

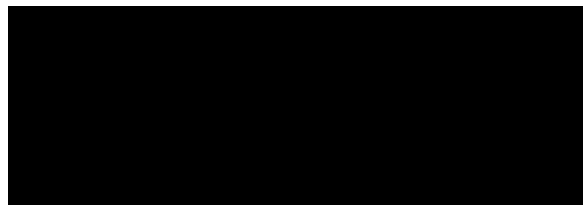
The Instrumentalization of Contemporary Art in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2013 – 2018

Matthew Webber

UCL

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I, Matthew Webber, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis:



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This thesis is dedicated to Garth, for asking the important questions.



Let them show not only that she is pleasant but also useful to states and to human life,
and we will listen in a kindly spirit;
for if this can be proved we shall surely be the gainers –
I mean, if there is a use in poetry as well as a delight?

Plato, Republic, Book X

The best thing that could have happened to art was its divorce from government.

Gerhard Richter and Hans Ulrich Obrist (1995: 101)
The Daily Practice of Painting: Writings and Interviews, 1962–1993,
Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press.

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Abstract

Following the end of the Bosnian War in 1995, a then unprecedented level of international aid was deployed in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH). A portion of this was devoted to the sponsorship and support of contemporary art. This thesis investigates the reasons for this, whether it was effective, and whether it had any further effects on the 'art system' of BiH. I propose a number of reasons why contemporary art was used as an instrument in the country, drawn from the historical discourse on the uses to which 'culture' may be put in effecting societal change, and suggest that contemporary art possesses a number of characteristics that make it a particularly useful tool in both developing the public sphere and promoting the discussion of particular themes. I then present three 'biographies' of artworks that were produced and displayed in BiH between 2013 and 2018, all of which display examples of instrumentalization, and which are based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted over the same period. I argue that though such programs have been effective in strengthening civil society in the country, they have also had a number of detrimental effects on the art system of it. Specifically, whilst funding contemporary art is able to produce critical reflection on political and social issues, an overuse of this tool, or too inflexible an application of it, may result in a distortion of the art system, and ultimately destroy the very characteristics that make contemporary art valuable.

Impact Statement

The impact of this thesis can be described in three ways. Within academia, I see the primary impact of this work as stemming from the approach I develop to understanding why contemporary art is valued by the international community in transitional states, and I envisage that this part of the present thesis will inform future academic approaches to this subject. Secondly, the data I present here may have an impact on the way in which cultural policy is developed and implemented in BiH. Cultural programs in the country are generally assessed via public survey, where they are assessed at all. As such, the ethnographic investigation of the effects of such programs I present here may guide future policy-makers in designing programs which avoid some of the problems I have outlined. Lastly, the arguments and material I present here may be read, albeit with caution, as illustrative of the value of culture in post-conflict states, and some of the issues raised by its deployment as instrument for social change. I therefore envisage that this work will have an impact in guiding cultural intervention in post-conflict states more generally.

Chapter 1: Introduction

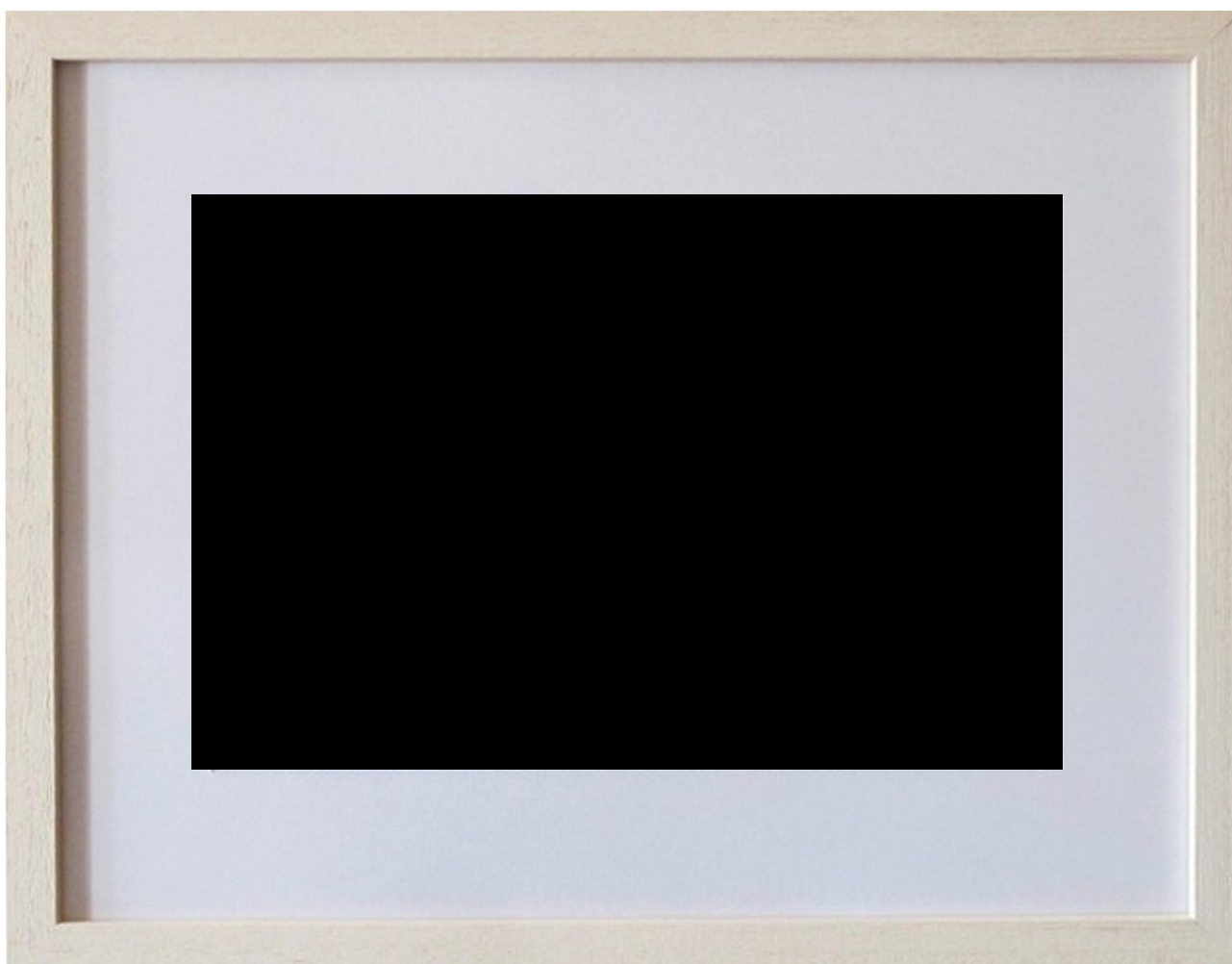


Fig. 1: Untitled / Viva La Transicion! (2015), Bojan Stojčić, inkjet print on paper, 30x50cm (credit: Duplex Gallery)

Sarajevo, 14th June 2018, around 21:00

The exhibition is called The Sarajevo Storage, and is at the National Gallery of BiH (Fig. 2). The works exhibited come from the private art collection of Pierre Courtin, who has acquired them over a 16 year engagement with the art scene of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH). As the curator of the galleries Duplex 10m², and then Duplex 100m², Pierre has been at the center of this scene from 2002 until today. On this particular evening, at this particular time, I am standing next to Pierre, glass of wine in hand, discussing an artwork that is on prominent display: *Viva la Transcion!* by Bojan Stojčić (Fig. 1). It is a photograph of a Sarajevo tram, parked outside the train station, on which has been stenciled a slogan that would be funny if it wasn't so tragic.



Fig. 2: Poster for The Sarajevo Storage exhibition, hanging on the National Gallery of BiH

Though this event is the beginning of the exhibition, it also represents an ending. The Duplex gallery, which has been the project, love, and obsession of Pierre for the past 16 years, is closing. The exhibition is also the end (at least for now) of a long journey undertaken by Bojan's artwork, which was conceived of in a smoky bar not far from this exhibition, began its life as a slogan painted on the side of tram, was photographed, was displayed in many places, and is now on the wall of the National Gallery.

The Duplex galleries were supported, between 2002 and 2018, by a succession of international cultural organizations. Between 2004 and 2008, this funding came from the Institut Français, the French state's international cultural arm. From 2008 until 2018, the gallery was supported by the Agnes B. Foundation, a private charitable foundation set up by by a French fashion designer. In addition, throughout the entire period the gallery has been sustained by a huge number of small grants from a vast variety of international NGOs. Exactly how many is a subject for debate, but the last time Pierre counted there were more than two hundred.

Though each of these organizations expresses their motivations for funding contemporary art differently, they share a remarkably consistent vision of what contemporary art can do in BiH. The sponsors for this particular exhibition are the Agnes B. Foundation, the Institut Français, and the WARM Foundation. The Agnes B. foundation says that its aim is the 'creation of a public space devoted to arts and culture' (Agnes B. Foundation 2009). The Warm Foundation is 'is an international Foundation working on the world's contemporary conflicts ... is dedicated to war reporting, war art, war memory ... bringing together people – journalists, artists, historians, researchers, activists – with a common passion for "telling the story with excellence and integrity"', and is 'dedicated to the promotion of emerging talents and to education' (WARM Foundation n.d.). In an interview in 2015, the Project Manager of the WARM Foundation, Velma Šarić, told me that exhibitions like this were the 'core of what we do ... people engage with art [in a way that they do not] with culture' (interview with Velma Šarić, Project Manager of WARM Foundation, 23rd October 2015). The Foundation, in turn, has been funded by a huge variety of private and institutional sponsors: their website lists 104 supporters and 45 partners (WARM Foundation n.d.).

These aims are, presumably, being achieved by the exhibition taking place around Pierre and I, in which dozens of people are looking at art, drinking wine, and talking. The space is undoubtedly a 'public space devoted to arts and culture', in the words of the Agnes B. Foundation. Bojan's piece, and many of the works that are displayed alongside it, are perhaps 'telling the story with excellence

and integrity’, in the words of WARM. Indeed, since many of the artworks in the exhibition deal, more or less directly, with the current political and social situation of BiH, some of the conversations at the exhibition opening are about the same topics. My fieldnotes for that evening, however, note that one of the most common interpretations given to the works in the exhibition were that they drew attention to the deep contrast between the dynamism of the art scene of BiH, and the country’s stagnant political and economic situation. And indeed, the local press, quoting the gallery text, would characterize the exhibition as ‘extracted from [the] commercial sector’, an ‘anarchist island within the art world governed by money, standardization and compromises’, a ‘personal, emotional and sentimental utopia’ (Crenn 2018).

The aims that contemporary art were expected to achieve in BiH, if one is to believe the documents that justified its funding, were vast. The creation of open public spaces such as The Sarajevo Storage exhibition was expected, from the perspective of the international community, to contribute (at least) to the strengthening of the civil society of the country. In many cases, they were also expected to contribute to the promotion of a huge range of discourses and processes: reconciliation between previously warring ethnicities; to allow under-represented minorities access to the public sphere; and ultimately to contribute to the emergence of BiH as a democratic, prosperous, European state.

These seem weighty responsibilities, however, to entrust to Bojan as an artist, Pierre as a curator, or indeed myself as an audience member. Are the things that Bojan’s photographs are ‘saying’, if they are doing so at all, contributing to these aims? Or is the purpose of his photograph, seen from the perspective of the sponsors of the exhibition, merely to gather us together? Is it merely a lure to attract diplomats, art lovers, and PhD Anthropology students? How are we, as gallery goers, expected to improve BiH?

And indeed, these seem large expectations to place on a group of artists. Bojan forms an informal part of what might loosely be called a new generation of Bosnian artists. They are opposed to accepting international funding for their art, instead wanting to maintain their ‘freedom’ to make art that is not ‘political’ (these terms are theirs). They do not live as political radicals. They hang around bars and cafes like any other 20 year-olds, and try to make a living making art. Funding from the international community helps in this regard. Yet, it seems, they have an important part to play in eventually, finally, wrenching Bosnia out of the state of transition that it has been stuck in for 22 years.

Research Questions

The Bosnian War finished in 1995. Between 1995 and 2016, the country received an unprecedented level of international aid. World Bank data on the Overseas Development Assistance (ODA, a widely used measure of international aid) received by BiH shows that in 1995 alone international aid totaled US \$965 million, and made up fully 60% of the income of the country. In 2016, the country received US \$445 million, a total that still contributes 2.5% of its income (World Bank 2018) (Fig. 3).

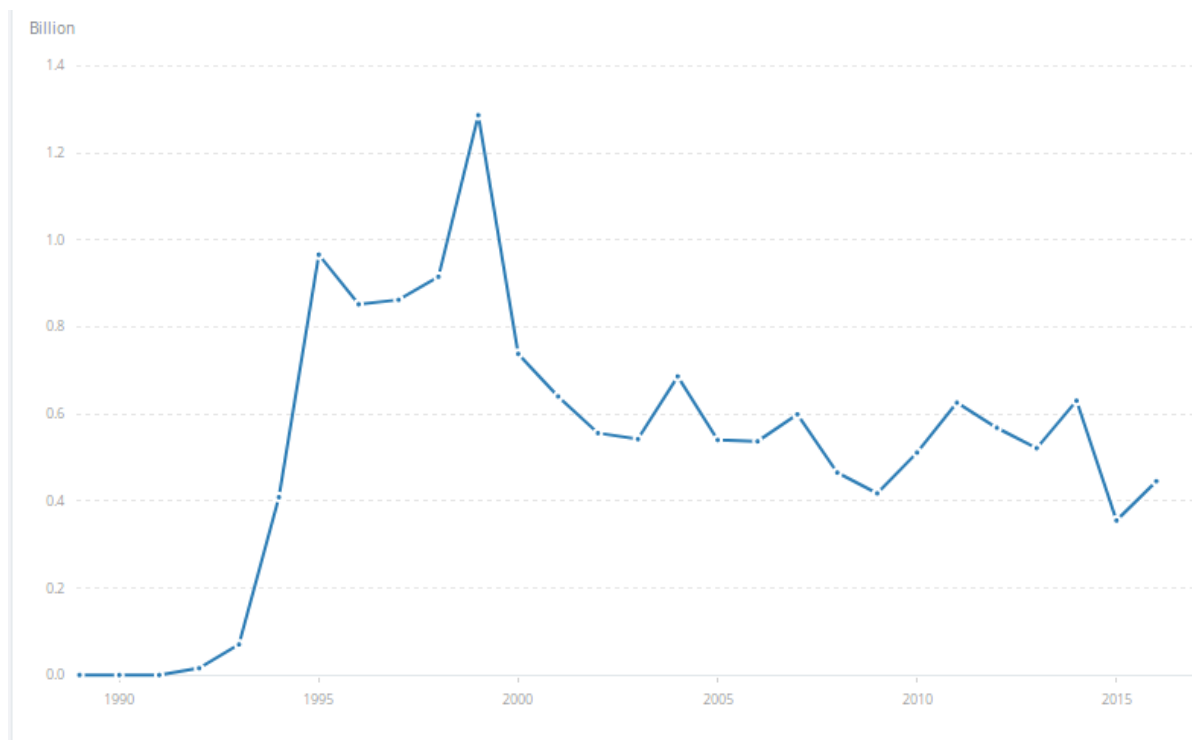


Fig. 3: Net ODA received by BiH (current US\$), (World Bank 2018)

A proportion of this funding was devoted to cultural development, including NGOs, institutions, and other organizations working with contemporary art. Funding was given, for instance, to rebuild the National Gallery in Sarajevo and the bridge in Mostar; used to set up and sustain galleries such as Duplex and the Soros Center for Contemporary Art; and given to a wide range of local NGOs devoted to the production and display of contemporary works of art.

Why?

More specifically, why did international organizations fund art in Bosnia between 1995 and 2018? What was this expected to achieve? Did it succeed in achieving these objectives?

A shallow answer to the first two questions may, in a sense, be found in the statements of these organizations. The European Cultural Foundation, which has funded many art projects in the country, states its core concern is to ‘re-invigorate European democracy through cultural actions’ (European Cultural Foundation 2014). The Swiss Cultural Foundation, a major funder of the arts in Bosnia until 2013, summarizes its mission as contributing ‘to the promotion of democracy and freedom of expression ... through employment of cultural instruments’ (Swiss Cultural Foundation 2014). The primary political authority in Bosnia, The Office of the High Representative (OHR), goes further. It states that this support, cultural and otherwise, is designed to ensure that the country ‘evolves into a peaceful and viable democracy on course for integration in[to] Euro-Atlantic institutions’ (OHR 2014). These statements, however, reveal relatively little about the way in which contemporary art was understood by these organizations between 1995, when the first cultural programs in the country were funded, and 2018, by which date they are increasingly being discontinued. What is it about paintings and performances, in short, that means they are seen as a useful tool in achieving a ‘viable democracy’?

