My Electricity Bill* (Figure 28) the central object of the piece is a large scale reproduction of the tombstone of Josip Broz Tito, the President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1953 to his death in 1980. Marshall Tito is the most important figure in the cultural memory of the socialist period. He embodied all parts of the Yugo-socialist cause and is remembered for being just, pragmatic, a revolutionist and one of the founders of non-aligned movement, and a champion of the multi-ethnic state.¹⁰⁸ In Nemanja Cvijanović's piece, the large marble slab serves a double purpose in its

¹⁰⁷ Bošković, "Yugonostalgia and Yugoslav Cultural Memory: Lexicon of Yu Mythology," 55.

¹⁰⁸ Fredja Burić, "Dwelling on the Ruins of Socialist Yugoslavia: Being Bosnian by Remembering Tito," in *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, ed. Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 227-243; Mitja Velikonja, "Titostalgia: On the Post-Yugoslav Cognitive Map," In *Retracing Images: Visual Culture after Yugoslavia*, eds. Daniel Šuber and Slobodan Karamanić (Balkan Studies Library, v. 4. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012) 283-312.

Yugonostalgic signification; in addition to memorializing Tito, the piece's orientation on its side is also meant to resemble home radiators made of marble slabs that were commonly found in Yugoslavian houses during the socialist period. This layer of meaning is meant to evoke memory for viewers who had or still have these radiators in their homes, but also to speak about the role of the artist and his public in keeping the memory of Tito 'warm.'¹⁰⁹

Ibro Hasanović's approach to the Yugo-nostalgic memory of Tito in the video *Spectre* (Figure 29) relies on the inverse function of bringing to light the extent to which this cultural memory has expired. *Spectre* was filmed on the Yugoslav Navy Yacht 'Galeb' which Josip Broz Tito frequently used for parties, especially for foreign visitors to SFR Yugoslavia.¹¹⁰ The film details the insides of the presidential yacht, now in disrepair and abandoned in a shipyard in Croatia. The video relies on cinematic tactics similar to horror movies, as well as music meant to evoke a haunting and eerie feeling, as if one is walking through history, in a space that was meant only for the eyes of the red bourgeoisie. Unlike Cvijanović's piece which at once celebrates and critiques Tito's memory, Hasanović's work reveals the thin veneer of power that these symbols of Yugoslavia's statehood once held. While both pieces draw to mind associations of Yugo-nostalgia, neither work should be interpreted as a glorification of the socialist past. These works instead should be understood as speaking to viewers with the same cultural memory as the artists themselves in a codified way– they invite viewers that possess this Yugoslav iconography in their cultural memory already to reinvestigate the meaning that these symbols once held for them and position themselves in relation to them in the current moment.

¹⁰⁹ Alenka Gregorić, "Nemanja Cvijanović: Paying My Electricity Bill," extract from 52nd October Salon catalog, 2011. Accessed 21 March 2016, <http://nemanjacvijanovic.eu/text.html>.

¹¹⁰ Ibro Hasanović, Portfolio, pg. 13. Accessed April 24, 2016. http://www.ibrohasanovic.com/Ibro-Hasanovic_portfolio.pdf.

Flags: Meditation on a Theme

Following the discussion of subverted and reinvented symbolism of Yugo-nationalism, this separate section addresses one such type of nationalist symbolism that tends to be very literal and has been employed in one way or another by many contemporary artists from the South Slavic region. National flags are one of the most powerful symbols around which the identity of a nation collects. The sovereignty of a nation is often bound up with protecting this symbol, especially in the case of warfare, when the flag serves to both mark territory and represent the collective unit of the nation against the enemy. In the following works, flags are in states of becoming or degenerating. They are abused, discarded, reinvented, burned, washed, and transformed. The artists in this section strategically choose flags that represent nations that have failed to remain intact, or try to resuscitate flags that no longer hold meaning as the result of political changes.

Most recently, Ivan Grubanov (1976, Belgrade, PR Serbia, SFR Yugoslavia) presented the work *United Dead Nations* (Figure 30) at the 2015 Venice Biennale.¹¹¹ This work involved the desecration of flags that Grubanov viewed as empty signifiers for nations that are no longer in existence, Yugoslavia being among them. The work was praised for conveying the presence that these dead nations still exert in a post-global landscape, a becoming rather than an absence or overwriting. Additionally, Grubanov's work was

¹¹¹ Merenik, Lidija. "Ivan Grubanov: United Dead Nations." Press release for the Serbian Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale, e-flux. Accessed 18 February 2016, <http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/ivan-grubanov-to-represent-serbia/>.

presented in the Serbian pavilion, which was formerly the pavilion of SFR Yugoslavia. This space of presentation, in the hall of a “dead” nation, lends particular resonance to the aim of examining how “dead” nations continue to take part in contemporary geo-politics.¹¹² With this piece Grubanov also comments on the Venice Biennale's role in supporting ideological, political and cultural visions of nationalism with its mission of uniting nations to celebrate art production. The flags he selected for the piece represent flags of countries which have ceased to exist since the founding of the Venice Biennale in 1895.¹¹³

While Grubanov depicts the casting off of a national identity that gathers around the flags of dead nations, Bosnian artist Gordana Anđelić Galić's (1949, Mostar, PR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) 2006 video performance *Mantra* deals with the accumulation of various national identities that the people of her native Bosnia and Herzegovina have experienced over the course of history, represented by the flags of former constitutive nations and ruling ideologies.¹¹⁴ In *Mantra*, the artist walks along a long road on the outskirts of Sarajevo, and while doing so attempts to carry the twenty-three flags that have represented the territories that make up modern day Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are handed to her at regular intervals (Figure 31). As Galić continues along the road, gradually accumulating more and more unwieldy flagpoles, she becomes unable to bear the load and occasionally drops a flag and struggles to recollect it and move on. The sound that overlays

¹¹² While it could be argued that the space of presentation by nature of belonging to Serbia when other successor states do not have a pavilion of their own desecrates the formerly multi-ethnic state, I prefer to interpret it as I have here: an examination of the role that the memory of Yugoslavia plays in current politics in the successor states.

¹¹³ Merenik, Lidija. “Ivan Grubanov: United Dead Nations.” Press release for the Serbian Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale, e-flux. The countries represented in Grubanov's piece are: the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867–1918), the Ottoman Empire (1299–1922), Gran Colombia (1819–1930), Tibet (1913–51), United Arab Republic (1958–71), South Vietnam (1955–75), German Democratic Republic (1949–90), USSR (1922–91), Czechoslovakia (1918–92) and Yugoslavia (1918–2003).

¹¹⁴ Gordana Anđelić Galić's website, videos: *Mantra*, Accessed April 24, 2016.
<http://gordanaandjelicgalic.com/VIDEO1.html>

the video of this performance is the new national anthem of Bosnia and Herzegovina, adopted in 1998. The national anthem has no words, as the constitutive government which is still propped up by the Dayton Agreement has been unable to come to an agreement on lyrics that are felt to be equally representative of the multi-ethnic population of BiH.¹¹⁵ This piece represents another liminal state of becoming, opposing but complimentary to Grubanov's, in which the flags which represent identity are collected and subsumed, ultimately producing a kind of oversaturating erasure.

Božidar Jurjević (1963, Dubrovnik, PR Croatia, SFR Yugoslavia) also utilizes an erasure to create a form that has become a symbol in many of his works for the survival of national identity during crisis. Amy Bryzgel has compiled several works of Jurjević's on her web archive *Performing the East*, in which the artist uses an established leitmotif- a digital image of a "circular form" (Figure 32) which was created from an object that he found in the ruins of Dubrovnik's Imperial Hotel (now the Hilton) after it was shelled during the worst attack in Croatia during the Wars of Secession.¹¹⁶ This circular form, as Bryzgel describes it, was created by a pile of towels that had been burnt together from the edges to the center, leaving only a small, round, white circle, which the artist calls "the space of our survival." The artist has used this recurring symbol in several performative works, including the 2011 piece *O-Circulation-Imperial Hilton*, in which the artist created a

¹¹⁵ "Bosnia Considers Lyrics for National Anthem" *Balkan Insight*, 7 October 2008. Accessed 14 May 2016. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnia-considers-lyrics-for-national-anthem> The government of Bosnia and Herzegovina is made up of three constitutive parties which represent the interests of the three majority ethnic groups in the country: Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs.