An answer to the third question, whether contemporary art has been able to achieve these aims, is even more difficult. In fact, given the rather vague way in which these aims are stated, it is debatable whether this question can be answered at all. What, precisely, would the ‘re-invigoration’ of Bosnian democracy look like, and, if it occurs, how are we to assess art’s contribution to it? Is this even something that contemporary art can achieve, or are we expecting altogether too much of it? Ultimately, why did these organizations seek to instrumentalize contemporary art to bring about social and political transformation, even in the absence of hard evidence that it can do so? Has such a belief in the power of art ever been justified?

The aim of this work is to suggest answers to these questions by investigating them in a particular time and place, BiH between 2013 and 2018. By doing so, these questions may be narrowed down: What was the perception of contemporary art by those involved with it in BiH during this period? What social, political, cultural, or other aims was contemporary art expected to achieve in this context? Did it achieve these aims? Were there other, unintended consequences of its sponsorship? The answers to these questions, as presented here, are grounded in ethnographic data collected between 2013 and 2018. I will also argue, however, that the interrogation of these issues within this

context gives rise to insights into much broader issues: the legitimacy of seeing contemporary art as a tool for the realization of social and political objectives, and ultimately the belief that art can effect such societal transformation.

Summary

I will provide answers to these questions in the following way. In Chapter 2 I will contextualize the international support given to contemporary art in post-conflict BiH. In order to do so, I will give a brief history of Yugoslavia, and characterize the contemporary art scene of that country. I will argue that the Yugoslav state permitted the existence of a 'neo-avant-garde' in order to legitimize the claim that Yugoslavia was more permissive than the states of the Eastern Bloc and the USSR. I will then briefly describe the Bosnian War (1992-1995), paying particular attention to two seemingly contradictory themes: the way in which the conflict came to be understood in the West as an essentially civil, ethnic struggle, and the simultaneous involvement of many external states in the conflict in order to secure influence in the Western Balkans. I will then argue that the War, though hugely destructive, created or allowed the emergence of a cultural renaissance in the country, and particularly in its capital Sarajevo. Though much of the contemporary art (and other forms of culture) created during that time carefully avoided political and ethnic themes, they also functioned as an implicit call for the West to intervene to stop the conflict, and to save the 'European' civilization that was being destroyed in Sarajevo. I will then describe the peace agreement that ended the conflict, and the criticisms that have been made of it: specifically, the way in which it essentially 'froze' the conflict by imposing upon the country a bloated and ineffective form of government. After noting the unprecedented level of international intervention in BiH after 1995, I will then argue that this was motivated and informed by a number of interlinked discourses. These are, firstly, the paradigm of 'new interventionism', in which the international community came to see state sovereignty as less important than, and sometimes actively opposed to, the guaranteeing of human rights for the citizens of such states, and which therefore legitimized international intervention in order to secure them. Secondly, the paradigm of 'transition' implied that the states of the former Eastern Bloc (in particular) could be transformed, partially through the intervention of the international community, into democratic, market-capitalist polities. After noting these motivations, I will describe the type of state that the international community intended to create in BiH, which was based on a particular vision of the country and the processes needed to achieve this

vision. At the end of Chapter 2, I will note that this international intervention was not limited to political or economic programs, but that it also came to include a significant ‘cultural’ component.

Accordingly, Chapter 3 will describe the process through which culture and contemporary art came to be seen as useful instruments in achieving societal change, in BiH and elsewhere. I will start by noting that the way in which the international community have conceived of culture in BiH is as an ‘instrument’, and thus it is possible to talk of the ‘instrumentalization’ of culture in the country. In order to contextualize the way in which this instrument was employed in BiH, I will begin Chapter 3 by describing the provisions that the peace agreement that ended the war (the Dayton agreement) made for the administration of cultural policy, or rather the lack of them. This has meant that the majority of the cultural programs that have occurred in post-conflict BiH have been administered and funded by the international community. The goals that these cultural programs are designed to achieve are largely identical with the self-stated aims of the international community in BiH more generally: primarily, there is a focus on the development of civil society as a mediator between the public and the political system, and as part of this culture is expected to contribute to the development of a number of subsidiary discourses such as multiculturalism and reconciliation. There is, however, one exception: the Dayton agreement created a national commission, albeit still under international supervision, for the management of monumental cultural heritage, largely due to the cultural destruction that had occurred during the Bosnian War. I will argue, however, that this can also be seen as indicative of the forms of culture that were deemed worthy of protection by the international community. The protection of monumental cultural heritage has been a concern since the founding of UNESCO in 1945, but during the subsequent years the definition of ‘culture’ used by the international community, as well as the aims it is presumed to be able to achieve, has broadened significantly.

In Chapter 4 I will argue that contemporary art came to be seen as an important part of broader cultural programs in BiH, and the production and display of it an important sign of the country’s ongoing viability. In the immediate post-conflict period in BiH, a number of projects devoted to the creation and display of contemporary art received international recognition and funding. The reasons why they did so form part of the answers to my research questions above, and I will therefore close Chapter 4 by advancing an argument: that contemporary art possesses certain characteristics that mean that the international community perceive in it an ability to ‘afford’ particular outcomes. Specifically, funding contemporary art produces spaces which resemble the public sphere, and can contribute to it. In addition, the sponsorship of contemporary art institutions

such as galleries and artist collectives can be used to fill such spaces with artworks that guide public discussion toward particular themes, and particular interpretations of those themes. All of these ‘affordances’ are problematic, in that a detailed analysis of the way in which contemporary art is presumed to operate suggests that it might not be able to achieve the outcomes it is believed to. Nonetheless, I argue, these affordances were the primary reason why contemporary art was funded in post-conflict BiH, and they form the basis for my analysis of the outcomes of this.

In Chapter 5 I will outline my research methodology. I will begin by noting that the types of spaces I have outlined, in which artworks are ‘exhibited’ in some form, form part of a much broader ‘art system’. An understanding of the aims, mechanisms, and outcomes of the instrumentalization of contemporary art therefore entails an understanding of this broader system. I will present a model of the art system, which contains a number of sites, processes, and outcomes, linked together through the movement of artworks. I will argue, therefore, that the art system may be studied through tracing the movement of individual artworks through this system. The ‘artworks’ to be ‘followed’, however, should not be understood as merely material objects, but as composite ‘things’ which have an existence that extends beyond their physical manifestation: not just in the ideas, concerns, and processes that lead to their creation, but also in the discussion, debate, and press coverage they generate. I will argue that my research questions may be answered by closely observing the way in which such ‘things’ interact with the spaces they pass through, and the processes that cause them to move between such sites. The instrumentalization of art in post-conflict BiH is largely designed to create and sustain such sites, and to facilitate the movement of (some) artworks between them, because through doing so artworks both convene public space and may also guide the discussion within them toward particular themes. In investigating these sites, I will then argue, participation in them is critical. As such, my research methodology is primarily concerned to use participant-observation to research and construct artwork ‘biographies’ that link various such sites together, and through which the outcomes of sponsoring them may be read. By applying this methodology in BiH between 2013 and 2018, and more intensively during 2014 and 2015, I was able to collect data that allowed me to construct a large number of such artwork biographies, and I will present a portion of this data over the course of the following three chapters.

Specifically, Chapters 6 – 8 each describe a particular artwork biography, and use this to reflect on the aims and mechanisms, and assess the outcomes, of the instrumentalization of contemporary art in post-conflict BiH.

Chapter 6 presents the biography of *And what else did you see? – I couldn't see everything!* (2010), an artwork by Radenko Milak. This piece is composed of 24 oil paintings, each of which is a 'copy' of an iconic (and violent) image of the Bosnian War. It was originally conceived of during the Spaport biennial project in 2010, but then came to be displayed in a variety of exhibitions over the following years. It had its first exhibition in another biennial project, entitled D-0 Ark, which was convened in a Yugoslav-era nuclear bunker in Konjic. The first iteration of this project, in 2011, used an art exhibition inside the Bunker to explore themes of 'reconciliation', for which it received a large amount of funding from a huge variety of international and domestic organizations. *And What Else Did You See?* was then displayed at an exhibition at the national art gallery of Serbia. In both of these exhibitions, the artwork was valued for its ability to promote reflection and discussion on the necessity and process of reconciliation in post-conflict BiH. During the second part of its biography, however, the piece was valued for a different set of reasons. It was displayed, between 2012 and 2018, in a number of exhibitions organized and curated by Duplex Gallery, including a number of international art fairs. In these contexts, the piece was valued more for the way in which it represented 'Bosnian art', and (more problematically) for the violent nature of the image it depicted. The piece can therefore be used to explore the way in which Bosnian contemporary art is read and re-read as it moves between spaces, and the way in which Duplex operates is also instructive in this regard. In conclusion to this chapter, I will argue that the types of project and site it came into contact with during the earlier part of its biography are indicative of the way in which culture and contemporary art have been seen by the international community in BiH: these projects were concerned primarily to create social space which both mirrored the public sphere and sometimes, with the help of such artworks as *And What Else Did You See?*, promoted the discourse of reconciliation. On the other hand, the relative success of *And What Else Did You See?* in an international context raises uncomfortable questions regarding the complicity of the West in consuming and promoting images of violence, and illustrates a broader theme: that many artists in BiH feel compelled to produce 'art about the war'. This is problematic not only because it creates frustration among artists, but also because it illustrates that the instrumentalization of contemporary art can lead to the reduction of its critical power, which is one of the reasons why it is prized.

The artwork biography presented in Chapter 7 is that of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*, a large mural that was created by Adela Jušić and Andreja Dugandžić for the Kaliedoskop Festival in Tuzla in 2015. The creation of this work took place over a relatively short period, but its biography stretches back to 2012, with the founding of the group, Crvena, that Adela and Andreja form part of. This

group has created a social space in Sarajevo which acts as an important hub for the art system of the city and BiH more generally. The group, and this space, has been sustained by numerous grants from the international community. These funds have been given for individual projects, however, rather than the ongoing activities of the group. This has been a conscious decision by the members of Crvena, who fear that by accepting more direct funding they would come to be seen as ‘agents of the international community’, and their ability to produce critical work would be undermined. They therefore operate through a sometimes uneasy alliance with international cultural organizations, as part of which they must ‘hide’ the true aims of much of their work in order to gain funding for it. This was the case, for instance, in the project that led directly to *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*: an archival project devoted to making public documents relating to a much earlier women’s organization. It was also the case, to a degree, in the production of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* itself, during which Adela and Andreja co-operated with the administrators of the Kaliedoskop festival in order to tailor their description of the piece to conform to the requirements of the international organizations who would eventually fund its creation. In conclusion to this biography, I will note that, like Duplex, the space that Crvena have created is precisely the kind of space that the international community envisage as useful in achieving their aims in BiH: a space in which people may gather to discuss politics, culture, and a range of other topics. Further, the way in which Crvena work, of which the creation of the *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* piece is indicative, is deeply collaborative, and uses art to draw people together, and especially young people. However, each of these spaces are also exclusionary, as are many of the spaces that I describe across this thesis. The biography of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* may therefore be used to draw out two observations regarding the affordances of art. One is that, whilst artworks that use ‘relationality’ as a technique can draw people together, there are limits to this approach. The second is that, although in some senses Crvena are exactly the kind of group that the international community would deem to be useful in using art to generate critical comment on political and social discourses in BiH, the group’s politics are in fact too critical to easily attract funding. This suggests that, although contemporary art is prized for its ability to provoke critical comment, in reality there are particular forms of criticality that are permitted.

Chapter 8 is the last of three chapters in which I will present an artwork biography. The artwork described in this chapter is *Viva La Transicion!*, the same work with which I started this introduction. The context in which the piece was produced, however, forms a striking contrast to the exhibition I have described above, which was funded by a number of international cultural

organizations. Bojan, the artist, forms part of a artists' collective named Kreaktiva, and one of the primary characteristics of this group is that they reject international funding for their activities, fearing that in accepting this they would limit the ability of their work to provide genuinely critical comment. The work produced by the group, of which *Viva La Transicion!* is a part, is heavily influenced the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde of the 1980s, in that it incorporates elements of humour and irrationality, and Kreaktiva seek to display such works in unusual spaces. One such exhibition, *Izložba na Šinama*, took place inside a tram carriage on 6th April 2015, and it was as part of this exhibition that *Viva La Transicion!* was produced. This exhibition, and indeed *Viva La Transicion!*, sought to interrupt the normal operation of Sarajevo, and expose new audiences to contemporary art, by 'confronting' them with an exhibition during their daily commute. Following this exhibition, a photograph was made of Bojan's piece, and this was eventually displayed by Pierre Courtin of the Duplex gallery in a series of international art fairs. Thus, although Bojan had produced the work partially as a critique of the commodification of art in post-conflict BiH, he came to reluctantly agree to display his own work in an environment in which this was likely. The piece was then displayed in a large exhibition in Sarajevo, the Sarajevo Art Fair, although the story of how it got there is a complex one. Initially, this art fair was conceived of by Pierre and others as a way of stimulating the Bosnian art market, but for a variety of reasons this project was then abandoned. Then, however, the project was re-born under a new organizational team, including members of Kreaktiva, who re-envisioned it as a non-commercial exhibition aimed at showcasing contemporary Bosnian art. This exhibition was organized very quickly, quite chaotically, and with very little funding: something which those involved with it took great pride in, and referred to as the 'Spirit of Sarajevo'. The last exhibition (to date) that *Viva La Transicion!* has been displayed in is the one I have described above. The artwork biography described in this chapter is then used to reflect on a number of themes. The type of spaces and exhibitions created by Kreaktiva are, arguably, exactly the sort of critical, open space that the international community has sought to create in the country, but the fact that Kreaktiva reject this funding suggests that there exists a resistance to the international community's broader project in BiH. In addition, the way in which *Viva La Transicion!* moved from an 'anarchist', 'autonomous' environment into those in which it was funded by the international community, and offered for sale, is indicative of broader scholarship on the ability of avant-gardist contemporary art to resist processes of co-option. Finally, I will use the ambiguity of many of the pieces that *Viva La Transicion!* was displayed alongside to reflect on the extent to which this characteristic is valued by the international community.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In Chapter 9 I will reach some conclusions on my research questions. I will begin by describing the clearest, most direct, and perhaps most obvious outcome of the instrumentalization of contemporary art in post-conflict BiH: the maintenance of the art system of the country. I will argue that this art system is in a period of resurgence, despite the gradual reduction in funding from the international community, but that its dependence on international funding has also led to the destruction of some of the affordances that led to it be funded in the first place. I will then turn to the stated aims of the international community in funding contemporary art in the country, starting with the goal of ‘strengthening civil society’. Contemporary art, I propose, can contribute to this objective, by providing social spaces in which extant civil society groups can meet. During my fieldwork, however, I found little evidence that contemporary art produces publicly critical comment, and therefore little evidence that it directly contributes to the public sphere of the country, and therefore similarly little evidence that it directly contributes to the more specific aims of the intervention agencies who have funded it. Given these findings, I will conclude this chapter by questioning why contemporary art continues to be believed in as a force for social change.

Chapter 2: Contemporary Art and BiH 1945 – 1995

In this chapter I will contextualize the support given to culture and art in BiH by international agencies, international NGOs, and other organizations from 1995 onward. In order to do so, I will give a very brief history of Yugoslavia, and characterize the contemporary art produced there. My argument here, drawing on that of other scholars, is that contemporary art occupied a somewhat ambiguous position within Yugoslavia: whilst it was not given official state support, and was sometimes censored, the Yugoslav state largely tolerated the existence of a neo-avant-garde art scene in order to legitimate claims that it was more tolerant than the countries of the Eastern Bloc. I will then argue that the Bosnian War, though widely understood in the West as an ethnic conflict, can be better seen as a multi-polar struggle for dominance in the region between a large number of external states. I will then argue, again drawing on other scholars, that the Bosnian War, and particularly the Siege of Sarajevo, led to a cultural renaissance in the city, and this cultural scene attracted many Western artists and cultural producers to the city. Lastly, I will outline the international involvement in the country following the end of hostilities in 1995. My argument is that the level of international intervention in BiH's political system from 1995 was unprecedented at that time, that it was motivated by on a number of historically contingent factors, and that it focused on promoting a number of discourses that would come to shape the support given to culture and art from 1995 onward.

Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia, and the art produced there, can be described through sketching a series of ambiguities. This is an approach that has been taken by previous scholars. Todorova's (2009) *Imagining The Balkans* argues that ambiguity has characterized the western discourse on the region from the earliest days of scholarship there. Her book is an attempt to do for the Balkans what Said had earlier done for the 'Orient' (1979), but Todorova's argument is not that the Balkans were othered in the same fashion as Said's Orient. Rather, she argues that the region was (and is) regarded as occupying a liminal space between East and West, and that as such 'unlike orientalism, which is a discourse about an imputed opposition, Balkanism is a discourse about an imputed ambiguity' (Todorova 2009: 17). Further, Bakic-Hayden argues, these ambiguities are present within the region itself, such that there exist a series of fractal, 'nesting Orientalisms' through which each ethnic, religious,

political, and sexual group of the region is seen (Bakić-Hayden 1995a). More recently, similar ambiguities have been used to characterize Yugoslavia itself, at a variety of levels (Zizek 1999). Not only was Yugoslavia part of neither east nor west in a cultural sense: it was also a federal state that was centrally controlled; a Cold War state that was aligned neither to NATO nor the Warsaw Pact; a communist state with capitalist features; a dictatorship that held elections; and whilst committed to Socialist Realism in art, it also permitted 'subversive' art in order to illustrate its essentially benign character.

The modern history of Yugoslavia, BiH, and Sarajevo begins with the founding of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1945, with Josip Broz 'Tito' as the head of State. The country was communist, and was initially economically, politically and diplomatically aligned to the USSR. Following the Tito-Stalin split of 1948, engendered by Tito's frustration at increased Soviet interference, the SFRY sought to re-negotiate its position; from this point onward, it pursued an official policy of Cold War neutrality. This eventually led to the 1956 founding of the non-aligned movement by Yugoslavia, India, and Egypt. From 1948 onward, this non-alignment meant that the SFRY sought to distance itself from Soviet orthodoxy. The most visible manifestation of this process was the increasingly federal character of the SFRY. The state had been explicitly founded as a federation of six republics and two autonomous regions. In practice, however, the initial intent of the leadership of the new country 'was simply to follow the Soviet model, where a hierarchical party apparatus controlled a fictional federation' (Lampe 2000: 229), and in which the six federal republics would possess only limited political agency. However, following the split of 1948, 'the various drawbacks of the Soviet model, plus the desire to repudiate it publicly, [pushed] Tito's Politburo toward a new theory of decentralized socialism' (Lampe 2000: 229). From this point onward, the desire to present the SFRY as an alternative form of communism gave rise to periodic constitutional reforms, most notably those of 1953 and 1964, in which power was successively delegated to republic-level bureaucracies. However, the relationship between the centralized administration and the republics (both politically and ideologically) was more complex than the text of these new constitutions would suggest. Throughout the existence of the SFRY the Communist Party sought to unify the country with an appeal to 'Yugoslavism' rather than federalism or even communism (Lampe 2000: 232), reflected in the state's unofficial motto, 'Brotherhood and Unity' (*Bratstvo i jedinstvo* / *Братство и јединство* in Serbo-Croat). Indeed, in the central bureaucracy there remained a perception that ceding too much autonomy to the republics ran the risk of undermining the entire Yugoslav project. As such, whilst the new constitution of

1953 sought ‘the decentralisation of continued Communist political control over industry’ it also guarded ‘against the dangers of genuine autonomy for the republics themselves’ (Lampe 2000: 251). Similarly, though the new constitution of 1964 ceded further powers ‘to the specific advantage of the republics and regions’ (Lampe 2000: 281), it left significant powers in the hands of central control, and specifically with Tito himself. Throughout the entire existence of the SFRY, from its inception in 1945 to its dissolution in the 1990s, the relationship between central and republic-level administrations remained ambiguous; a situation noted (Stokes et al. 2013) as contributing to the eventual, bloody disintegration of the SFRY.

The Yugoslav Art System

Yugoslavia also sought to distance itself from the USSR with regard to its official policy on art. Following the Tito-Stalin split, the SFRY rejected the Soviet policy of Socialist Realism, in which art and other forms of culture were expected to conform to communist ideology. This permitted the artists of the SFRY a significant level of freedom in comparison to their peers in the Eastern Bloc. Though the SFRY initially ‘attempted to enforce ... a highly centralized and rigid cultural model’ (Wachtel 1998: 146) even before 1948 the new state sought to distance itself from total Soviet orthodoxy. In its first constitution, the vague Soviet definition of permitted art as ‘nationalist in form and socialist in content’ was modified to replace the word ‘socialist’ with the still vaguer ‘generally humanist and democratic’ (Lampe 2000: 233). Following the Tito-Stalin split, this distance became an important political tool in the SFRY’s policy of non-alignment. As such, at the Sixth Party Congress in November 1952, ‘prominent writer Miroslav Krleža ... rejected socialist realism as a cultural standard’ (Lampe 2000: 258) in order to mark an abrupt point of rupture between the SFRY and the USSR. As Merenik (1998) explains, ‘one day the art of the West was identified as a symbol of the class enemy, an example that someone should avoid, and the very next day, the art of the West has been “liberalized,” it became a welcome factor in the policy of “sitting on the fence”’. This liberalization was achieved more through a permissive attitude to enforcement, rather than an explicit change in cultural policy. In the words of Gatalović:

At the Seventh Congress of LCY in 1958, a certain plateau of Party cultural policy was achieved - the Party remained adherent to the goal of political and ideological obedience of artists and cultural workers, but was less inclined to arrest or punish them if they would not obey. The guiding principle was rather one of surveillance, coupled with warnings and threats. (Gatalović 2009: 56)

Thus, after the 1950s artists in the SFRY were in an ambiguous position; like their colleagues in the USSR, they lived in a state committed to Socialist Realism, but ‘the Communist Party no longer arbitrated or interfered in “aesthetic questions”’ (Blažević 2013). However, even if art was nominally ‘freed from political pressures’ (Blažević 2013), art that furthered the ideals of socialism was still afforded tacit or overt support, and on occasion censorship still occurred. Indeed, at the very same conference in which Socialist Realism had been so roundly rejected, the communist party asserted that ‘every opinion that has a struggle for socialism and socialist democracy as its starting point ... should be secured the right to express itself’ (Sixth Congress of the KPJ (SKJ) 1952: 256). Further, there still occurred ‘periodical clashes or cases where political authorities perceived the presence of anti-communist discourse (‘propaganda’) in certain literary works or films’ (Blažević 2013), with the means through which the state sought to control art production gradually growing broader throughout the 1960s and 1970s. As Merenik (1998) states, these means ranged:

From the open attacks on abstract art of 1960s, through a sort of ghettoization of the conceptual art within the Belgrade Student Cultural Center (SKC) after 1968, through restrictive revisions or ignoring of the avant-garde tendencies and championing all forms of populism in the culture, like naive art and folklore, all the way to the emphasizing of national myths (the Battle of Kosovo), and pseudo-religious, commercial new painting. (Merenik 1998)

This approach is posited by Šuvaković (2003) to have given rise to the gradual separation of artists and art into several more-or-less discrete types. His 2003 work delineates three such types; an overtly socialist, ‘official’ scene; secondly, a muted modernism which maintained a nominal neutrality; and lastly a neo-avant-garde practice which was heavily influenced by Western art, largely confined to student centers, and highly critical of state interference. This rubric, whilst reductive, is useful for understanding the art system of Yugoslavia, and particularly for isolating the type of art that would become dominant after 1995.

Šuvaković’s first type of art, the ‘official’ scene, was overtly Socialist Realist, consisted of art and artists overtly sponsored by the state, and was often given the title ‘National Realism’. Within this category, there may be found a further division, in that painting overtly inspired by 19th century folk arts co-existed with practices heavily influenced by Russian Socialist Modernism. The second type of art, Modernist in approach and nominally adherent to Socialist Realism, Šuvaković terms ‘Sober Modernism’ - an art ‘that was decorative, neither abstract nor figurative, and politically neutral’ (Šuvaković 2003: 93). Whilst influenced by Western art practice, this type carefully avoided

political comment, and as such occupied a middle ground between the neo-avant-garde and explicitly state-sponsored work. It was afforded official sanction and support, and came to be exhibited widely in the SFRY. Šuvaković notes that though this type is evident throughout the Eastern Bloc, it only developed ‘fully’ in Yugoslavia due to the unique policies of the SFRY: this practice, which combined elements of both Western and Soviet art, may be regarded as a parallel to the SFRY’s foreign policy. In the early years of the SFRY, ‘Sober Modernism ... occupied the central role and represented the mainstream of culture and art’, but from the 1960s an increasing rivalry grew up ‘both in art practice and in theoretical debates’, such that by 1970 the ‘primary division existed between the representatives of modernism and the neo-avant-garde’ (Blažević 2013): that is, the third type of art.

The Yugoslav Neo-Avant-Garde

It is this third type of art, the neo-avant-garde, that is most important here, because almost all of the Bosnian contemporary art produced after the Bosnian War is a descendant of it. This neo-avant-garde practice was, to-re-iterate, heavily influenced by Western art, largely confined to student centers, highly critical of state interference, and based on ‘various forms of abstract art, Informel, [and] post-conceptual painting’ (Blažević 2013). Such work is given truly encyclopedic treatment in Djurić & Šuvaković’s (2003) *Impossible Histories*, from which it is clear that it initially lacked any official recognition, but later came to be associated with, and exhibited by, student centers. During the span of its existence between the 1960s and the 1990s, the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde exhibited some unusual features when compared to both Western contemporary art and contemporary practices in the USSR. Its development was conditioned by a number of factors, and its character can be described by sketching a series of apparent contradictions.

Although the neo-avant-garde was heavily influenced by Western practices, and indeed was displayed prominently on an international level, it remained marginal within Yugoslavia itself. During the 1970s, as Borčić argues, travelling to Western Europe was ‘surprisingly easy, especially to Italy and France’, and as such the ‘schools of Paris and ... New York were sources of influence for Yugoslav artists’ (Borčić 2003: 492). By the 1980s, this type of work was also increasingly being exhibited outside of Yugoslavia, but remained marginal within the SFRY itself. Partially because of these links with the West, by this later period the art scene of Yugoslavia:

Was rather more developed than those in other Eastern European countries. There were state and regional museums and galleries, art and cultural magazines, and a large number of exhibitions and artists, although it lacked an art market with an appropriate system of management, along with sponsorship and private galleries. (Borčić 2003: 492)

The development of the neo-avant-garde in BiH itself arguably began with the founding of the Sarajevo Fine Arts Academy in 1972. This was followed, in 1982, by the founding of the Zvono ('Bell') group, the movement's most visible exponent in BiH. The Sarajevo art scene of that time has been described as 'an unusual, eclectic, and provocative atmosphere for making artistic experiments', and the Zvono group produced work that was similarly eclectic and provocative, described as: 'pop art focused allegories' that 'did not hesitate to link the incompatible, making works of art in a nomadic way with a nod to conceptual art, to neo-Dada, and pop art' (Djurić et al. 2003: 123). Sarajevo would also come to play an important part in the development of Yugoslav contemporary art in the 1980s through the development of the 'New Primitivism' movement, an originally 'Sarajevan, exclusively male, art and media movement' that incorporated film, theater, music, and surrealist popular culture (Blažević 2013). This scene was also represented internationally through the work of one of the first neo-avant-garde 'Bosnian' (actually Yugoslavian) artists to achieve widespread acclaim: Braco Dimitrijević, who studied in Zagreb and then London, was exhibiting internationally by the mid-1970s, and had a solo show at the Tate Gallery, London, in 1985. Sarajevo was also the site of *Dokumenta*, arguably the most important series of exhibitions of neo-avant-garde art in Yugoslavia. Between May 1984 and May 1987, the artists Jusuf Hadžifeizović, Radoslav Tadić, and Aleksandar Bukvić organized a series of solo shows of artists who were representative of the neo-avant-garde work being produced throughout Yugoslavia, initially displayed in the Collegium Artisticum Club within the Skenderija shopping center, 'at that time one of the best representative spaces for cultural and political events in the city' (Carolo 2016: 50), and culminating in 1987 with a large group show of all the artists who had been involved in the series of exhibitions in the huge concert hall of the Skenderija center.

By the late 1980s, this neo-avant-garde scene was well established in Yugoslavia, if still marginal on an official level. However, at this point it should be noted that although Šuvaković's division of the art scenes of Yugoslavia provides a useful rubric for understanding the breadth of art practice in the country, the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde should not be casually elided with the (contemporary) Russian neo-avant-garde, nor with the contemporary art being produced in the West during the 1980s. As Amiel has noted, there has been a tendency among scholars, in seeking to characterize

this scene, to view is as an under-developed version of either the Russian neo-avant-garde, or of contemporary Western art practices. In reality, the liminal position of Yugoslavia, both geopolitically and within the international art world, gave rise to a unique (and often contradictory) neo-avant-garde.

As Weibgen notes, beginning with the 1984 English translation of Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Russian Constructivism and Productivism became common reference points in discussions of the relationship between the historical and neo-avant-gardes (Weibgen 2011: 109), and certainly the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde shares certain features of both these earlier practices and contemporary Russian neo-avant-garde art. At the broadest level, much Yugoslav neo-avant-garde work sought to draw attention to the position of art within society, and to reveal the processes that shaped the production and reception of artworks. In the words of Groys, writing about Russian conceptualism, the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde sought 'to thematicize and shape the conditions that determine the viewer's perception of the work of art, the process of its production by the artist, its position in a certain context, and its historical status' (Groys 2010: 36). This last element, the position of an art work within its historical context, was of particular importance both in Russia and Yugoslavia. Indeed, Groy's characterization of the history of the Soviet Union as the 'anticipation of communism that never occurred', and his contention that 'Moscow conceptualism's essential function ... was to witness and reflect upon this state of anticipation' (Gerber 2011: 1068) can be applied equally to much of the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde. Even by the 1960s, and certainly by the 1980s, many Yugoslavian artists sought to question whether the modernizing, apparently utopian, project of Yugoslavia would ever be truly realized, and produced work that explicitly drew attention to its historical relationship to this (failing and then failed) project. As such, Osborne's (Osborne 1995) analysis of the importance of the concept of time within the Russian neo-avant-garde can also be applied to its Yugoslav analogue: much of this work simultaneously acknowledges its specific historical context, whilst also possessing a 'millenarian' aspect that anticipated the eventual realization (or failure) of socialism. Similarly, Roberts' argument that Russian neo-avant-gardes can be seen as examples of 'futures past' (Roberts 2011: 726) also holds for the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde. Particularly in the closing years of the 1980s, a significant strand of this work sought to explore and question the prevailing historiography of the Yugoslav period, and to present alternate historical narratives. Indeed, this concern with time is still a major theme of many of the artists who started their careers within the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde, and particularly for Dimitrijević.

Another common feature of the Yugoslav and Russian neo-avant-gardes was that both exhibited different concerns to much of the contemporary art of the West. This is seen most clearly in the absence of ‘a very anglo-saxon variant of art theory stretching from Joseph Kosuth to Peter Osborne’, and which ‘maintains that art in its post-conceptual contemporary form is a self-reflexive, circular, and ontological movement: to ask whether something is art is what art is’ (Kollev et al. 2016: 176). Much of the contemporary art of the West during this period was concerned to draw attention to its status as art, and the way that this was conferred by the institutions that surrounded it (as seen, for instance, in Buren’s *La Place des Drapeaux*). The absence of this mode in Russian and Yugoslav neo-avant-gardes has been explained in different ways. Groys argues that structural questions such as these were alien to Russian art practice, which retained a more ‘mystical’ mode throughout the development of the neo-avant-garde, proposing that ‘in Russia, art is still magic’ (Groys 2010: 54). To this, I would add the observation that many of the institutions that Western artists sought to question during this period, such as the gallery-museum system and an increasingly internationalized art market, simply did not exist within Yugoslavia. As such, even though the work of the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde was displayed internationally, within Yugoslavia there would seem to be little point in questioning the role of non-existent entities.