¹¹⁶ Amy Bryzgel, "Božidar Jurjević," *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 21 April 2016, <http://performingtheeast.com/maja-bajevic/>. According to the archive entry, these circular forms appear in both performative and two dimensional works by Jurjević. And: Suzana Marjanić, "Domestic Post-Socialism's Art of Vexillology, or, Flags as a Subversive Artistic Symbol," *Narodna Umjetnost: Croatian journal of ethnology and folklore research*, vol.49, no.2 (December 2012): 165.

readymade flag from towels from the Hilton Imperial Hotel that was rebuilt in Dubrovnik.¹¹⁷ In this work the artist creates a hybrid flag that resembles the “stars and stripes” layout United States of America’s flag as well as the color scheme of the national flag of Greece, countries that represented polarities of global economic standing during the time this work was created. Using his “space of survival,” his leitmotif for the resilience of the Croatian people, in place of the starred portion of the American flag, Jurjević utilizes this symbolic vocabulary of resistance and perseverance in the face of crisis to represent the interconnectedness of the globalized world of the twenty-first century.¹¹⁸ The use of flag related imagery is thus employed in many ways by South Slavic contemporary artists, a source of imagery that holds significance for nations and for the globalized and post-global world that can be manipulated and transformed, projected with performances of identity.

Representing Political Transitions: Entering the ‘Other’ Side

As part of my research for this study, I attended an exhibition in New York City at the Austrian Cultural Forum entitled *Normalities*. The exhibition dealt with the intangible of what “normality” can mean for artists from South Slavic region who are now living in the diaspora.¹¹⁹ In this exhibition, many artists examined political events, especially events that represented liminal or transitory periods in the recent history of the region. Ibro

¹¹⁷ Marjanić, “Domestic Post-Socialism’s Art of Vexillology, or, Flags as a Subversive Artistic Symbol,” 165.

¹¹⁸ Bryzgel and Marjanić both focus on the connectedness of Croatia with Greece as a Balkan neighbor in their analyses of this piece, but also on the artist’s extension of his “space of survival” motif beyond the particularities of the Balkans. This reading emphasises a more nuanced look at the identity of the artist focusing on Jurjević as an artist who is connected through the globalized art world rather than specifically a Croatian artist making work about war memory.

¹¹⁹ Suzana Milevska, “Normality and Its Contingencies,” In *Normalities* (exhibition catalog), ed. Christine Moser (Austrian Cultural Forum: Verlag Anton Pustet, 2016), 18-23.

Hasanović's video work *Study For The Applause* (Figure 33) is such a piece. Presented in this exhibition as a video that consists of a series of footage of nine pairs of clapping hands, measured in their movements, a reenactment of an applause captured in a photograph by Gerard Julien (AFP), taken 14 December 1995 at the Elysee Palace in Paris.¹²⁰ The photograph, and Hasanović's video which restages the political act isolated into stills of its constituent parts, commemorates the signing of the Dayton Agreement, the peace agreement that ended the war in Bosnia and the document that created a provisional structure for governance of the country which is still in place today.¹²¹ The clapping hands in empty space, modeled after careful study of each gesture, recreates the applause of each head of state that was a participant, elevating their gesture of clapping to a mythic status. As an artist working in the international art world, and as a refugee of the war, Hasanović utilizes a careful reconsideration of the Dayton Agreement to comment on the significance of this event in the geo-politics of the region.¹²² His self-identity as a Serbian national and a refugee is subverted in this work, as he draws upon a pool of shared cultural memory of a transitional action towards ending the conflict in his home country.

Similarly, Aleksander Stankovski (1959, Kičevo, PR Macdeonia, SFR Yugoslavia) explores the political transition that Macedonia experienced with the country's acceptance

¹²⁰ Hasanović, Portfolio, pg. 17. Accessed April 24, 2016, http://www.ibrohasanovic.com/lbro-Hasanovic_portfolio.pdf. The hands belong to Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzales, US President Bill Clinton, French President Jacques Chirac, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, British Prime Minister John Major and Russian Premier Victor Chernomyrdin, Serbian President Slobodan Milosević, Croatian President Franjo Tuđman and Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović applauding after signing of the peace agreement on Bosnia. The piece is also presented as a series of nine still photographs.

¹²¹ Hayden, *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans: Studies of a European Disunion, 1991-2011*, 301-327. Chapters 13 and 14 address the Dayton Agreement and the provisional government created by the constitution outlined in this agreement. Hayden's text is useful for gaining an understanding of the political structure of the Agreement, looking at both the positive and negative consequences of its execution of a tripartite constituent government.

¹²² Hasanović currently lives and works in Prishtina, Kosovo.

into the European Union in his work *Penetration in EU* (Figure 34) acting as a mediator between the public and the action of union. Acceptance into the European Union has been a major point of contention for many states in the former East, and this political commentary was Stankovski's first performance after a long period of silence. He is best known for his work with the artist collective Zero Group, who did most of their performative actions during the 1980s in Yugoslavia.¹²³ In this performance, Stankovski uses the metaphor of a sexual act: beginning with foreplay and ultimately leading to penetration, to comment on the process of becoming European. While this performance has been read as crudely sexual, I believe that Stankovski is commenting on the desirous relationship between Macedonia and Western Europe, not just the act of an entrance. During the course of the performance, the artist reveals from under a sheet a phallic object (a large dildo) affixed to a canvas on which the Macedonian flag is painted. The artist remained seated during this first part of the performance, but after the dildo was revealed, he turned to the large EU flag also painted on canvas, propped behind the table at which he sat and cut into it an opening meant to represent a vagina. Finally, he placed the two flags together such that the large dildo penetrated the central portion of the canvas bearing the EU flag– inserting Macedonia's phallus into the ringed stars of the flag representing the countries that comprise the European Union. This political act relies upon the perceived difference between Macedonia and moreover the East, and the EU which stands in for all things West, as represented by the biological difference between male and female genitalia.

¹²³ Bryzgel, "Aleksander Stankovski," *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 21 April 2016, <http://performingtheeast.com/aleksandar-stankovski/>.

Representing Political Transitions: Opening and Repairing

After the initial period of political transition, an important step for South Slavic artists towards recovery from the wars was creating artistic practices that could be part of new policies of post-socialist openness to the West and working towards repairing damage domestically. Owing to the tradition of highly political performative practices in the region, many artists continued to make works that were imbued with political messages, using their artistic performances to engage with movements of social activism and activist practices. Especially with the initial return towards conservative values and nationalist ideologies in the post-Yugoslav space, those in the artistic community who opposed these aspects of post-war government created works of critique as well as works promoting openness rather than discrimination and divisions. During the early 2000s, the Social Democrat party was in control and promoted a turn towards liberal democracy. Consequently, the successor states of Yugoslavia quickly worked towards becoming a society based on the Western model of capitalist consumerism, also became a period in which artists used their work to explore themes of openness and repairing.¹²⁴ The following works deal with these themes.

Jasmina Cibic's (1979, Ljubljana, PR Slovenia, SFR Yugoslavia) 2007 installation and performance work *Tourists Welcome* (Figure 35) utilized the recently rebuilt terminal at the Brnik Airport in Ljubljana, Slovenia to explore the space of the airport as a

¹²⁴ Roxana Marcoci, "Art in Transitional Times: Post-1945, 1968, 1989, and 2000 in former Yugoslavia," in *Sanja Ivekovic: Sweet Violence* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2011), 28.