Simultaneously, the artists of the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde were acutely aware of the liminal status of their country and work in relation to both Russian and Western art. An example of this can be found in the work of arguably the most important late neo-avant-garde groups, NSK. The work of this group presented a radical flattening of apparently opposed ideological frameworks into collages which questioned the values of the Yugoslav project itself. As such, it added ‘to the Western canon of the play of ideas between autonomous artworks an interplay between different periods and movements, articulating a relativism born of their peripheral status in relation to the canon Social Realism as one aesthetic among a collagist approach, reduced to one among many’ (Kollev et al. 2016: 176). By the late 1980s, this work equally questioned the values of both Social Realism and those of the incoming liberal democratic order, and then went beyond this to ‘comment on what a Slavic political identity might be’, presenting a ‘fragmented collage in which signifiers of identification are elusive and slippery – Austro-Hungarian, pan-slavic, pan-Germanic, Slovenian, internationalist-socialist, eastern, European’ (Kollev et al. 2016: 176). Much of this work can therefore be seen as both a critique and affirmation of Yugoslavia’s apparently neutral yet actually

contradictory geopolitical status. Indeed, the work of NSK can be seen as the embodiment of the ambivalence of Yugoslavia: an artistic equivalent of non-alignment, and a replication of a carefully constructed ambiguity that refused to commit to a definable political ideology, and thus left space for the emergence of nationalism.

Fragmentation and Tolerance

Beyond this positioning of the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde between contemporary practices in both Russia and the West, it also possessed a number of unique features. The first is that, though it was a pan-Yugoslav phenomenon, and that though ‘there was an active cultural exchange between Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Skopje, etc., and a common mental, cultural and art space’ (Gržinić 2007), each republic came to develop its own ‘flavor’ of neo-avant-garde work. In some senses, this is not surprising: the association of this work with student centers in the republic capitals meant that it was regionally focused, and even the National Gallery of Contemporary Art in Belgrade publicly admitted that ‘Serbian art’ would be displayed more widely than that of the other Yugoslav nationalities, without an ‘unambiguous and publicly declared (or negotiated) notion of what exactly Serbian art was, and what separated it from the art of other Yugoslavs’ (Manojlović et al. 2011: 797). The outcome of this is that scholarship on the Yugoslavian neo-avant-garde typically documents the art sphere of each republic capital separately, looking for differences and similarities between the republic capitals and the artists who were read as representing them: Mladen Stilinović from Zagreb; Malevich from Belgrade; IRWIN, Laibach and the Neue Slowenische Kunst movement from Ljubljana; and Braco Dimitrijević from Sarajevo (Djurić et al. 2003: 3). This, in turn, mirrors the politically ambiguous relationship between the republics and federal state within Yugoslavia.

This ambiguity also extended to the relationship between the neo-avant-garde and political authority. Though neo-avant-garde work was not officially sanctioned, it has been argued that it largely avoided suppression because it allowed Yugoslavia to further distance itself, in the perception of the West, from a Soviet regime that was widely regarded as oppressive. That, in the words of Miller (T. Miller 2005),

The existence of the Yugoslavian avant-garde was marked at its very roots by a political and ideological regime that at once denied the legitimacy of this art and required the arts’ legitimating capacity as the ‘elusive margin’ of creative culture that allowed the state to disavow its repressive nature. An

unhappy compact of complementary ‘incompleteness’ was struck between state and civil society: an incomplete totalitarianism tolerating an incomplete avant-garde, forming the two torn halves of the particular form of ‘incomplete modernity’ that characterized Yugoslavia. (T. Miller 2005: 714)

This strategy, in turn, rested on a particular Western characterization of the art produced under authoritarian regimes. Gupta (Gupta 2010) notes that during the cold war there existed an often-invoked polarity between ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ art, in which ‘unofficial’ art was often wrongly assumed to be uniformly ‘anti-totalitarian and “natural” ... a variegated area of individual and group efforts’ (Gupta 2010: 573). Conversely, he writes, ‘official’ art should not be viewed as uniformly supportive of its political sponsors, as the:

Relationship of ... superstructural institutional discourse to art practice at ground level should be examined by allowing that much that happened under this bureaucratic aegis was inconsistent and did not necessarily hold together with conceptual totalities, however powerfully total ideological subscription may have been enjoined and demanded. (Gupta 2010: 582)

Nevertheless, Western art criticism persisted in viewing ‘unofficial’, avant-garde art as the true representation of the feelings of the people, in Yugoslavia as much as in the Eastern Bloc, and this was leveraged by Yugoslav political authorities in order to maintain an appearance of tolerance. Though this view of socialist art was questioned, even at the time, it remains important in order to understand the way in which the art of Sarajevo and BiH was understood during the Bosnian War and after.

The Bosnian War

As Povrzanović Frykman puts it, ‘there is no “neat,” singular, simple, or generally valid explanation of the post-Yugoslav wars, of 1991 to 1995’ (Povrzanović Frykman 2012: 255), despite a large number of works that have dealt extensively with the conflict (Vulliamy 1994; Burg et al. 1999). Instead, in order to explain the international intervention that occurred in the post-conflict period in BiH, my intention here is to describe a contradiction that existed within the way in which the War was understood by the international community. My argument is that though the War was often written about and understood in the West as a civil, ethnic conflict, in reality it is best seen as a multi-polar struggle between a large number of external states for influence and dominance in the Western Balkans. Following the cessation of hostilities, this contradiction would come to inform the

international community's approach to BiH in several key ways: not only in the unprecedented level of economic, political, and cultural influence sought over the country by some of these same states, but also in informing a perceived need for reconciling the previously warring ethnicities. Before proceeding with this description, however, it is necessary to define what I mean, or perhaps more specifically what I do not mean, by the term 'international community'. My usage of the term, here, is designed to mirror that of the literature on BiH that I quote here: as a community of nations that finds a tool and expression of collective will in such institutions as the UN. Though the administration of BiH would therefore fall, after the War, to a group of nations, it should also be understood that the majority of the intervention programs carried out in BiH in the post-conflict period, though mediated through international organizations, were developed and realized by the West, and particularly the US and Western European countries. One reason for this has already been suggested: that the Balkans occupied a place in the Western imaginary that problematically assigned BiH a 'European' nature. Other reasons, such as the growth of an appetite for intervention in West, will also be suggested in the following sections.

The chain of political events that led to the Bosnian War arguably began with Tito's death in 1980. During the decade that followed Yugoslavia underwent a period of economic decline. The decade also saw more and more power devolved to republic-level administrations under ethno-nationalist leaders. In March 1989, changes to the constitution of the SFRY were made that effectively put Serbia, the largest republic, in control of three of the eight federal-level votes. This gave the leader of Serbia, the newly elected Slobodan Milošević, a huge degree of power over the federation. Several republics protested against this change, and in an increasingly febrile atmosphere both Slovenia and Croatia seceded from Yugoslavia in 1991. The war in BiH was then engendered by a controversial independence referendum in 1992. The referendum was regarded as illegal by the federal government of Yugoslavia, and was boycotted by BiH's Serb community. Nevertheless, following a landslide victory for independence, the republic-level government declared their independence on 3rd March 1992. The sovereignty of the new state was recognized by the United States and Europe in April 1992, and the United Nations a month later. Violent clashes had begun prior to recognition, and would then erupt into a war which would divide the three dominant communities in the country (Muslims, Serbs, and Croats) and claim the lives of more than 100,000 people, while displacing two million more. The war baffled commentators and policymakers outside the country, many of whom knew little about the new state. Grasping for a simple narrative to explain the eruption of violence, many public figures turned to a myth best exemplified in

Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts* (1993). This work argued that the war was the result of 'ancient ethnic hatreds'. Though this concept was derided by scholars at the time (Cooper 1993), and would later become infamous in Balkan scholarship as a gross misunderstanding of the region, it was nevertheless influential among contemporary policy makers. Kaplan's book, for instance, was read by US President Bill Clinton, who referred to the conflict as a civil war (1993), and in his *Address to the People of Bosnia* (1996) offered a dubious comparison with America's own civil war. This understanding of the conflict was also perpetuated by international media coverage, best illustrated by O'Ballance's book *Civil War in Bosnia 1992-94* (1995), which was based almost exclusively on Western media reports. It declared that the Bosnian War was a vicious three-sided civil war between territorial warlords and rival militias, summarizing a narrative of the conflict which became embedded in public consciousness outside the region.

The reality was more complex. The war saw significant involvement by a variety of international actors, and is best characterized as a multi-polar struggle for dominance in the Western Balkans. Following the secession of Slovenia, Croatia, and BiH (and, in 1993, Macedonia) all that remained of Yugoslavia were the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro. The Yugoslav army inherited almost all the equipment of its predecessor, and as fighting broke out in Bosnia the Bosnian Serb forces were issued weapons and equipment from the federal arsenal (Cassese 1997) and retained a communications link to Belgrade. These forces were further bolstered by the infamous roaming bands of 'paramilitaries' from Serbia, who were under the direction of the secret police in Belgrade (Simons 1997). In addition, Bosnian Serb troops continued to receive supplies, arms, equipment, training, and financial support from Belgrade as the war progressed. However, as the initially dominant Bosnian Serb army became bogged down across the country, this support escalated into the direct involvement of Yugoslav troops: estimated at 20,000 infantry and 100 tanks (Kifner 1994). Throughout the war a "ghost unit" of the Yugoslav army was maintained, serving as a front to allow Belgrade to pay the wages, pensions and social support of members of the Bosnian Serb army. Further, Bosnian Serb forces received support from hundreds of Russian and Greek volunteers, some of whom formed the 'Greek Volunteer Guard', (Smith 2003) leading the political leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Radovan Karadžić, to proclaim that 'the Bosnian Serbs have only two friends. God and the Greeks'. Mossad are even alleged to have provided arms to the Bosnian Serbs in exchange for the safe passage of Jews out of Bosnia to Israel (Aldrich 2002).

Bosnian Croat forces were organized from Zagreb, the capital of newly independent Croatia, and throughout the war were directed by a general of the Croatian army. Many Croatian officers

transferred to serve in the Bosnian Croat army, which was reliant on supplies, arms, equipment and financial support from Croatia (Milekic 2017). Their forces were also bolstered by many volunteers from European far-right organizations and a plethora of arms that were smuggled into the country from across Europe. Throughout the war thousands of Croatian regulars fought in an ‘invisible’ army in Bosnia (Darnton 1994), and by 1995 the Croatian leadership was confident enough to launch a sweeping offensive led by its most elite units into Bosnia, halting just 20 miles short of the largest Serb-held city, Banja Luka.

The predominantly Muslim Bosnian government did not have a neighbor to sponsor its war effort or march to its aid, but it did receive assistance from an unlikely grouping of predominantly Muslim states: Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, with the tacit collusion of the United States (Molotsky 1996; Permanent Select Committee On Intelligence 1998). Iran and Saudi Arabia smuggled weapons into the country unhindered throughout the war, and Pakistan’s ISI is said to have provided intelligence and logistical support to the Bosnian government forces. Indeed, a few thousand Islamic fighters are known to have made their way to Bosnia from across the Muslim world to form ‘El Mujahid’ detachments that were deployed as shock troops. Further external support was offered in August 1995, when NATO began Operation Deliberate Force, a bombing campaign which would see more than 1,000 bombs dropped exclusively on Bosnian Serb targets in support of the offensive of the Croatian army into Bosnia.

A report by the Dutch into the genocide at Srebrenica made no reservations about noting ‘black flights’ of C-130s dropping off weapons and supplies in Tuzla Air Base (Wiebes 2003), and it later emerged that the Pentagon orchestrated arms shipments for the Bosnian Muslims utilizing their contacts among the Afghan mujaheddin (Aldrich 2002). The size and sophistication of the attack surprised all parties to the conflict, leading observers to conclude that a US military contractor, Military Professional Resources Incorporated, that had been in Croatia as part of a Democratic Transition Assistance Program, had a hand in training the troops and planning the attack. A strong case can therefore be made that the war was an interstate conflict between Croatia, BiH and Serbia. Incursions into internationally-recognized Bosnian territory by both Croatian and Serbian forces support this argument, which is further strengthened when it is noted that it was the leaders of BiH, Croatia and Serbia (rather than non-state actors from BiH) who signed the Dayton Peace Agreement that ended the conflict. This suggests that by 1995 the US State Department recognized the war as an interstate conflict. Judge Gabrielle Kirk McDonald would argue at The Hague in 1997 that the conflict was ‘international in character’, a definition which would’ve allowed the perpetrators of

atrocities in the conflict to be tried for breaching Part 2 of the Geneva Convention, in addition to their other crimes. A more nuanced consideration might conclude that the conflict, although an international one, was a proxy war fought in BiH between Yugoslavia, Croatia, several Muslim countries and NATO, all of whom competed to further their interests in a fragile, emerging state. All the actors listed became directly involved in the conflict, contributing troops and material to the war to achieve their respective goals, without directly coming into conflict with each other. Perhaps the most convincing analysis, however, is advanced by Mary Kaldor of the London School of Economics, who has suggested that the war in BiH should be considered a ‘new type of warfare in the 1990s’, a ‘new war’ in her terminology (Kaldor 2006: 33). Although localized, such conflicts involve ‘a myriad of transnational connections’ which blur the distinction between internal and external, aggression and repression, local and global, and state and non-state. Viewed through this lens, the war in Bosnia can be seen to have been one of the first of a new type of conflict in the globalized post-Cold War era, in which both state and non-state parties to a conflict operate globally, and borders signify little more than a potential *casus belli* that can be utilized when advantageous. These ‘new wars’ of the 1990s also questioned Western assumptions that conflicts between states constituted the core challenge to international security (Kostadinova et al. 2014): of the 111 conflicts that occurred between the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the new century, 95 were purely intrastate, but also ‘pressed for’ outside actors and international institutions to intervene (Nye 2003: 150).

Culture In and Of The War

Culture played an important part in the Bosnian War. In the broadest sense, several scholars have noted that it was the breakdown of a Yugoslavian national cultural space that precipitated the later political breakdown. Wachtel’s (1998) central argument is that the ‘imaginary community’ of Yugoslavia, as an ‘imagined’ national community, in Anderson’s terms (2006) started to break down in the 1960s. Thus, ‘the collapse of multinational Yugoslavia ... was not the result of the breakdown of the political or economic fabric of the Yugoslav state; rather, these breakdowns ... sprang from the gradual destruction of the concept of a Yugoslav nation’ (Wachtel 1998: 4). The emergence of the neo-avant-garde in the late 1960s, and its problematic separation into republic-level spheres, can be seen as both a symptom and driving force behind this process.

More directly, culture was used both to justify the war, and was a victim of it. This was a characteristic of ‘new wars’, in which belligerents often defined themselves along cultural lines

such as language, religion, shared memories, and shared symbols (Nye 2003: 151). In Yugoslavia, there was accordingly a 'process of historical revisionism' which 'took place within both the cultural and the political sphere' (Sahovic et al. 2012: 253). Through this, 'new monuments, museums and memorial centres, were being created', but it also meant that 'the old socialist heritage was given a new meaning in order to confront the narratives from the recent joint socialist past' (Sahovic et al. 2012: 253). Many contemporary observers of the conflict, and especially those in Belgrade, noted the role of television in propagating pro-war narratives. Ironically, and as noted by the film director Michael Benson, then making a documentary about the Neue Slowenische Kunst movement, these narratives utilized the same process of othering that had long been criticized in Western interpretations of the Balkans. This is because:

One element of Serbian propaganda seeks to convince the world, not to mention their own population, that "We are a Balkan people, we've hated each other for centuries, we cannot live together, we must be separated." And the politicians of the West – Mitterrand, Major, Bush, Clinton – lined up, in a very relieved way, to echo this, as well, as to say, "It's incredibly complicated, you can study the Balkans forever and you'll never understand," and so on - which apart from being inaccurate is actually a racist view. (Michael Benson quoted in Menashe et al. 1996: 32)

Documenting the widespread effects of this process is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, one can note that it led, for example, to the re-emergence of symbols last used by fascist movements in WW2, a heightened ethnic identification among large portions of the populace, and to works of art (and most notably the films of Kusturica) being retro-actively 'claimed' as Serbian, Croatian, Muslim, etc. The 'damage' done to the symbolic regime of Yugoslavia has later been extensively explored by Belgrade's Center For Cultural Decontamination (CZKD), who profess 'the firm belief that nationalism, xenophobia, and any kind of violence can be questioned in the same way that they are developed – through culture, art and public speech ... the Center has been an institution of critical thinking and the affirmation of the right to rebel, without separating human rights and justice, art, culture and truth' (Center For Cultural Decontamination 2017).