“communication interface” between the site and the people who use it.¹²⁵ Viewing the airport as a site of communication between the state and outsiders who are entering it as well as a neutral space that represents the liminal state between leaving and arriving, Cibic created neon signs bearing popular and historical tourism slogans which she incorporated into the terminal space as installation pieces. These pieces formed the backdrop for the performance aspect of the piece, and were retained after the performance as well, allowing these open-ended positive statements to continue to speak to the potential for openness in the post-socialist and post-war period.¹²⁶ The piece *Tourists Welcome* also consisted of a performance in the terminal by the State Police Orchestra of the Republic of Slovenia, of the song “I Feel Love” by Donna Summers, intended to echo the new state motto of “I Feel (S)Love(nia).” The orchestra performed in an area of the terminal that could be seen by viewers both inside and outside the terminal, those who had not yet passed through security and passport control as well as passengers waiting for their flights. This reinforced the liminal space that the airport can represent.¹²⁷ The airport as conceived by Cibic thus becomes a kind of ambitious space that works towards receiving and exchange, rather than reinforcing divisions between East and West and between various ethno-national territories in the South Slavic region.

Slovenian artist collective IRWIN’s ongoing piece (2011-present) *Time for a New State* also includes several iterations of performative and installation works, including passports that allow owners to identify as citizens of an invented “nation-state-in-time”

¹²⁵ Michelle Deignan, “Tourists Welcome: Overview,” Jasmina Cibic’s artist website, accessed 18 February 2016, <http://jasminacibic.org/projects/tourists-welcome/>.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Amy Bryzgel, “Jelena Cibic,” *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 18 February 2016, <http://performingtheeast.com/jasmina-cibic/>.

and billboards that declare “Time for a New State,” (Figure 36) a motto like Cibic’s neon signs that comes from a found object and serve to proclaim a physical and temporal state of openness.¹²⁸ IRWIN, along with its parent collective NSK (Neue Slowenische Kunst/New Slovenian Art), has a long history of creating works that are at once critical of political issues in the South Slavic region and supportive of renewed connections with the West.

The *Time for a New State* billboard project developed from IRWIN’s visit to Lagos, Nigera, where many passport holders of the NSK state passports lived. Curator Albert Heta describes that at the time that they visited Lagos, there were giant billboards and posters throughout the city that were simply large white letters on a red ground, proclaiming “Time for a New State” and in smaller letters, “Some say you can find happiness there.”¹²⁹ These posters were not labeled with any information as to what they were advertising, apparently a guerilla marketing tactic in which the product being sold would be later revealed through another series of advertisements. The members of NSK/IRWIN were inspired by these ambiguous statements that seemed so well suited to their mission of creating a nation-state on the premise of sharing a moment in time, rather than ethno-national or geographic affiliation. This utopic and malleable vision of a state with no borders and no limits seemed to be perfectly defined by this billboard’s motto, so much so that passport holders and residents of Lagos who knew about NSK/IRWIN believed that the

¹²⁸ Bryzgel, “IRWIN,” *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 30 February 2016 <http://performingtheeast.com/irwin/>. Bryzgel eloquently describes in her archive entry the importance of IRWIN in the South Slavic arts community and the history of art production in this region; Calvert 22 Foundation, “IRWIN: Time for a New State,” Calvert 22 Foundation’s Vimeo account, accessed 30 February 2016, <https://vimeo.com/album/1931857/video/39763454>. This video gives a helpful history of the NSK passports, which were an art initiative taken on by NSK, not IRWIN, but were at the core of the impetus for the *Time for a New State* project.

¹²⁹ Albert Heta, Curatorial statement: “Time for a new state: Some say you can find happiness there,” Stacion: Center for Contemporary Art Prishtina website, accessed 30 February 2016, <http://www.stacion.org/en/Time-for-a-new-state>.

billboard campaign was initiated by the group. IRWIN therefore took this found object into their lexicon, producing many “Time for a New State” billboards elsewhere and in other languages (Figure 37). According to Heta, the group later found out that the found objects were actually created by Coca-Cola, the ever imminent representative of Western capitalism.¹³⁰

In addition to works that suggest and inspire the opening of borders and the reconciliation of neighbors who were once enemies in the post-Yugoslav successor states, many artists in the region have taken on projects that rely on the tactics of social activism. Most significant in this category is Alma Suljević’s (1963, Kakanj, PR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SFR Yugoslavia) long-term undertaking *4-entity* (1997-present), and related performance *Annulling the Truth* (1999). With *4-entity*, Suljević’s mission is to clear her home country of Bosnia and Herzegovina of the remaining three million landmines that still litter the landscape, a remnant of the wars that the artist claims connects the entities that now make up the nation as a result of the Dayton Agreement: the federations of Bosnia, Republika Srpska, and Brčko District; the minefields representing the 4th entity.¹³¹

Suljević has worked on the actual deactivation of landmines in the countryside as well as fundraising initiatives to finance the equipment and labor needed by the Mine Action Center for the clearing of minefields with her project *4-entity*.¹³² Figure 38 details the remnants of this ongoing performative practice: Suljević’s comprehensive minefield

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Alma Suljević, “Annulling the Truth,” online catalog for *Meeting Point* exhibition (1997), Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art website, accessed 13 May 2016, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/meeting-point/meeting-point-alma-suljevic-annulling-truth/>.

¹³² Aida Cerkez-Robinson, “It’s dirty work, but artist’s sales help clear Bosnian minefields,” *Seattle Times Newspaper*, Accessed April 26, 2016, <http://community.seattletimes.nwsources.com/archive/?date=20000903&slug=4040414>.

maps and hand-sewn pouches filled with dirt from mine sites. The artist sells these objects at the market, spreading awareness about the pervasiveness of dangerous active mines and the government's inaction in clearing them, encouraging the community to join with her in fighting against this painful reminder of the landscape of their country which is still a "4th entity," effectively a war zone.¹³³ With *Annulling the Truth*, the artist both physically and symbolically removed mines. Part of the performance included scratching out mines which had been deactivated from the original mine maps, which were laid out on the floor of the Ćulhan in Sarajevo during the *Meeting Point* exhibition at the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, meant to artistically stand in for her work in the minefields. This action is detailed in Figure 39. Additionally, the artist used the maps as a surface on which to perform the trauma inscribed on her and her fellow Bosnians by writing her memories onto the maps, circling the homes of friends and relatives on the mine maps. This work has been documented extensively by the artist, making this piece a work of social activism as well as a performative document of the development of the landscape in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On Performing the National in the Globalized Art System: A Continued Becoming and Un-Becoming

In this final section, I want to reiterate the mission of this chapter: to address works of performative art that challenge the established East-West binary and to illuminate how collective and personal cultural identity is explored through works that address issues nationalism, war memory, and re-union with the West through global politics and the art

¹³³ Bryzgel, "Alma Suljević," *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 13 May 2016, <http://performingtheeast.com/jasmina-cibic/>.<http://performingtheeast.com/alma-suljevic/>.

system. The works in this chapter seek to question the validity of and to work against this predetermined version of South Slavic identity, especially such as it is commodified and sold to Western audiences.