The role of culture in the war was especially visible in Sarajevo. The city was under siege by Bosnian Serb forces from 5 April 1992 until the 29 February 1996, a period of 3 years, 10 months, 3 weeks, and 3 days. The siege brought great suffering to the citizens of the city, with widespread shortages of water and food, intermittent electricity supplies, and almost constant shelling and sniper fire. Some 6,000 Bosnian soldiers were killed, and 5,000 civilians. The siege was also, in the

words of Povrzanović Frykman, one of the first examples of conflict ‘to be thoroughly dealt with by anthropologists and ethnologists as the conflict was actually ongoing’ (2012: 254), and of particular note is Maček’s brave and in-depth ethnographic account in *Sarajevo Under Siege: Anthropology In Wartime* (2009). Several themes emerge from this work, but before I turn to them I think it important to mention the most prominent: the enormous suffering endured by the citizens of the city. This is something that continually re-surfaced during my own fieldwork, and it must be remembered that almost everyone quoted and referred to in this work lost family members, went hungry, and often was actively targeted during the siege.

Understanding the culture of besieged Sarajevo is critical in understanding the contemporary art currently being produced in the city, because this earlier scene would come to exert a huge influence on the form and concerns of post-conflict Bosnian contemporary art. Understanding it also necessitates an understanding of the way in which the war was seen by the citizens of the city. Bosnia had always been the most ethnically mixed of the Yugoslav republics, and Sarajevo the most mixed of Bosnian cities. In the Yugoslav countryside, there are generally separate villages for each ethnicity, but in Sarajevo (and, to a lesser extent, other cities) all three lived side by side (Bringa 1995). Thus, Sarajevo had long been optimistically regarded as a example of multi-ethnic harmony. This is powerfully expressed by Panovski:

For many of us who felt at home in pre-war Sarajevo ... it was also an important symbol of our multicultural coexistence and tolerance ... Sarajevo meant, in fact, many things: it was a place of braided cultures and religions, languages and alphabets, ideologies and beliefs, races and ethnicities; it was a city where different worlds met, a place where the past met the future, and where politics competed with the arts. (Panovski 1994: 47)

This identification, during the siege, led to a curious phenomenon: the emergence of a ‘fourth ethnicity’. ‘Despite’, or because of, ‘the war-induced relevance of belonging to one of the three major ethnic groups in Sarajevo, a “fourth nation” was recognized, consisting of people who experienced and valued the multiethnic life in Bosnia, identified themselves as *Sarajevans*, and did not allow ethnic animosity to take over their personal social relations’ (Povrzanović Frykman 2012: 262). This identification, in turn, informed the way the war was understood in the besieged city. Sorabji has investigated this, and shows that there were ‘gradual changes to common interpretations of the meanings, motivations, and portents of violence among the people who stayed in Sarajevo throughout the war: from urban-rural opposition in the early days of war, via ideas about innate or semi-innate aggression of Serbs both during the peak and at the end of war, to later interpretations

that position Serbs, and even their wartime president, as mere dupes and instruments of global powers' (Sorabji 2006: 13; cited in Povrzanović Frykman 2012). The first narrative, that the siege of Sarajevo represented cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic urbanism versus 'the barbarians on the hills' (Kurtović 2012: 203), is very prominent in the literature on culture during the siege, and (somewhat contrary to Sorabji's work) was the most prominent narrative of it that I encountered during my own fieldwork. From a historical perspective, this narrative is notable because it is simultaneously one of othering and identification, and that it works within tropes of 'Balkanism'. In Todorova's (2009) terms, this narrative is a 'nested Balkanism' that sets urban, cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic, 'true Yugoslavs' against rural, provincial, nationalist, separatist Serbs. Simultaneously, it claims that the former group are also European, or at least Western, and are fighting *against* an eruption of barbarian, violent, Balkanism.

Art and the Siege

Culture and contemporary art played an important role in the siege of Sarajevo. Indeed, the city underwent something of a cultural renaissance: 'It is estimated that during the siege, some 182 theatre productions, 170 exhibits, and 48 concerts came to life in Sarajevo' (Kurtović 2012: 197). During my own fieldwork, this period was often referred to with a deep ambivalence. Today, there is a recognition that the siege of Sarajevo represents the bleakest time in the history of the city. Simultaneously, however, it is felt that these years brought an artistic and cultural energy, a 'fantastic anarchy' (Kurtović 2012: 219), that has not been seen since. The most common comparison made by my own informants, perhaps in response to my own background, was that of the London Blitz. This renaissance can be explained in a variety of ways. At the most mundane level, there is the practical consideration that the city essentially stopped functioning, and with many people 'unemployed', there was more 'leisure' time to attend cultural activities. Kurtović notes this, writing that the siege (perhaps paradoxically) created a sense of 'freedom', as many people suddenly had more time to attend art exhibitions (Kurtović 2012: 198): that, in the words of Asja Mandić, a curator, 'if you're going to get shot, you might as well die in the theater' (interview with Asja Mandić, curator, 23rd May 2013).

On a deeper level, Maček argues that culture during the siege was partially a way of maintaining a sense of normality, and of dealing with the immanence of death, because:

The omnipresence of destruction that makes death a constant companion of people living in a war zone drives them to respond with startling creativity. They need not only to re-create culture through reshaping knowledge and forms of expression but also to deal with profound existential issues when death becomes possible, not in an unknown future some decades away, but any moment—as people are killed randomly, here and now, just a minute or a meter away from where one is standing. (Maček 2014: 35)

The perception of culture as ‘a basic human need, which only becomes heightened by the violence of war’ (Kurtović 2012: 223) is very prominent in the scholarly literature on the siege. It is put neatly by Nihad Kreševljaković, director of the Sarajevo War Theatre, in a 2014 interview with the British Council: ‘what happened in Sarajevo during the siege was a phenomenon in the world of art - a ‘cultural resistance’. The fact that the city’s cultural life during the siege remained so intense vividly shows that arts and culture are basic human needs, along with water, food and air’ (Kreševljaković 2014). Kreševljaković’s reference to ‘cultural resistance’ is also typical: this was the most common characterization of the art and culture produced in Sarajevo during the siege. This ‘cultural resistance’ operated through several mechanisms. On a mundane level, the continued production of art was proof, whether to themselves, the enemy, or the outside world, that the citizens of Sarajevo had not surrendered. Culture could also, potentially at least, be used to articulate the narrative through which these same citizens understood the war. Predominantly, this meant the production of art and other forms of culture that was nominally ‘non-political’, ‘non-nationalistic’, and made no reference to ‘ethnicity’: that is, art opposed to the nationalistic work of the opposing forces (Kurtović 2012: 198). That, in the words of Zelizer, ‘the war was so barbaric and uncultured that responding with culture was a way to resist and affirm the multi-ethnic nature’ of BiH (Zelizer 2003: 69). Further, much of the art of the siege incorporated European and Western symbols in order to stress the Western, European nature of Sarajevo itself. There was reference to Europe:

as an idiom for a lost normality of a cosmopolitan Sarajevo. Evocations of internationally recognizable references, such as the Olympic Rings – now made out of barbed wire – were reminders of the fact that Sarajevo used to be a part of “Europe and the world” at the time when the Winter Olympic Games were held there in 1984. (quoted in Povrzanović Frykman 2012: 262; Maček 2009: 59).

Alongside this work was a concern to safeguard the cultural heritage of Sarajevo. This was particularly important, and particularly difficult, in Sarajevo because the destruction of the city’s

cultural heritage formed part of the strategy of the besieging forces (Walasek et al. 2016). This, in itself, was a characteristic of the ‘new wars’ (Kaldor 2006) of the 1990s: though not unique to them, the destruction of cultural heritage had become a ‘very effective way to destroy ... [a] culture’s common history’, and an integral ‘part of modern warfare’ (Cultural Heritage Without Borders 2017). In Sarajevo, this technique was particularly important because of the ethnic dimension of the war. This is seen most clearly in the destruction (by incendiary shells) of the National Library in August 1992. As Reidlmayer puts it:

While the destruction of a community's institutions and records is, in the first instance, part of a strategy of intimidation aimed at driving out members of the targeted group, it also serves a long-term goal. These records were proof that non-Serbs once resided and owned property in that place, that they had historical roots there ... Other Bosnians, however, remain determined to preserve their country's historic ideal of a multicultural, tolerant society and the institutions that enshrine its collective memory. (Reidlmayer 1994: 8)

With regard to the contemporary art produced during the siege, one theme stands out: that there was attempt to document the events of the siege in a way that avoided nationalistic, ethnic stereotypes. This mute ‘witnessing’ can be explained, in part, by the reticence many artists felt in exploiting, and perhaps commodifying, suffering (Obradović 2012). However, it also contributed to the perception of Sarajevo as immune to such ‘backward’ concepts as nationalism and ethnicity. This is seen in a variety of projects. It is visible, for instance, in the most high-profile art exhibition of those years, *Witnesses of Existence*. This show included the work of a number of established artists from BiH and elsewhere: Nusret Paäic, Zoran Bogdanovic, Petar Waldegg, Mustafa Skoplak, Edo Numankadic, and Sanjin Jukic. The exhibition was originally planned to officially represent the government of BiH at the 1993 45th Venice Biennial. However, due to the blockade of Sarajevo by both Bosnian Serb forces and the United Nations command, none of the artists were able to make an appearance, and because of communication difficulties they were not even entered into the Biennial catalog: a videotape and catalogs were the only ‘witnesses’ to the original exhibition in Sarajevo to appear in Venice (Murphy 1995: 76). The exhibition would nevertheless eventually tour several galleries in Europe and the US. While the art in the exhibition avoided explicit reference to politics and ethnicity (Weine 1999: 188), it made extensive use of objects found on, and evocative of, the besieged Sarajevo, and therefore partially sought to document the suffering of those in the city. It also contained, as one catalog pointed out, subtle references to the perceived lack of interest by the

West, such that ‘in Jukic's installation of Coca Cola cans and Marlboro cigarettes set within a Turkish coffee tray that satirically evoked the dominance of American culture in the region, "Close inspection of these items reveals them to be empty"' (Murphy 1995: 79). Alongside this exhibition, several other artistic projects are notable in attempting to document the siege. The FAMA ‘Virtual Museum’ collected together first-hand accounts of the siege, including creative writing and visual art, into an interactive archive. The appearance of ‘Sarajevo Roses’, where red paint was poured into shell craters and allowed to set, can also be seen as a way of making a record of the siege. Both these two projects are notable for their lack of overtly political rhetoric. Both claim to be mere witnesses of the siege, mute observers, allowing (and perhaps compelling) the viewer to make their own interpretation of the events they record. Whilst these projects may therefore be naively seen as politically neutral, in reality the contemporary interpretation of a ‘Sarajevo Rose’, for instance, was set by domestic and international opinion of what was happening in Sarajevo: the destruction of ‘European’ civilization.

Alongside these projects, there were two other cultural projects that began during the Siege, and would have significant consequences for the operation of the BiH cultural scene in the post-conflict period. One of these was the Sarajevo Film Festival (SFF), which first took place between 25th October and 5th November 1995, in the closing months of the Siege. The festival was convened by the Obala Arts Center in order to, in their own words, ‘rebuild civil society’ and the maintain the ‘cosmopolitan’ aspect of the city (Sarajevo Film Festival n.d.). During the 10 day festival, more than 140 films were shown to an audience approaching 20,000 people. ‘The idea of organizing a film festival in the middle of a war, might appear absurd, given the extreme conditions that the populace of Sarajevo was facing’, as Zelizer (2003: 69) notes, but as Haris Pasovic, one of the main organizers of the festival explained, ‘there are many things you can live without, food, etc, but you need film or arts for the magic. In the war it was particularly powerful to be watching films and be able to be transported to another world and also release emotions through the film’. The history of the Film Festival, and its importance to the cultural scene of Sarajevo and BiH, has been written about extensively elsewhere (Turan 2003a). For my own purposes, however, it is worth drawing out a few aspects of the Film Festival that parallel the way in which contemporary art, and culture more generally, would be used in BiH in the post-conflict period. The first is that although SFF was initially conceived of as a local initiative, it quickly attracted a significant level of international support in subsequent years. From the early 2000s, the prizes for the SFF were provided by a number of international charitable foundations and cultural organizations: the Best Feature Prize

was currently provided by Council of Europe, and the second Prize by the Agnes B. Foundation, who would go on to have a significant impact on the contemporary art of BiH through their sponsorship of the Duplex galleries. Secondly, the curatorial focus in the early years of the SFF was on using the experience of the citizens of Sarajevo, BiH, and the former Yugoslavia to draw a diverse range of films into dialogue with each other: the philosophy that informed the SFF partially relied on the idea that Sarajevo, as a ‘meeting point between East and West’, could be used to connect works of culture across this divide (Turan 2003b).

Ars Aevi

The second large cultural project that started during the Siege was the Ars Aevi project. This project aimed at the creation of a museum of contemporary art in Sarajevo. Although the project had stalled by the period of my own fieldwork, it is very important for my research questions, because the way in which it operated reveals much about the way in which contemporary art was understood (and funded) in BiH between 1992 and 2018. Accordingly, references to this project will occur throughout the current work. This project has also been studied at length elsewhere: it formed the basis of my own MA thesis (Webber 2013), is one of Hajdarpašić’s case studies in his review of the role of museums in post-conflict Sarajevo (2008), and has recently been the subject of a PhD thesis (Carolo 2016). The project started in 1992, the first year of the Siege of Sarajevo (Hadžiomerspahić 2006: 17). It was founded by Enver Hadžiomerspahić, who had previously been heavily involved in cultural projects in Yugoslav BiH: he had curated cultural programs at the city’s Hall of Youth, directed the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1984 Winter Olympics, and worked to organize the first Documenta art biennials of 1987 and 1989. From its beginning, the Ars Aevi project aimed at the construction of a museum of contemporary art in Sarajevo, though the ‘insane’ ambition of this in the besieged city was well appreciated (Hadžiomerspahić 2006: 17). The purpose of the museum, in line with much of the contemporary art produced during the Siege, was to use contemporary art and culture as a form of resistance. As such, it ‘represented a civil revenge’, even a ‘peaceful weapon of culture’, and ‘a place where well-renowned contemporary artists were being invited to express their protest against the siege and the general abandonment of the city’ (Carolo 2016: 4). From the inception of the project, Hadžiomerspahić invited artists to donate artworks to Ars Aevi, as way of expressing their solidarity with the citizens of Sarajevo, and many did so. These artworks were envisaged as forming the core of the planned museum, which was predicated on international donations as the representation of a common vision of Sarajevo. As Hajdarpašić

explains, the project was based, at heart, on ‘the conviction that the artists of this age feel and understand the injustice done to our city,’ and would therefore come ‘together to create a unique museum, one which will, even in its initial steps, announce the superiority of spirit and art over the forces of evil and destruction’ (Hajdarpašić 2008: 121). Hadžiomerspahić was forced to move to Italy during the Siege of Sarajevo, but took the *Ars Aevi* project with him. Here, ‘the contact with Italian political and cultural institutions proved to be fundamental’ (Carolo 2016: 16) in defining the future of the project. Hadžiomerspahić developed relationships with, and elicited donations from, several museums, foundations and contemporary art centers in Italy, and then more broadly. The directors of these organizations were invited to choose ten prestigious artists for the future museum’s collection, and each was ordered not to invite more than two from their own country. From 1994 to 1999, five ‘founding’ exhibitions were then held throughout Europe. The first of these took place in Milan at Centro Spazio Umano/Human Space, and the following exhibitions were in Prato (Museo Luigi Pecci, 1996), Ljubljana (Moderna Galerija, 1996), Venice (Fondazione Querini Stampalia and Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, 1997) and Vienna (Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, 1998). The optimism expressed as part of these initial exhibitions is striking, as is a belief in the power of culture, and art in particular, to overcome the destruction caused by the Siege. What was being destroyed in Sarajevo, it was felt, was more than just a city, but rather the whole edifice of civilized life, and art as part of this. Accordingly, wrote Corà, one of the curators of the founding exhibitions, ‘art could set the first milestone towards a recovery of civil and cultural life made up of new authentic will by its citizens ... and express our close bond with their reality’ (1996: 19). This ‘close bond’, in turn, was based on the ‘shared values’ of those involved in the *Ars Aevi* project and (presumably) the citizens of Sarajevo, according to which the arts were indicative of a ‘free and liberal community’. Further, though few of the artworks in the *Ars Aevi* collection (at this time) dealt directly with ‘the tragic facts of war and siege’ (Carolo 2016: 80), the artists who donated works to the project saw their actions, at least partially, as ‘reflections on our bad conscience,’ (Cacciari 1997: 12) and as a chance ‘to redeem it’ (Cortese 1997: 19).



Fig. 4: *La Place des Drapeaux* (1998), Daniel Buren, approx. 40m x 40m (credit: Daniel Buren)

It was during this period that Daniel Buren, a French conceptual artist, donated the artwork *La Place des Drapeaux* to the Ars Aevi project (Fig. 4). Though it was produced in 1998, it works with many of the same techniques and ideas that have been present in Buren's work since the 1960s. The use of 8.7 centimeter wide vertical stripes, in particular, have become something of a signature of his work. The use of such simple visual elements has been, for Buren, a way of subverting the traditionally representative role of painting in order to draw attention to the context, both social and architectural, in which his artworks appear. Thus, in the words of a gallery that represents his work, the use of this 'visual tool' makes such a piece 'no longer a work to be seen, or to be beheld, but is the element that permits you to see or behold something else' (Lisson Gallery 2011). Initially, this tool was deployed in paintings, but by the 1970s Buren was using the same technique on a larger scale, in order to draw attention to the architectural framing that contemporary art galleries and museums provide for artworks. Such pieces were informed by a movement that became known as

‘institutional critique’, which had its roots in deconstructionist ideas that themselves came to prominence in association with the 1968 student protests in France. Inspired by minimalism, these pieces aimed to draw attention to the material basis of ideological institutions: by draping a museum, or filling a gallery space, with minimalist forms, they attempted to draw attention to the museum or gallery itself. The purpose in doing so was to reveal not only the role of such spaces in legitimating art, but also their ideological biases. In this sense, the purpose of such artworks was less to ‘mean’ something and more to act as a marker of space, drawing attention to the institutional and architectural structures that surround them. In this context, Buren’s stripes have become:

A readymade, homogenizing device that, like Duchamp’s urinals, commented on the heroic singularity of art, and the role of the institution in defining what art was. The stripes also tend to transform whatever space they inhabit, rendering familiar public spaces unfamiliar, calling into question the values we attach to these spaces and their role as a forum for competing—and often contentious—artistic, public and state interests. (Considine 2013)

When Buren first began producing such pieces, they were occasionally controversial. He had to remove one such work from a group exhibition in 1971, because fellow artists Donald Judd and Dan Flavin claimed it obscured and compromised their works. By the 1980s, however, the role of both Buren’s work, and institutional critique more generally, were regarded as important parts of the contemporary art scene: Buchloch, writing in 1982, praised the way in which his work was able to ‘transfer the viewer’s attention from exhibited objects to the underlying framework which determines the conditions of their presentation’ (Buchloh 1982: 48). For Buren, the value in doing this was to reveal the way in which the museum imposes its frame on everything that is exhibited in it, because ‘everything that the Museum shows is only considered and produced in view of being set in it’ (Buren 1985), and therefore an analysis of the art system must inevitably ‘investigate both the studio and the museum as parts of the “ossifying customs of art”’ (Buren et al. 1979).

This piece would become very important for the way in which the Ars Aevi project, and indeed the role of the international community in BiH, would be seen in later years. It still stands, albeit ruined, in the center of Sarajevo. I will therefore return to the way this piece has been understood in the post-conflict period in the coming chapters. In understanding the way in which the Ars Aevi project was embedded within the cultural scene of wartime BiH, though, the early history of the piece is relevant here. In the early years of possessing *La Place des Drapeaux*, Ars Aevi used it in a similar way to the exhibitions I have described above: essentially as a way of protesting against the

perceived lack of interest of the international community, and as a way of calling for help for BiH and Sarajevo. It was not displayed during the founding exhibitions. Rather, it was first displayed outside the 21-22 June 1996 meeting of the European Council in Florence. On that occasion, instead of the typical blue and white stripes, the piece carried black stripes, ‘evoking mourning for what happened in Sarajevo and Bosnia’ (Carolo 2016: 81), and was positioned in public spaces that the delegates to the council would pass through. It was, in this context, both a high-profile endorsement of the Ars Aevi project, but also a protest which called on European heads of state to do more for Sarajevo and BiH.

Resistance and Neutrality

Whilst much of the culture produced during the siege did not contain explicitly ‘political’ material, this did not mean that it was politically neutral. Much of this work, by casting Sarajevo as a bastion of liberal, ‘European’ culture, also functioned as a protest against the perceived lack of intervention in the War on behalf of the West. As such, though much of this work was referred to as ‘non-political’, it was anything but. The reason why this is the case is well illustrated in Kurtović’s study of the war-time ZID radio station (2012). The ZID station became a cultural hub during the siege, with many artists, writers, and other cultural producers having their own shows (Kurtović 2012: 201). The radio station ‘was carefully multi-ethnic, although this was never mentioned’ (Kurtović 2012: 204), and claimed that ‘culture provides a superior, more ethically pure alternative to politics’. As Kurtović points out:

This move was in no way surprising: during late socialism, cultural elites throughout Eastern Europe saw such a reorientation towards creative endeavour as a means of (as Czech dissidents like Havel would put it) “living in truth.” By taking this “anti-political” stand, they sought the ground for an ethical life “outside” of official ideology or formal political relations, often exalting the presumably authentic arena of culture and everyday life. (Kurtović 2012: 205)

In addition, ZID (and many of the bands that were associated with it) stressed their urban, European heritage: many songs were in English, and the whole endeavor ‘seemed to be directed at some imaginary western audience’ (Kurtović 2012: 211). The problem is that, as Kurtović points out, the ‘anti-political’ stand taken by many cultural producers during the war was anything but: in stressing their essentially Western characteristics, cultural producers invited an implicit contrast between themselves and those besieging the city. This ‘uncritical veneration of urban cosmopolitanism and

Western modernity', Kurtovic continues, 'entailed also a mobilisation of developmentalist tropes and (self)-orientalising narratives. Given the history of deployment of such rhetoric both within and in various descriptions of the region (i.e. "ancient ethnic hatreds", "Balkan backwardness", etc.), such choices are extremely ironic. To this day, Sarajevo's self-professed cosmopolitanism continues to also rely on other kinds of oppositions and exclusions' (Kurtović 2012: 220).

Nonetheless, the characterization of the besieged Sarajevo as a vulnerable bastion of liberal multiculturalism persisted in the West, and led to significant international support being lent to the city. Indeed, the besieged Sarajevo became something of a *cause celebre* for Western artists between 1992 and 1995, many of whom visited the city. Among the most high profile visitors were Susan Sontag, who directed a production of Beckett's *Waiting For Godot* at the Sarajevo War Theater, and U2, who wrote a single, 'Miss Sarajevo', about the plight of the city. Both are instructive in understanding how Western artists saw Sarajevo in those years.

Sontag documented her experiences in Sarajevo in a 1994 essay. She is very direct about her motives in visiting the city. The problem, for her, was that 'plenty of excellent foreign journalists (most of them in favor of intervention, as I am) have been reporting the lies and the slaughter since the beginning of the siege, while the decision of the western European powers and the United States not to intervene remains firm, thereby giving the victory to Serb fascism' (Sontag 1994: 87). Therefore, Sontag argued that a theater production was necessary in order to restore the humanity of those suffering in the siege, since 'culture, serious culture from anywhere, is an expression of human dignity- which is what people in Sarajevo feel they have lost' (Sontag 1994: 90). U2's contribution, the song and music video 'Miss Sarajevo', is somewhat more problematic. The video is based on a 1993 documentary of the same name, filmed by Bill Carter and financed by U2's lead singer, Bono. While the documentary is generally regarded as a fair depiction of the siege, the music video made from it 'centers around two contrasting performances. The video images switch back and forth between the super-star singers (Bono and Pavarotti) at a September 1995 charity concert in Modena, Italy, and Miss Sarajevo beauty contestants during a 1993 Serbian attack on the city' (Kothe 1999). The problem with this, as Kothe notes in her highly critical appraisal, is that 'the resulting music video represents the plight of a city under siege with the image of the female body. Indeed, the video ends with the beauty contestants holding up a sign: "Don't Let Them Kill Us!" The implied response is that the "heroes" performing in Modena, and possibly the viewer, shall save them' (Kothe 1999: 137). By presenting Sarajevo as a white, blonde, woman the video relies on processes of othering and eroticization that are typical of orientalizing discourses, and it also makes

explicit what many Bosnian artists were happy to imply: the call for the West to save the city. This work thus works within the discourse of ‘Balkanism’, in Todorova’s terms. On one hand, the culture produced in BiH during the War, and indeed the very fact that culture was being produced at all, was designed to prove that a ‘european’ BiH was under threat by a Balkan other. On the other hand, works like *Miss Sarajevo* rely for their efficacy on processes of othering that cast this culture as attractively exotic.

This brief review has covered only a small fraction of the culture produced during the siege, and I will return to further examples of this work in the coming chapters, as well as the way in which the Ars Aevi project developed between 1992 and 2018. However, my purpose here has been to illustrate the perception of the Bosnian War, and in particular the Siege of Sarajevo, that was prevalent among those in the city, and to those in the West, during the years of the Siege. This perception was, in short, that BiH’s claim to independence was legitimate; that Sarajevo represented a European, vulnerable, liberal, multi-ethnic city under siege; and that culture and the arts were seen as being able to contribute to its defense. As will be seen, this perception had large consequences for the instrumentalization of art in the city and country after 1995.

Dayton

The Bosnian War ended with the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, also known as the Dayton Peace Accords, or simply as ‘Dayton’, at a USAF base in Ohio in 1995. The treaty, though it would later become the constitution of post-conflict BiH, was primarily designed to stop the war. The situation in BiH in 1995 was complex. The destruction caused by the conflict and the ethnic cleansing that formed part of it meant that there were large areas of the country that were essentially ethnically homogeneous, and there were hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people. Large areas of the country were under the control of armed forces sometimes only loosely under the control of their respective command structures. Roughly half of the country was under the control of Bosnian Serb forces, and the other half was controlled by a combined force of Croat and Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim) forces. The international negotiators of Dayton were therefore caught in a bind. Dividing BiH would have permitted Bosnian Serb forces to have claimed victory, since the creation of a politically autonomous and ethnically pure homeland had been their intention. Simultaneously, neither Serb nor Bosniak nor Croat parties were willing to enter into government with the other groups, fearing that doing so would lead to each being in a permanent minority. The

compromise reached was to divide the country into two ‘entities’, a concept still unique in international law, with the dividing line largely identical to where the front line stood in 1995 (Fig. 5). BiH, since 1995, has therefore been composed of two entities, the Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina (or FBiH, in itself composed of 11 cantons) and the Republika Srpska (RS), and a

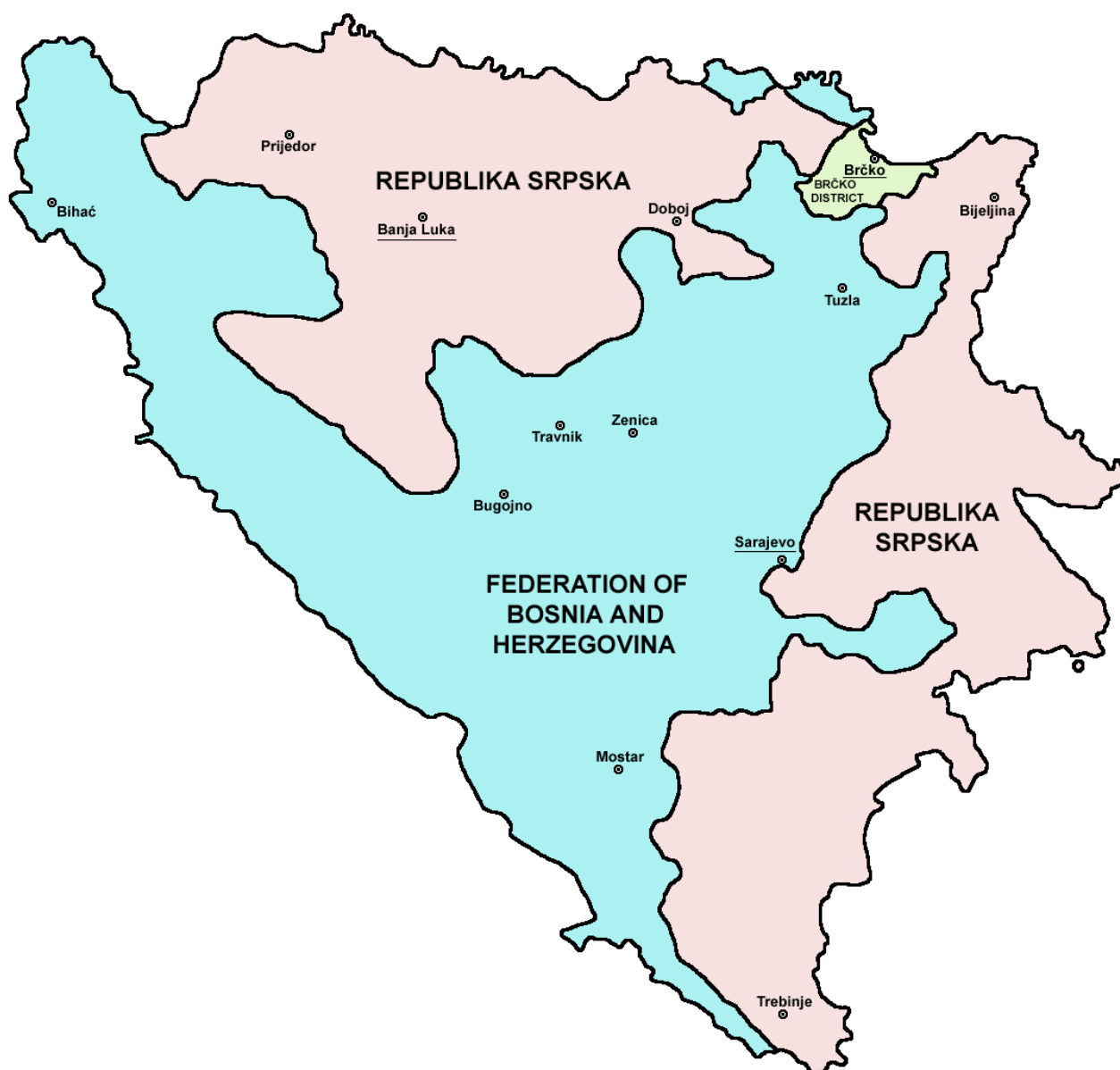


Fig. 5: Map of BiH, showing entities (credit: creative commons)

federal district in Brčko, linked by an extremely weak central government. Croats and Bosniaks dominate the FBiH demographically and politically, whilst Bosnian Serbs largely control the RS. The two entities are endowed with maximal responsibility for internal governance including, as will be seen, responsibility for cultural policy. At the state level, BiH’s presidency is shared between

three figures, respectively elected by the Bosniak, Croat, and Serb constituencies. BiH's executive body, the Council of Ministers, includes a maximum of two thirds of ministers from the FBiH, and each minister is assigned a deputy belonging to a different constituent people. In the legislative bicameral parliament, seats are similarly shared: the House of the People is composed of five Bosniaks, five Croats, and five Serbs. In contrast, representation in the House of Representatives is linked to territory, with 28 seats reserved for the FBiH and 14 assigned to the RS (Fontana 2013: 448). In addition, the entirety of this political system is overseen by a United Nations agency, the Office of the High Representative (OHR), which still retains ultimate political authority in the country.