Vladimir Nikolic (1974, Belgrade, PR Serbia, SFR Yugoslavia) takes issue with this very idea, a predetermined and commodified South Slavic identity, which he calls the “geopolitical burden” of artists from this region.¹³⁴ In the twenty-seven page artist statement and extended textual exploration of the piece that Nikolic created to accompany the video of his performance piece *Death Anniversary*, the artist writes:

“They (art catalogue text writers, curators, journalists, etc.) always read my work in the geopolitical context of the country I represent. So no matter what my work was about– it was seen only in the light of this Balkan communism post-communism, war-post-war, anti-modern tradition, weird local habits, and described in terms of cultural, social and political references related to the place I come from.”¹³⁵

The piece itself attempts to replicate the struggle of trying to communicate with someone who cannot hear you, which Nikolic likens to being an artist from the South Slavic region working on the international stage, unable to escape the Western associations of their ethno-national identity. The video and textual piece documents Nikolic’s collaborative

¹³⁴ Vladimir Nikolic, “Death Anniversary,” Downloadable .pdf document that accompanies the piece, from the website of the artist, accessed 23 May 2016, http://www.vladimir-nikolic.com/death_anniversary.html, 1. While it is not my intention to “out” the ethno-national origins of artists featured in this study, in this case I find it important to note that Nikolic’s parents are ethnically Serb but were raised in Kosovo and at the time of the war were living in Belgrade, save his grandmother who was in the town of Peć in Kosovo. Nikolic’s experiences as both Serb and Kosovar are detailed in his .pdf statement, and I think this liminality in his self-conception of identity factors into his distaste for Western art professionals to label him “Serbian artist,” especially considering the associations that this brought in the early 1990s-2000s in light of the war in Bosnia and the human rights offenses of Slobodan Milošević’s regime. (See pages 11-15 for more information on Nikolic and his family origins).

¹³⁵ Ibid., 1. This document explains the entire process of constructing the piece, from the meaning he had intended, to the process of arranging travel, to the experience of performing the piece and how it altered from his original plans. For this reason I consider the .pdf to be part of the performative action itself.

performance with Milica Milošević, a professional dirge singer from north Montenegro, who the artist calls an “ethno-artist” and a “true Balkan artist.”¹³⁶ In the piece, the pair visit the grave of Marcel Duchamp in Rouen, France, and Milošević performs a funeral dirge song in the traditional Montenegrin style while Nikolic plays the role of a silent mourner (Figure 40).¹³⁷ It has been read that the dirge singer’s position between Nikolic and Duchamp is supposed to represent Nikolic’s inability to enter the international art world without his ethno-national origins, which always follow his work, but I want to read “beyond and through” that association here. Based on what I understand about Nikolic’s artistic practice, I believe that while this piece deals with a very serious subject, the artist has a particularly pointed sense of humor which he is invoking in this piece. He is allowing us, Western viewers, to hold a mirror up to our bias. Nikolic is teasing the international art world for seeing artists like himself as “ethno-artists” or as artists from an exoticized periphery, and presents Milica Milošević as an alternative to himself, playing on the nesting Balkanisms that are notoriously pervasive both in the West and within the South Slavic region itself. Nikolic also manipulates one of Western modernism’s great tropes: Duchamp’s readymade, which takes an object and de-contextualizes it from its original context by placing it into the context of the Western art system.¹³⁸ In this case Milošević and the dirge as well as Nikolic’s mourning become performance art rather than stereotypes, defined by the West, of the tragic Balkanized post-Yugoslav space from which they originate.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 24.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 5-7.

¹³⁸ Bryzgel, “Vladimir Nikolic,” *Performing the East*, digital archive, accessed 23 May 2016, <http://performingtheeast.com/vladimir-nikolic/>.

Natalija Vujošević (1976, Podgorica, PR Montenegro, SFR Yugoslavia) takes on the readymade as well in her 2015 installation *Market will cure all our wounds* (Figure 41), exploring the commodification of identity that the international art market has imposed on South Slavic artists. Her installation takes the form of a hanging rack of clothing and printed images on flat hangers, and resembles a display of garments in a boutique. The juxtaposition of clothing both used and new with drawings, mathematical formulas, and digital images of sunsets and landscapes printed on paper, as well as a mix of natural elements like leaves and herbs, has a quality of sculptural assemblage. Vujošević often creates works that have a particular uncanniness that is part youth culture self-parody à la the “tumblr niche aesthetic,” and part Marcel Broodthaers installation. Though the objects in the installation piece on their own do not seem to relate to issues of post-Yugoslav identity, the title *Market will cure all our wounds* clues the viewer in to the artist’s goal of implying a reference to the changes brought to the South Slavic region by a neo-liberal capitalist economy. To reinforce this connection, Vujošević includes this text with the installation:

“The piece *Market will cure all our wounds* explores the profitability of catastrophe, weighs pain against fashion and turns us to face the truth that we are not actually as deep as we like to think we are. I can’t remember one single thing, no matter how painful or hard, how deep or temporary that did not become a product. Is Bosnia still fresh?!? Maybe? Communism is really “the thing” these days. I wonder if the World War II is ever gonna be sold out?”¹³⁹

With the text portion of the piece, Vujošević gives us a mirror to analyze our own connections, like Nikolic does with *Death Anniversary*. The idea that the international art

¹³⁹ Natalija Vujošević, Statement for “Market Will Cure All Our Wounds,” Accessed 28 March 2016, <http://www.silverlining.li/market-will-cure-all-our-wounds/>.

market will find a way to make any work of art by a South Slavic artist about the war or about communism makes *Market will cure all our wounds* a kind of readymade. It is a paradoxical piece in which the objects assembled in the work don't seem to match up with the theme evoked in the title or text, but the artist having selected them and contextualized them in this way forces the audience to make a connection that theoretically they would have made on their own, a double bind of identification. *Market will cure all our wounds* both reifies and critiques the stereotypes about contemporary art from the South Slavic region that the international art market would capitalize on by making it a commodity, illustrating the pervasiveness of these stereotypical associations even in 2015, some twenty-five years after the beginnings of conflict in the region.

This kind of meta-level institutional critique enacted by artists working in the post-Yugoslav space is never clearer than in Maja Bajević's 2012 video performance *Art Has To Be National, An Artist Has To Be National* (Figure 42), modeled after Marina Abramović's 1975 performance *Art must be Beautiful, An artist must be Beautiful*. This performance uses the exact format of Abramović's, a reference to the role that Abramović—'the brand'—as the Westernized representation of South Slavic contemporary art plays in the globalized art world's understanding of all artists who originate from the same geographical area. In the video, the artist repeats the phrases echoed by the title, changing Abramović's "beautiful" to "national." Jonathan Blackwood notes that the change of words shifts the emphasis of the whole performance, drawing a parallel between culturally defined notions of beauty that operate by satisfying the male gaze, and the similar way that the gaze of the West operates

in the context of international art exhibitions.¹⁴⁰ The repetition of language in both performances mimics conditioning, surely a reference for Bajević's successors Jušić and Čmajčanin.¹⁴¹ By repeating these phrases over and over again, the artist performs identity work that is both creative and destructive. Bajević's message in *Art has to be national, An artist has to be national*, however, is not directed towards the artists of former Yugoslavian countries- but to those in the globalized art world who have required South Slavic artists as a group to stand for the ethno-national in order to be accepted. Bajević's performance is raw and chilling, she performs the numbness that results from being conditioned to believe that a singular element of one's identity is the only contribution one can make of value to a system that was constructed and that maintains a dialectic of binaries and difference.

Coda

In summation, within the contemporary art market at the current moment there is still an immense amount of pressure placed on artists from the South Slavic region to perform works that adhere to a collective identity based on fierce nationalistic sentiments, the memory of the brutal disintegration of a multi-ethnic state into ethnic warfare, a transition from socialism to neo-liberal capitalism, and the spectre of Yugoslav culture. Many of the works discussed in this chapter are evidence of South Slavic contemporary artists performing social-identities on behalf of the community or the collective and are intended to make commentary on political issues in the region, in order to make these issues visible in the globalized art market in the post-war period. While many of these

¹⁴⁰ Jonathan Blackwood, "On "Performativity" in the Sarajevo Art World." *Sarajevo Culture Bureau: Art, Culture & Cultural Policy from Bosnia-Herzegovina*, blog, accessed 11 May 2016. <https://sarajliacult.wordpress.com/2014/08/03/on-performativity-in-sarajevo/>.

¹⁴¹ See Page 1 and Figure 1.

works do deal with war memory, they do so in a way that reflects a performance for the 'other' - in this case, for the West.

After looking again at a collection of performative works that have brought visibility to both the complex and changing identities at play in post-Yugoslav space, as well as the issues that affect these identities as artists work outside the South Slavic region, the need to move past readings that implicate associations of ethno-national origin is evident. The performance of ethno-national identity as part of artworks is something that should neither be asked of artists, nor is it absolutely crucial to meaningful readings of their works. Through the works of artists like the many discussed in this chapter, and the scholars and curators that work to achieve new readings of these works, the former West is learning to see the former East as it sees itself; just as these binaries are proving to be constructed and fallible.

CONCLUSION

Beyond and Through: Towards Continued Engagement with South Slavic Contemporary Art

In the introduction to Robert Hayden's comprehensive historical text, *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans: Studies of a European Disunion, 1991-2011* the author uses the metaphor of a joke about a Western scholar working in Sarajevo during the Wars of Secession to describe the state of the literature on the subject that his book explores:

"I am writing a book about Bosnia."
"Oh, that is nice; and when did you arrive here?"
"Yesterday."
"And when are you leaving?"
"Tomorrow."
"And the title of your book will be...?"
"*Bosnia: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow.*"¹⁴²

The state of academic art historical research on the subject of South Slavic contemporary art is not unlike the imaginary book that this joke addresses. While there is certainly a variety of scholarship that covers a specific media, specific thematic or theoretical tactics and approaches, specific populations, and specific windows of time, there is a lack of comprehensive sources that attempt to investigate the channels interconnectedness among all these factors together as an interdependent network of meaning. Linking together the many critical contributions of scholars across diverse disciplines such as history, critical theory, political science and theory, ethnography and cultural anthropology, and visual culture and media studies with publications in

¹⁴² Hayden, *From Yugoslavia to the Western Balkans: Studies of a European Disunion, 1991-2011*, xi-xii.

newspapers, blogs, and exhibition catalogs, first responses to the presentation of these works, is a process that still needs to be undertaken to form more inclusive studies of the art production in this region. I have attempted to do this in my work by drawing on a wealth of scholarship that exists outside the field of art history, and by relying heavily on the art historians who are working “on the ground” and have relationships with the artistic communities in the areas that they study, such as Amy Bryzgel and Jonathan Blackwood, to whom I owe much of my primary source research. The central aim of my study is to contribute to the valuable work that experts such as the aforementioned scholars are doing to contribute to the burgeoning discourse surrounding post-socialist and post-war contemporary art from the South Slavic region, while also situating that artistic production within a broader historical and theoretical context.

While this project is not intended to represent a totally comprehensive look at the artistic currents of contemporary art practices in this place and time, it does ambitiously attempt to suggest new readings and connections between works with thematic similarity that have otherwise not been discussed together because of differences in medium or format, time of creation, place of exhibition, or most frustratingly: the nationalities of the artists who produced them or scholars who study them. Nationalism and the perception of its effect on an artist’s work is still an enormous stumbling block that stands between both domestic and international artists and scholars in the South Slavic region. While many exhibitions and much of the scholarship about artists from this area take on only one ethnic or national group of artists in an attempt to avoid horizontalizing the multiplicity of memory and experience, I suggest in my writing that scholars need to embrace working through ethno-nationalisms and actually go beyond these issues in order to draw

meaningful and critical connections between the history, memory, and identities of groups that are often as similar as they are different.

In order for this discourse to move forward there needs to be a 'best practices' of scholarship established at the crux of two fundamental actions: First, a change in the questions that scholars are asking with their research. For too long the scholarship has tended to focus on the reproductive or representational qualities of works from this context that deal with conflict, trauma, post-socialist economies and social equity, and post-war identities in flux. The question to ask of these works is not "What conflict is depicted?" or "Whose truth does this work represent?" but rather, in the words of Jill Bennett: "How does it *work*?"¹⁴³ We need to be investigating how these artistic practices put insides (memories, feelings, and identities) and outsides (social and cultural contexts of creation and display) into meaningful networks, if we are to establish a more sensitive and complex basis for understanding. Secondly, there needs to be a continued engagement with the production and analysis of works from the South Slavic region by both local and international scholars as artists continue to emerge and their works continue to be exhibited in the globalized art world. This subject sorely needs more peer-reviewed publications, more emphasis on the study of this region at the undergraduate and graduate level, as well as more financial support and development opportunities for artists, and further engagement by scholars in the former West with the artists in their own communities.

As the discourse around South Slavic contemporary art takes further shape specifically in the discipline of art history, scholars must recognize the need for more

¹⁴³ Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art. Cultural Memory in the Present*, 45.

nuanced readings of identity performance with regards to issues of citizenship, mobility, generations, socio-economic factors, urban/rural dynamics, gender identity and sexual orientation, diaspora and refugee status, and the space between cultures. As demonstrated by the diverse examples of works by contemporary artists that deal with intersectional identities in the post-Yugoslav space discussed in this study, we have to move beyond ethno-nationality as a primary marker of experience in the case of South Slavic artists as well as all those who are still regarded as coming from the margins of the art world.

In conclusion, I would like to imagine the role of performative artworks as supports of identity work in the case of South Slavic artists and their publics by suggesting a quote by Šejla Kamerić, whose work we have examined in this study. Kamerić's artist statement is: "Art is not the goal, but the means for self-identification." I believe this statement can well be extended to South Slavic contemporary art on the whole, in which identity-work that addresses the multiplicity of memory and the intersectional nature of identity construction has become an established practice. The result of this identity-work is not just art, but activism, memorialization, protest, processing of trauma, and establishing new channels for presentation and reception. Though artists from this region are still frequently characterized solely by the signifiers of ethno-nationalism present in their work, as I have hopefully illuminated with this study's selection of artworks that represent the diverse self- and social-identities and tactics for negotiating them present in the works of South Slavic contemporary artists, we must move through the ethno-national by recognizing its role in identity, without overplaying its significance.

Figures



Figure 1 Adela Jušić and Lana Čmajčanin, *I Will Never Talk About the War Again*, collaborative video performance, 2011.

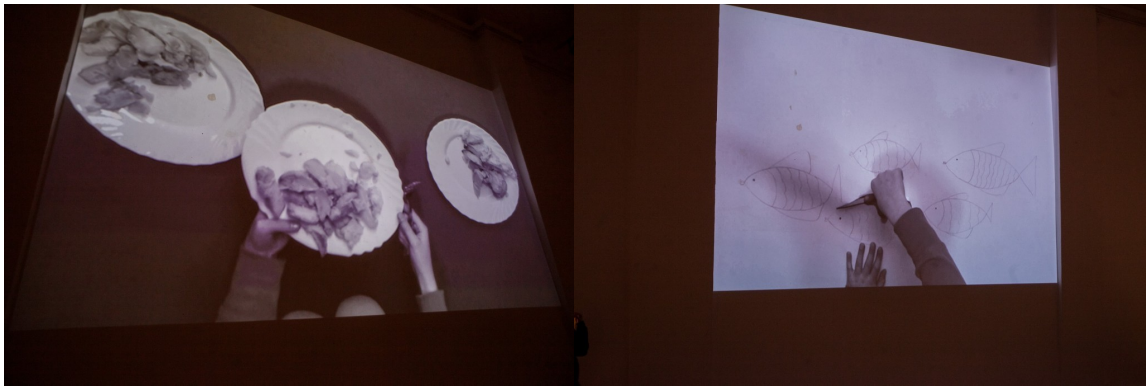


Figure 2 Nela Hasanbegović, *Story About a Fish*, video performance, 2013.