The Dayton agreement has been widely criticized. Firstly, there is a widespread perception that the form of government installed by the agreement was both too incomplete and insufficiently flexible to allow BiH to move on from the war, and that the country has therefore been paralysed politically and socially since 1995. As Jansen puts it, many feel that under Dayton 'normality' had been suspended 'until further notice' (Jansen 2006: 184), and others have noted that the peace agreement essentially 'froze' the conflict rather than resolving it (Perry 2009). Secondly, though the international community had long criticized the rhetoric that had been used to legitimize the War, which was based on an ethno-nationalism that called for separate ethnic 'homelands' for each 'nationality' of BiH, the Dayton agreement arguably replicated and entrenched this same rhetoric. The way in which 'ethnicity' was defined, driven by wartime rhetoric but then incorporated into both Dayton and further policies in the subsequent years, was as a form of 'ethno-confessionalism' (Hajdarpašić 2008) in which one's identity was based on whether one self-identified as Orthodox (Serb), Roman Catholic (Croat), or Muslim (Bosniak). This left many of mixed heritage, those who were not religious, or indeed who were of a different religion (notably Jews) without an easily defined ethnicity. Accordingly, the census in BiH contains such strange 'ethnic' categories as 'Muslim by nationality' and even 'Yugoslav': that is, ethnically defined in terms of one's 'religion by nation' or as a citizen of a state that no longer exists. The problems caused by this categorization would later, as will be seen, come to inform calls for a fuller 'multiculturalism' in the country, but even these would largely replicate the same ethno-confessional structure that had come to prominence during the Bosnian War. Another criticism of Dayton, and of the political settlement it led to, was that it divided the country along ethnic lines that had become sharper during the war, and as such 'the two entities ... were founded on the expulsion and/or escape of over 90% of their inhabitants of undesired nationality, and the [FBiH] was itself largely unmixed into Croatian and

Bosniac-dominated zones’ (Jansen 2006: 178). In subsequent years, and despite refugee return processes that have sought to ‘recreate a population structure that resembled the pre-war one as closely as possible’ (Jansen 2006: 179), BiH remains ethnically divided. Lastly, by dividing the governmental system along ethnic lines, and by delegating large amounts of power to municipal and cantonal governments, Dayton created a political system in which no one ethnicity or political party would ever be to gain a majority for large-scale political or constitutional change. This extreme decentralization not only ‘fragmented’ political power to the extent that it became almost impossible to use (Massari 2005: 7); it also all but ensured that the citizens of BiH would continue to define themselves according to their ethnicity, and in fact ethnic association has increased markedly since 1995. An UNDAF report from 2010 noted that while achieving peace, Dayton has contributed to citizens’ primary identification being with their ethnic identity: ‘according to a recent UNDP-commissioned study (2007), 57% of the citizenry identifies itself as, “above all, a Bosniak, Croat, or Serb”, rather than as, “above all, a citizen of BiH”’ (UNDAF 2010: 6). For all these reasons, and despite some arguing that the inflexibility of Dayton has been overstated (Bieber 2006), even today there remains a significant stream of scholarship devoted to outlining how BiH can finally, after two decades, ‘move beyond Dayton’.

Reasons for Intervention

These criticisms of the Dayton agreement outlined, it is worth reflecting that, given the situation in BiH in 1995, ‘freezing’ the conflict in place may have been positive in the short term. From one perspective, one may argue that the priority, in Ohio in 1995, was to stop the bloodshed, under a naive expectation that the responsibilities that Dayton left undefined would be negotiated at a later date. On the other hand, it is also possible to argue that effectively removing political power from local actors, under the cover of distributing it, was a way of ensuring that the international community would be able to assume control of the country. This argument is given weight by the huge level of international involvement in the country since 1995. This occurred not just through the OHR. In a 1998 review, Deacon and Stubbs noted that a vast range of different international organizations have been involved in BiH since 1995, ‘including UNHCR and other UN agencies such as UNICEF and UNDP; the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund; and a wide range of International NGOs (INGOs), from the largest and most established, to the smallest and most recent’ (Deacon et al. 1998: 100). By 2001, the ‘cost of peacebuilding’ was ‘\$9 billion annually, of which \$7 billion maintains the peacekeeping troops’. The remainder, in a country of 3.5

million people, amounts to \$1,200 per person. As of the same year, the European Community alone had spent €200 million in Mostar, but the city remained (and remains) almost completely divided (Belloni 2001: 165).

The reasons for this engagement can be found in a number of interlinked discourses that were prevalent in the scholarship on international politics, and international security, in 1995. In the broadest sense, many have noted that in these years a doctrine of ‘new interventionism’ was formed. This is the rubric under which Mayall (1996) has analysed the Yugoslav conflicts, and it is well defined by Stedman in a 1992 editorial for *Foreign Affairs*. Following the end of the Cold War, he argues:

The end of superpower rivalry continues to entrance America with the chimera of a new world order. That illusion, alongside often violent disorder in many states, has produced a kind of "new interventionism." This outlook combines an awareness that civil war is a legitimate issue of international security with a sentiment for crusading liberal internationalism. The new interventionists wed great emphasis on the moral obligations of the international community to an eagerness for a newly available United Nations to intervene in domestic conflicts throughout the world. (Stedman 1992: 1)

In addition, he argues, national sovereignty was regarded, at this time, as a mere complication to a broader humanitarian mission on behalf of the West, such that, ‘In the words of former U.N. Secretary General Javier Prez de Cullar, “We are clearly witnessing what is probably an irresistible shift in public attitudes toward the belief that the defense of the oppressed in the name of morality should prevail over frontiers and legal documents”’ (Stedman 1992: 3). As such, the ‘new interventionists’ advocated ‘a new humanitarian order in which governments are held – by force, if necessary – to higher standards of respect for human life’, and contended that ‘the protection of ethnic, religious and other minorities endangered by conflict and alienated from a hostile government is now increasingly a recognized obligation of the international community’. To adherents of this approach, sovereignty was no longer a tool for creating international order, but a ‘political constraint’ on international action (Deng et al. 1992: 8, 131, 119).

In Eastern Europe in particular, this ‘new interventionism’ made use of a complimentary doctrine: that of ‘transition’. The term, as employed in this way, has a relatively brief history, and has its roots in Rustow’s *Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model* (1970), and *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Donnell 1986). Both of

these papers seek to outline a process by which authoritarian states can transform themselves (or be transformed externally) into liberal democracies. The process of transition, as outlined in these texts, includes a vast variety of different factors and institutions, but running through them is a presumed link between politics, economics, and culture, with each informing and promoting the transformation of the others. Both of these texts predate the end of communism in Europe. However, following the events of 1989, and the rapid disintegration of the Eastern Bloc, transition suddenly became an important policy area for Western states. Accordingly, scholarship increased significantly in this area, and directly informed the foreign policy of these states, so that what was once a somewhat academic concern became almost an applied science: that of ‘transitology’, to borrow Esanu’s term (2008).

In addition to these two broad discourses, further specific reasons for the international community’s involvement in Bosnia after 1995 may be suggested. The first is that the ‘new wars’ of the 1990s (Kaldor 2006), of which the Bosnian War is arguably a part, already involved the international community. If, as Kaldor argues, the War in Bosnia was partially a power struggle between external states for influence in the region, it was important for these states to remain engaged in the country in order to consolidate the gains they had already made: to ‘win the peace’, in other words. This is of particular importance in Bosnia, given the fact that the Dayton agreement essentially ‘froze’ the conflict without resolving it (Stratfor 2016). Finally, I would argue that the international involvement in Bosnia after 1995 was partially a result of guilt. From the earliest days of the war, the Bosnian government had been appealing to the international community for military aid in defending itself. This aid, when and where it did arrive, was typically inadequate (Mayall 1996), and a UN arms embargo limited the ability of the Bosnian government to defend itself. As such, it can be argued that in 1995 there was a deep sense of guilt in the West for being unable to stop ethnic cleansing and genocide, and that this compelled state actors to try and help Bosnia after 1995, or at least provided popular support for their decision to do so.

International Intervention

After 1995, there was a significant level of international involvement in BiH, both in terms of aid and administration. As Wilde points out, ‘the involvement of international organizations in varying degrees of [post-conflict] territorial administration has a long history, stretching back to the start of the League of Nations’ (Wilde 2001: 583), with the current situation in those countries most damaged by the Yugoslav Wars (Kosovo and BiH), bearing similarities to many initiatives

undertaken over the past century from ‘Danzig to East Timor’ (Wilde 2001). Intervention undertaken under the auspices of transition, however, was typically more aggressive, in terms of undermining state sovereignty, than previous attempts to promote societal change: Zaum argues that ‘since the late 1990s, international transitional administrations have been exercising a degree of authority over domestic arrangements ... that is unprecedented in the history of the United Nations’ (Zaum 2003: 102). Even given this, at least according to some authors, BiH was unique in the scale of the intervention undertaken. Knaus & Martin, in a critique of the role of the international community, and specifically the OHR, in BiH in the post-conflict period, argue that this intervention represents ‘an extraordinary political reality in contemporary Europe: the unlimited authority of an international mission to overrule all of the democratic institutions of a sovereign member state of the United Nations’ (Knaus et al. 2003: 360). They argue, further, that:

Six years after the end of the fighting in BiH, and despite possibly the largest amount of democratization assistance per capita ever spent in one country, the international mission to BiH has arrived at this paradoxical conclusion: What Bosnia and Herzegovina needs is not democratic domestic politics, but government by international experts. (Knaus et al. 2003: 361)

The reasons for this unprecedented level of international intervention are somewhat difficult to discern in retrospect. However, I would argue they center on a confluence of political discourses and humanitarian concern that was unique to BiH. The former Yugoslav republics, between 1995 and 2003, were in the unique position of being both post-conflict *and* transitional states. Unlike the other transitional states of Eastern Europe, the widespread human rights abuses that had occurred during the Yugoslav wars meant that the human rights framework could be used to justify intervention. Unlike non-European states which were also entering a post-conflict period, the paradigm of transition legitimated, and appeared to show a way, to integrate BiH into a pan-European political, economic, and social system. Both of these factors were heightened, in the Bosnian case, by the widespread public visibility and empathy for what had occurred during the Siege of Sarajevo, to which the cultural projects I have outlined possibly contributed.

Whatever the reasons for it, however, this unprecedented level of international intervention led to a number of problems and criticisms of the international community in BiH. At the largest scale, Knaus & Martin have argued that it represented a form of colonialism that reduced BiH to a Western protectorate (Knaus et al. 2003), and Zaum that it led to a ‘paradox of sovereignty’, in which the international community fatally compromised aspects of BiH's sovereignty in attempting

to enable BiH to fulfill its obligations as a sovereign state (Zaum 2003). Some have characterized this level of international aid and assistance as a ‘new feudalism’ (Deacon et al. 1998), in which client states such as Bosnia become absolutely independent on foreign aid. Jansen has explored, in addition, how the humanitarian aspects of this intervention were used to de-politicize what would become a ‘forced transition’ process (Jansen 2006: 190) in which the need for ‘economic reform’, meaning the imposition of capitalism, was not ‘up for discussion’ (Jansen 2006: 187). As such, though intervention was often justified under a ‘neutral’ human rights framework, ‘there was, of course, a much broader political-economic agenda at work, aimed at integrating the whole post-Yugoslav region into Western geopolitical and economic spheres of influence’ (Jansen 2006: 186), so that ‘the (initial) “transition” of Bosnia-Herzegovina occurred as an invisible part of a wider process of post-war reconstruction that was effectively under direct control of Western governments’ (Jansen 2006: 187). Others have argued that, rather than being focused on domestic concerns, intervention was partially an extension of international involvement in the Bosnian War, and therefore predominantly aimed at incorporating the Balkans into the ‘Euro-Atlantic community’ in order to ‘strengthen NATO’s “southern flank” and to draw in resources for the global war against terrorism’ (Massari 2005: 259).

These were not, unsurprisingly, the way in which the international community justified its interventionism in BiH after 1995. International programs in BiH have focused on a huge variety of themes, from the reduction of corruption to animal welfare. However, at the broadest level they are informed by a particular vision of what BiH would become. This vision is well illustrated by the OHR’s own statement of their aims: the work of the agency, they claim, is to turn BiH into ‘a peaceful and viable democracy on course for integration in[to] Euro-Atlantic institutions’ (OHR 2014). This statement is indicative of a number of discourses that would form a central part of the international community’s activities in BiH, whether these were articulated through electoral reform, educational programs, or, my focus here, cultural programs. In order for BiH to be ‘viable’, a process of nation-building would need to occur in which a multicultural nation-state was created or renewed; in order to become ‘peaceful’, it was felt that a process of reconciliation was necessary; in order to become a ‘democracy’, a process of ‘democratization’ would need to occur. Indeed, this was the primary justification for intervention during the immediate post-conflict period, as has been extensively explored by Chandler (2000), and relied primarily on the development of civil society as the primary mediator between citizens and the state. As such, progress in democratization came to be ‘no longer measured by free elections and constitutional frameworks, but on the basis of

alleged cultural distinctions or ill-defined assessments of “civil society”, despite ongoing concerns over ‘the anti-democratic impulse behind promoting unelected civic groups over elected bodies’ (2000: 4). All of these processes are interlinked, and each has been informed by a huge policy and academic literature. However, in BiH each also encountered a problematic local context that made their application complex.

Nation-Building, Multiculturalism, and Reconciliation

Though many contemporary post-conflict societies are undergoing externally-directed processes of nation-building (Anastasakis 2005), in BiH the ‘classical’ literature on nation-building encountered a complex local context. The Bosnian War had been justified, by local actors, in reference to the need for ethnically homogeneous ‘homelands’ which, in themselves, exhibited many of the characteristics of nation-states. Arguably, for many people Anderson’s ‘imagined’ national community (2006) was represented by these these national homelands, rather than in BiH as a state. As Musi argues, this has been a contradiction that has long informed the domestic politics of BiH: he highlights a Council of Ministers report from 2008 that identifies an impediment to the ‘achievement of a unified perspective’ on what BiH should become, a ‘dualism between state and nation, that only in ideal cases are identical and coincide with the country’s borders’ (Musi 2014: 17). This risked the quick disintegration of BiH into (at least) three separate states, whether on a cultural level or an administrative one. The nascent nation-state of BiH was therefore imagined, by the international community from 1995 onward, as an inherently multicultural one. This can be seen in the problematic apparatus of state that was set up in the Dayton agreement, but was also a problematic characteristic of post-Dayton international intervention, in which:

‘multicultural’ in many instances now serves as a trite, unimaginative reference that can be applied to almost anything that is not overtly characterized by extremist nationalism. Nonetheless, the most frequent usage – ‘multicultural’ as a synonym for ‘multiconfessional’ – continues to keep tacit references to the ethno-confessional partition always present in the postwar background. (Hajdarpašić 2008: 127)

At their core, what these interventions aimed at was the creation, in Anderson’s terms, of a rival imagined national community, opposed to those based on ethnic homogeneity which continued to be promoted by many domestic politicians. As such, politics in post-conflict BiH is characterized by two opposed movements: a vision of the state as a multicultural whole, and the competing

proliferation of ethnic discourse and claims for mono-ethnic homelands. At one level, many domestic politicians stress the importance of associating oneself with one's ethnic community, whilst the international community have simultaneously stressed the importance of association with the multi-ethnic nation-state of BiH. One of the tools that the international community has deployed in pursuit of this end is to instrumentalize one of the characterizations of BiH, and particularly of Sarajevo, that has already been mentioned: the claim that, historically, the country and city were the epitome of multicultural harmony. Ascertaining the extent to which such characterizations are true is beyond my scope, but in terms of nation-building they further complicate this project. This is because, in the former Yugoslavia, processes of nation-formation rely not so much on the creation of national myths but their resurrection. That, as Bakić-Hayden puts it, the 'emphasis on links between ethnic and cultural nationalisms and pre-communist identities ... directly challenges modernist views of the origins of nationalism' (Bakić-Hayden 1995b).