Figure 3 Šejla Kamerić, *Dream House*, installation view of video, 2002.



Figure 4 Ibro Hasanović , *Pieter Brueghel in the Letters of my Father*, video, 2013.



Figure 5 Borjana Mrdja, *Border*, performance, 2010.



Figure 6 Lana Čmajčanin, *Blank Maps Series: 551.35 — Geography of Time*, installation, 2014.



Figure 7 Mladen Miljanović, *Do You Intend to Lie to Me*, experimental film, 2011.
Video link: <https://vimeo.com/24960615>



Figure 8 Radenko Milak, *What else did you see? – I couldn't see everything!*, 24 grisaille watercolor, 2010-2012.



Figure 9 Ron Haviv, *Arkan's Tigers kill Bosnian Muslim civilians during the first battle for Bosnia in Bijeljina, Bosnia, March 31, 1992.*



Figure 10 Zoran Naskovski, *War Frames*, video stills, installation and web project, 1999.
Web project link: <http://www.warframes.com/>



Figure 11 DOPLgenger, *Fragments*, experimental video series, 2012-2015.

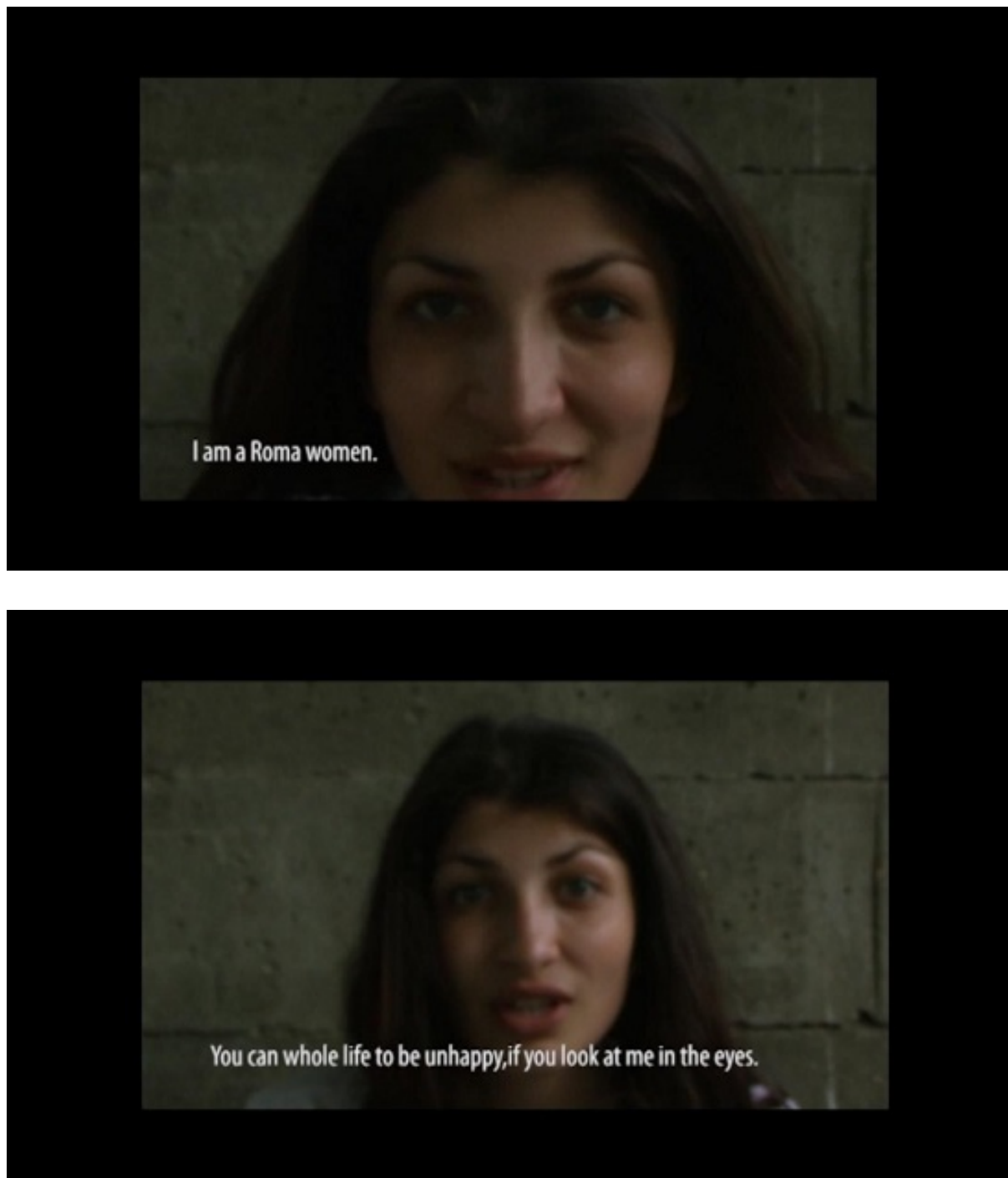


Figure 12 Selma Selman, *Do Not Look Into Gypsy Eyes*, video performance, 2013.
Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKCgPU8jAcI>



Figure 13 Tanja Ostojić, *Naked Life*, video performance series, 2004-2011.
Video link: <https://vimeo.com/74851684>



Figure 14 Sanja Iveković , *Resnik*, installation, 1994.



Figure 15 Zlatko Ćosić, *Only The Chimney Stays*, video, 2010.
Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4x9oHxc-L6g>



Figure 16 Igor Grubić, *East Side Story*, two-channel video installation, 2006-2008.
Video: <https://vimeo.com/64892049>

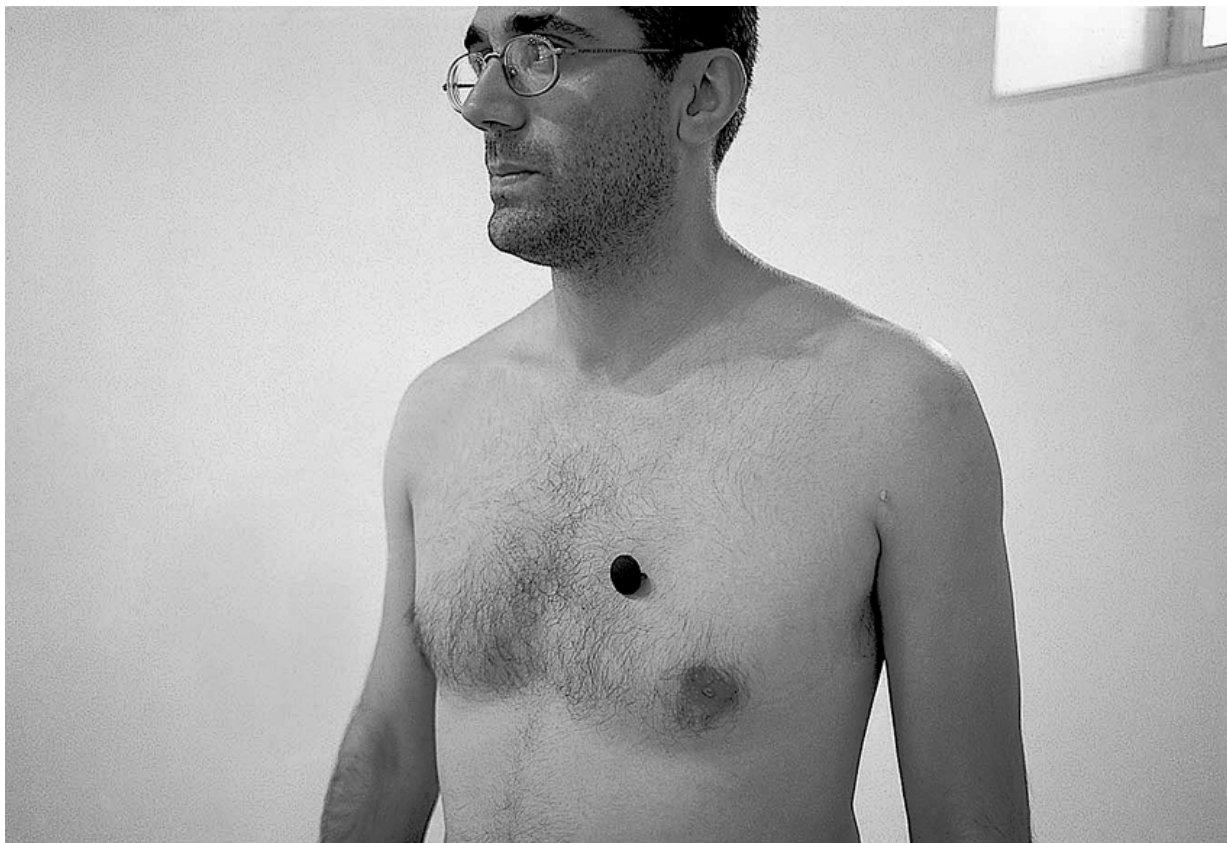


Figure 17 Slaven Tolj, *Untitled (Soldier)*, performance, 1993.

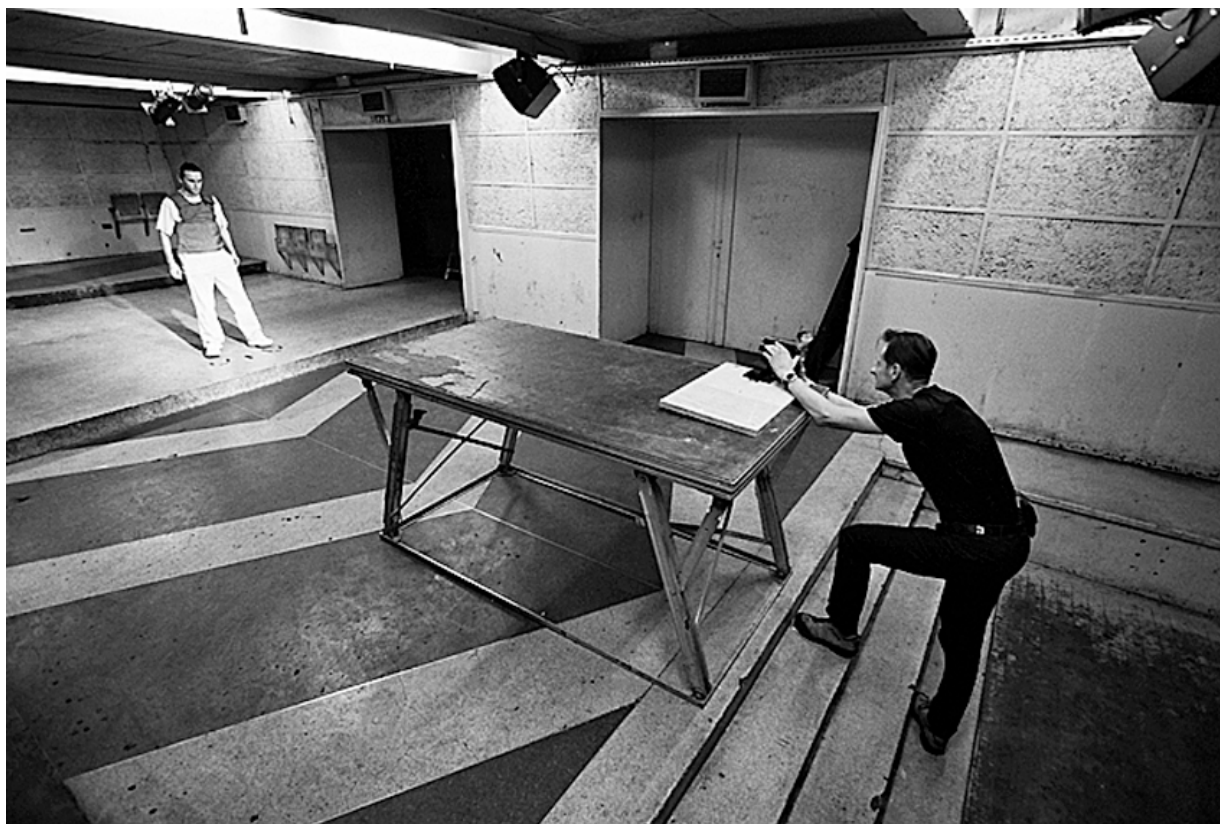


Figure 18 Boris Šincek, *Shooting*, Performance, 2002.



Figure 19 Adela Jušić, *The Sniper*, video installation, 2007.

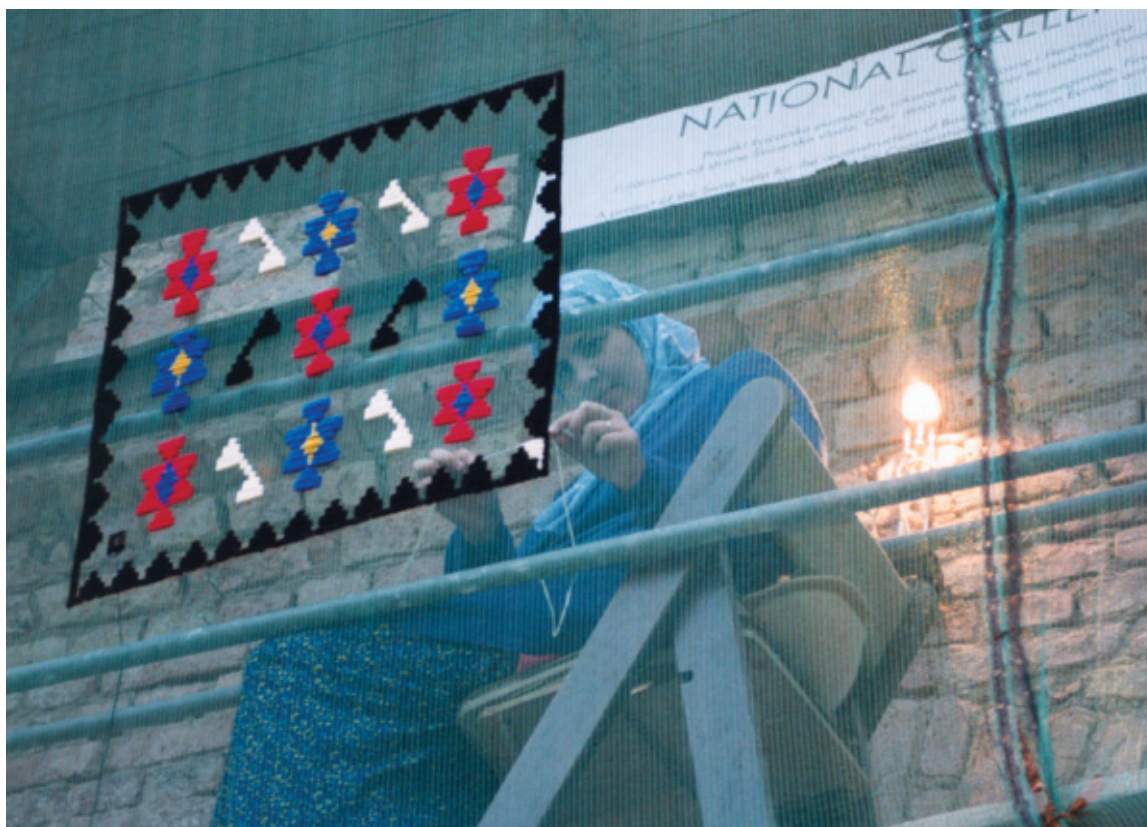


Figure 20 Maja Bajević, *Women at Work — Under Construction*, collaborative performance, video and installation, 1999.



Figure 21 Maja Bajević, *Women at Work — Under Construction*, collaborative performance, video and installation, 1999.



Figure 22 Irena Lagator Pejović, *Registrar*, video performance, 2004.

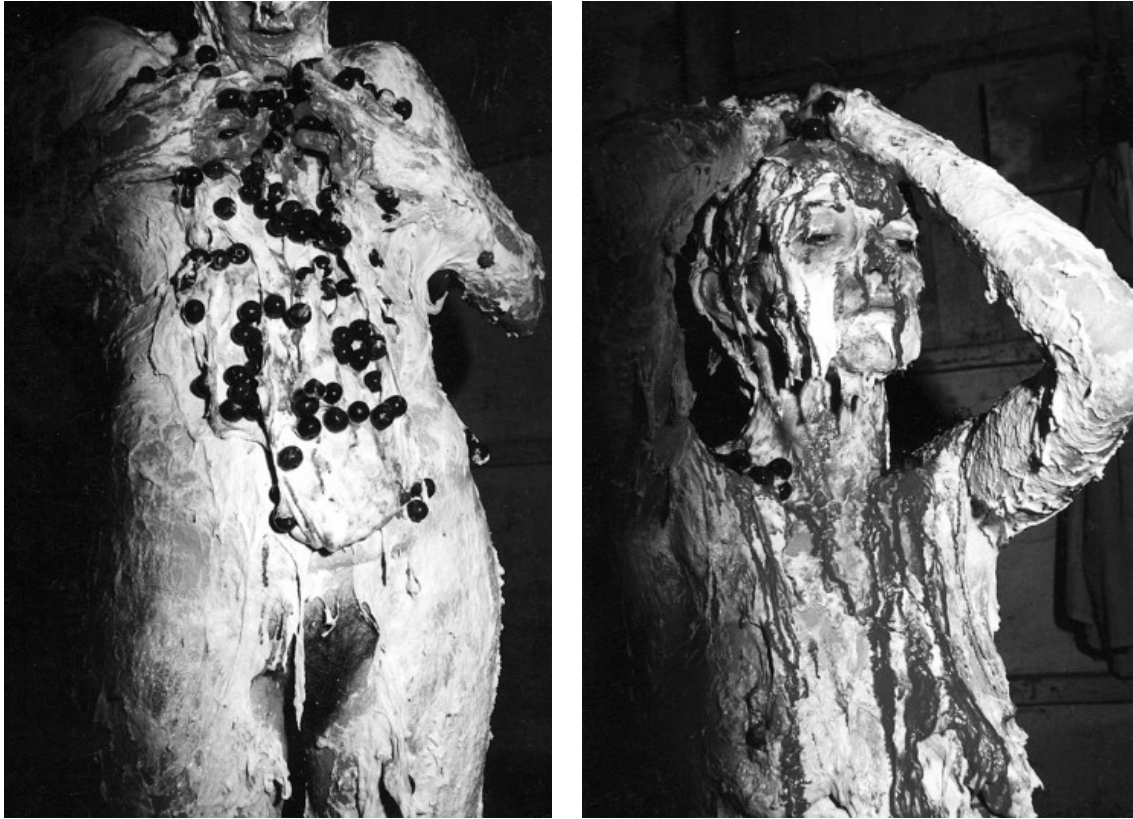


Figure 23 Vlasta Žanić, *Maraschino Cherries*, performance, 2002.



Figure 24 Marina Abramović, *Balkan Baroque*, performance and multi-channel video, 1997.



Figure 25 Marina Abramović, *Balkan Baroque*, performance and multi-channel video, 1997.
Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbswpr7ibBA>



Figure 26 Marina Abramović, *Balkan Erotic Epic*, performance and multi-channel video, 2006.



Figure 27 Nela Hasanbegović, *Postscriptum*, video performance, 2008.



Figure 28 Nemanja Cvijanović, *Paying My Electricity Bill*, installation, 2008.



Figure 29 Ibro Hasanović, *Spectre*, video, 2012.
Video link: <https://vimeo.com/67141011>



Figure 30 Ivan Grubanov, *United Dead Nations*, installation, 2015.



Figure 31 Gordana Anđelić Galić, *Mantra*, video performance, 2006.
Video link: <https://vimeo.com/60364334>



Figure 32 Božidar Jurjević, *Space of Our Survival* (above) and *O-Circulation-Imperial Hilton* (below), multi-format art object, 2011



Figure 33 Ibro Hasanović, *Applause*, video installation, 2013.
Video link: <https://vimeo.com/69172335>



Figure 34 Aleksandar Stanovski, *Penetration*, performance, 2005.



Figure 35 Jasmina Cibic, *Tourists Welcome*, performance, 2007.
Video link: <https://vimeo.com/106870199>



Figure 36 IRWIN, Time for a New State, 2011-2016.



Figure 37 IRWIN, *Time for a New State*, billboards in Moscow (above) and Prague (below), 2011-2016.



Figure 38 Alma Suljević, *4-entity*, performance, 1997-present.



Figure 39 Alma Suljević, *Annulling the Truth*, performance, 1999.



Figure 40 Vladimir Nikolic, *Death Anniversary of Marcel Duchamp*, performance, 2004.
Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKoOJw5FeWA>



Figure 41 Natalija Vujošević, *Market Will Cure Our Wounds*, installation, 2015.

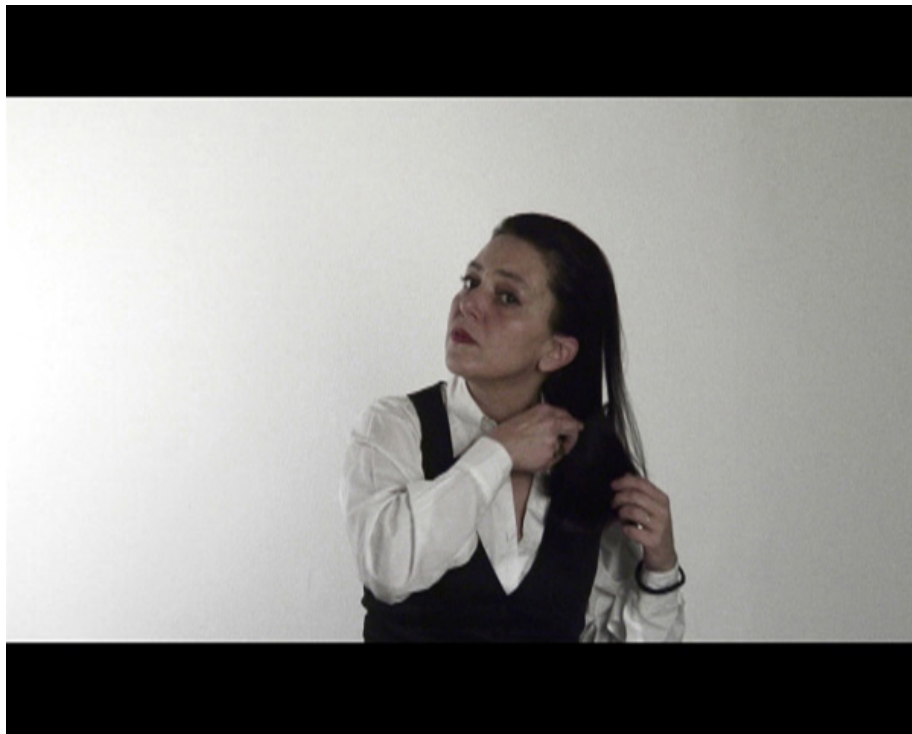


Figure 42 Maja Bajević, *Art Has To Be National, An Artist Has To Be National*, video performance, 2012.

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