The second important discourse that informed the post-conflict international intervention in BiH was that of 'reconciliation'. The relationship between collective memory, reconciliation, and transition processes has long been noted. As Dragović-Soso puts it, by 2010 there was a 'growing conviction among scholars and policymakers that stability, peace, and a genuine democratic transformation of post-authoritarian and post-conflict societies can only be achieved if the past is "dealt with" or "worked through" in some way' (Dragović-Soso 2010: 29). More generally, it has been argued that 'acts of remembering are today part and parcel of the project of establishing the foundations of a more just society and a better future' (Assmann 2010: 20). Most of the work done in this area has focused on post-WW2 Germany (Assmann 2010: 9), from which the belief has emerged that such societies are unable to achieve satisfactory reconciliation without some attempt to 'work through' memories of recent conflict. Dragović-Soso notes that there exist three motives for this 'memory work'; one psychological, one political, and one moral. Psychologically, it has been claimed that the revisiting of traumatic memory is therapeutic; politically, it is hoped that through interrogating collective memory the mistakes of the past may be avoided; morally, there exists an injunction to reveal guilt and administer justice (Dragović-Soso 2010: 34). All three of these motivations, however, have been noted to be problematic. It is far from proven that re-exposure to traumatic memory is therapeutic: indeed, in some cases such exposure can be traumatic in itself (Dragović-Soso 2010: 35). Similarly, it is possible for societies to maintain peace without revisiting the past (Dragović-Soso 2010: 36). Achieving reconciliation in BiH has involved a variety of processes, but primarily it has focused on 'working through' memories of the Bosnian war

(alongside the Yugoslav wars, in some cases) in order to build a public consensus regarding the causes, conduct, and outcomes of it (Džihic et al. 2010: 23). This, in turn, requires building a dialog between individuals' private memories of conflict and the collective memory of their society. The mechanisms through which this is to be achieved, as well as the legitimacy of particular organizations in arbitrating and manipulating collective memory, have been sources of conflict. In particular, both the international community and local political elites have been criticized for adhering to a 'constructivist' view that imposes and manipulates the memories of particular groups, such that these become 'an integral part of the national narrative and provide justification for national policy' (Dragović-Soso 2010: 31). Thus, some scholars have observed that 'generally speaking, the process of coming to terms with the past in the countries of the Western Balkans has not yet really begun; or it is - according to the optimists - about to unfold' (Džihic et al. 2010: 20). The reasons, Džihic & Pertritsch argue, are multiple:

conflicting issues of statehood ... belated state building, frequent renegotiation of the national question, pervasive political instrumentalisation of the past, political elites exclusively engaged in the expansion of their power base: in short, an enduring transformation crisis and a frustrated search for identity. (Džihic et al. 2010: 20)

In addition, they note that a number of other factors have been 'detrimental to the necessary process of healing' in all Western Balkan societies: the post-war environment of these countries is still dominated by ethno-nationalist argumentation; the majority of citizens do not really believe that facing the past will bring them any benefits or change their dismal social and economic status; and the degree of trust people have in the state and its representatives is rather small (Džihic et al. 2010: 20). Building a dialog between private and collective memory has been undertaken through a variety of mechanisms. Some international organizations have focused on educational reform as a way of ensuring that children are taught a balanced interpretation of the wars of the 1990s (Sorabji 2006: 2), though this still does not form a compulsory part of the school curriculum. Alongside this, the international community quickly sought to establish structures that could apportion criminal blame for war crimes committed during the conflicts, primarily through setting up the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). This institution has also been criticized, not least because of the legal basis on which this guilt has been assigned (Dragović-Soso 2010: 38). This has led to relatively widespread non-compliance on behalf of the former Yugoslav states, a situation that some have argued is indicative of a lack of political will to work through memories of recent conflict (Džihic & Pertritsch 2010: 23), and some to conclude that Truth

Commissions (as in South Africa's TRC) are preferable to criminal trials in building consensus about the recent past (Dragović-Soso 2010: 43). Several scholars have noted that there exist significant discontinuities between the memories of participants and refugees, believers and secularists, supporters of national parties and their opponents in BiH (Bougarel et al. 2007: 24). This fragmentation of memory has even led to questions over whether truly collective memories can ever be formed at all, and therefore 'whether reconciliation can best be achieved through the establishment of a shared narrative of the war or through the recognition of divergent war memories ... becomes a very practical and puzzling one' (Bougarel et al. 2007: 25). Some have even noted a '(perhaps naive) hope is that time by itself will bring healing' (Gloppen 2005: 40) without the necessity to perform memory work at all. This difficulty is exacerbated in BiH because of the dominance of ethnic discourse at the highest political levels, where political parties have deliberately promoted particular memories of recent conflicts in order to justify calls for ethnic exclusivity, which mean that 'marginal or subaltern discourses can become dominant and transform political and social realities' (Dragović-Soso 2010: 32) despite the best efforts of those seeking to build consensus collective memories.

Civil Society And The Public Sphere

The third priority, which might be called 'democratization', is a more complex one, and indeed is implied within the others I have outlined. This aim is typically expressed in a variety of ways, ranging from 'strengthening democracy' to 'promoting civil society' to 'democratization'. However, all such processes share a common understanding of the role of civil society in transition states (Chandler 2000), in which it which it forms an interstitial space between political elites and what might problematically be called 'ordinary people': 'obični narod', as Mujanović has it, a 'vulgar term perhaps within the annals of political theory but one that best approximates, in my experience, how the majority of the population in BiH and the former Yugoslavia as a whole think of themselves' (Mujanović 2016). Civil society is also a key concept in studies and processes of transition more generally. Indeed, the development of the entire ex-Eastern Bloc since 1989 has been characterized by fervent attempts to institute viable democratic institutions and build strong civil societies. That both these institutions would be key in the post-Soviet (and post-Yugoslav) transition of these states had long been recognized, both by then-dissidents within them such as Havel (Powell 2007: 148), and by those charged with overseeing transition processes.

In post-conflict BiH, partially in response to the perceived failure of Dayton to create a 'viable democracy' by itself, a large number of programs were undertaken in order to strengthen civil society as a way of mediating between citizens' private concerns and public life. This was particularly important in BiH because during the closing years of Yugoslavia, and during the War, citizens' trust in political institutions had been hugely undermined. Thus, the Open Society Foundation, which founded the SCCA arts center in Sarajevo, defines the 'key elements' of the society it wants to create as 'reliance on the rule of law, the existence of a democratically-elected government, a market economy, a strong civil society, respect for minorities and tolerance of divergent opinion' (OSF, quoted in Czegledy et al. 2009: 251). These examples reflect broader intellectual shifts in thinking about civil society. The discourses of new interventionism and transition relied heavily on the promotion of civil society as a force for societal transformation. As Belloni wrote in 2001:

In the last decade or so, a growing confidence has emerged about the positive role civil society can play in deeply divided societies. It has been deemed indispensable for the long-term sustainability of peace processes (Hampson, 1996: 7) and a critical space where participation is enhanced and diversity and pluralism can be fostered (Peck, 1998). (Belloni 2001: 163)

The development of civil society, in summary, is key to everything the international community want to achieve in Bosnia: it is needed to build consensus about the new nation of Bosnia, to provide opportunities for reconciliation, to allow ethnic and other minorities a voice within the country, and ultimately because a vibrant civil society is seen as an integral part of modern European nation-states. In Bosnia, it has been noted, the agency of civil society is particular important, because 'both the RS and the federation have 'control over the legitimate use of force, that is, over the standard instrument of sovereignty' (Belloni 2001: 164). Thus, in the words of Fagan, 'to suggest that civil society development is anything less than central to the international community's state building agenda would be an understatement' (Fagan 2005: 406).

In analyzing the operation and success of the post-conflict international interventions in BiH, therefore, the centrality of civil society to this project must be recognized. However, the ubiquity of the term in post-conflict BiH creates something of a problem in defining exactly what 'Bosnian Civil Society' actually consists of. Seen as an etic category, and from the perspective of the international community, almost every intervention initiative in BiH since 1995 has been linked to civil society development in some way, and so one approach to studying the concept would include

almost every instance of intervention since 1995. Indeed, the term is used so widely in studies of transition (including the Bosnian context), that it often appears to have little meaning whatsoever, and arguably this ambiguity of meaning was one of the factors that led to the misuse of funding in the post-war period. In addition, many of the groups that are currently regarded as part of civil society in BiH today pre-date the existence of the independent state, but were not referred to as civil society groups in earlier periods. As Helms notes, therefore, ‘the frequent assumption that ‘civil society’ is something new in Bosnia must be re-examined, since charities, cultural societies and trade-unions appeared there at the end of the 19th century (see e.g. Hadžibegović and Kamberović 1997), and various voluntary associations were also active in socialist Yugoslavia (see e.g. Hann 1996; Stubbs 2000a; World Bank 2002: 68-118)’ (Helms 2007a: 31).

This difficulty of defining civil society is not much improved by taking an emic approach either, since the dominance of the term has meant that many groups in the country have adopted it in order to secure funding for a vast range of activities that are only tangentially related to the scholarly definition of the term. Indeed, the way in which they have done so is a major theme of this thesis. Nonetheless, I will take this emic definition as the basis for my research here: where people say that their work (or their organization) is part of civil society, it must be assumed to be so. Whether such groups perform the functions given to civil society groups by the international community, such as reconciliation, democratization, etc., is another question, and one that can be approached through the fieldwork findings I describe in chapters 6 – 8. In order to make this assessment, in turn, it is also necessary to propose a mechanism through which these groups are expected to affect change. Funding a group working to secure the representation of women in politics, for instance, will not achieve the stated goals in itself. Indeed, this is one of the primary ways in which democracy is being ‘faked’, in Chandlers’ terms (2000). It is proposed, therefore, to assess the development of civil society in BiH, and the way in which contemporary art can contribute to this, by reference to a closely related term: the public sphere, broadly a ‘social network of informed, politically aware, and responsible citizens’ (Belloni 2001: 163), but also a term with a problematic definition. The two concepts are intimately related because, according to Calhoun, ‘without a vital public sphere, civil society is not inherently democratic’:

The promise of civil society was that social life could be self-organizing, even in complex, large-scale societies, and that it could thereby be more free than if left to government officials or to technical experts. The idea of the public sphere was crucial to hopes for democracy. It connected civil society and the state through the principle that public understanding could inform

the design and administration of state institutions to serve the interests of all citizens. (Calhoun 2011: 312)

The concept of the public sphere first appeared in Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Habermas 1989). Here, it is defined as a 'realm of social life' which mediates between private individuals and the state, to which 'access is guaranteed to all citizens', free discussion is conducted, and which ultimately is able to hold political actors to account (Habermas 1974: 49). Habermas himself was skeptical about the agency of the public sphere, and its ability to hold political organizations to account, noting that it could be 'colonized' by economic, political, or cultural elites, and therefore distorted towards the interests of specific groups. Many other authors have since engaged with the concept, by turns extending and criticizing it (Calhoun 1992; Fraser 1992), such that it is now understood less as a monolithic institution and more as 'multiple partially overlapping publics and counterpublics', which 'bring forward different conceptions of the public good and sometimes of the larger, inclusive public itself', and which 'may be judged by their openness, creativity, or success in bringing reason to bear on public issues' (Calhoun 2011: 321).

The public sphere is also particularly important in the scholarship on transition because both concepts share a common intellectual heritage. Analogues of the public sphere it can be found in much of the literature that would later inform 'transitology'. Notably, Popper's 'falsifiable' society (1951) resembles the public sphere in that it relies on the public being able to question and overturn political decisions in public fora. Secondly, from its inception in Habermas' work, the public sphere was inherently linked to capitalism. For Habermas, it was the public sphere that was able to break the aristocratic hold on power in pre-capitalist Europe, and pass political power to non-aristocratic actors. In transition societies, therefore, it was believed that the same process could be used to transfer power from the secretive elites of the authoritarian years to a broader, more representative, corpus of citizens. Conversely, however, this link between capitalism and the public sphere also points to one of the criticisms of it in terms of transition: alongside the development of capitalism, transition processes were also supposed to guarantee free expression for minorities, but the understanding that Habermas has of the public sphere (as a place exclusively for the bourgeois) implies that this was not achievable.

A working definition of the two terms (civil society and public sphere) may therefore be given as follows. 'Civil society' groups are defined *emically* as those that say they are civil society groups, at least initially. The term 'public sphere' I reserve to define a more diffuse idea of the sum total of 'public' speech and writing, in whatever form: newspapers, websites, and (critically) public

discussion. Both concepts are therefore interstitial between ‘the demos’ and political authorities, and civil society groups rely on the public sphere in order to bring about social transformation. An assessment of whether they can actually do so will be approached using the methodology I describe in Chapter 5, but before presenting the results of my own research it is important to note that most scholars of post-conflict BiH have been skeptical of the efficacy of civil society to bring about change in what remains a deeply divided country.

Everyday Life in BiH

The social and political environment of post-conflict BiH, whether in 1995 or 2013, exhibits some unique features. Ethnographic work conducted in the country since 1995 has shown that, contrary to the aims of the international community, many of BiH’s citizens feel simultaneously trapped by, and isolated from, the rest of the world. The themes of this scholarly work in the immediate post-war period are neatly summarized by Helms in her introduction to *The New Bosnian Mosaic* (2007). She notes that the scholarly characterisation of Bosnian society from 1995 until 2007 focused on three topics: the apparent importance of ethnicity in defining identity and regulating social exchange, the ‘ancient hatreds’ that had given rise to the war, and the idea of BiH as a ‘colonized protectorate’. The choice of these categories was, she argues, determined by the terms of the Dayton Agreement itself, but in some cases more recent scholarship has sought to question the importance of these discourses for the citizens of BiH themselves. With regard to ethnicity, scholars have highlighted how this categorization is often less important, for Bosnians themselves, than an individual’s experience of the Bosnian War, so that ‘depending on the circumstances, war-related categories can undermine, override, reinforce, or complicate ethnonational identifications, at times even rendering them all but irrelevant’ (Helms 2007: 21). This scholarly work has also been highly critical of the ideology and actions of the international community in BiH, in that from the perspective of the international community ‘constitutional reforms, removal of obstructive politicians, support to non-nationalist parties and NGOs, and ‘minority returns’ appear as convergent moves towards a common aim: the progressive reintegration of Bosnia’ (Helms 2007: 28), the outcomes of these policies ‘on the ground’ have been more complicated. ‘Minority returns’ have been resisted by various groups for various reasons, but most commonly in places where these returns threaten existing political structures. Institutional changes, rather than promoting democratization, have sometimes led to renewed support for the nationalist parties, and compliance with the decisions of international organizations can weaken non-nationalist forces (Helms 2007: 28). Partially because

of these reasons, research designed to assess progress against these policies has largely found none (Brković et al. 2017: 6). At the broadest level, in fact, ethnographic work in BiH since the war has found little shared ground or true dialog between communities fractured by a range of factors, from ethnic difference to internal displacement, but each of which ‘claims a monopoly and special legitimacy on the interpretation of suffering during the war’ (Doubt 2008: 222).

Nevertheless, some features appear to be shared across large portions of post-conflict BiH. One, already alluded to, is the dominance of a few key terms in political discourse, most of which have been imposed by the international community. As such, recent scholarly work has drawn attention to the fact that though the ‘vocabulary of international peace-building is dominated by apparently positive and transparent terms’ such as democracy, reconciliation, and justice, in local contexts the meaning and implications of these terms is often highly contested and politicized (Stefansson 2010: 72). One of these terms, already mentioned, is the concept of ‘civil society’, although others are equally problematic. Coles (2007), for instance, has drawn attention to the fact that ‘democracy’ itself ‘is neither natural nor intuitive’ (Coles 2009: 5). She argues, conversely, that the international community has attempted to produce democracy ‘through complex political machinery, tools and techniques that act explicitly and implicitly through coercion and desire’ (Coles 2009: 12) and that normalize ‘participation, agency, democracy, progress, [and] choice’ to the detriment of other possibilities (Coles 2009: 22). Other scholars, such as Stefansson (2010), have argued for a more nuanced understanding of the concept of ‘reconciliation’ through a recognition of the difference between ‘thin and thick reconciliation’. The ‘former seeks dialogue, truth, and forgiveness [and] the latter takes a more ‘pragmatic’ aim of achieving peaceful co-existence’ (Stefansson 2010: 64), and it is this form of ‘thin’ reconciliation that appears to be most valuable in the everyday lives of most Bosnians today.

Another key concern of this scholarly work, of the inhabitants of BiH, and indeed of the artists working within the country, has been with periodization. Most scholars recognize at least two distinct phases of recent Bosnian history. The first was the immediate post-war situation, characterized by the reconstruction of basic utilities and refugee return. The second began at the (diffuse) moment when ‘transition’ appeared to stall, and this is the period during which my own fieldwork took place. Brković et al (2017) call this period the ‘mature Dayton BiH’, and define its beginning around 2008. What characterizes it is the paradoxical feeling of being in a ‘permanent transition’ that means that, though most of the ethnographic studies done in the first decade after the war remain ‘depressingly recognizable’, the concerns and feelings of the citizens of the country

have changed since the immediate post-war period. What has changed is that the state of waiting and stagnation that initially appeared to be transitory has now gone on for so long that it has obtained its own history and struggles (Brković et al: 19). These struggles have largely been concerned with trying to live a 'normal life' despite institutional dysfunction.

This means that the inhabitants of BiH today live in an 'abnormal spatiotemporal location' which Jansen calls the 'Meantime' (2015: 17): a perpetual deferment of the return of 'normal life'. Bosnians today, Jansen argues, share an experience of having to perform extensive *ganjanje* (roughly 'chasing people') in order to perform the simplest tasks, caused by both state dysfunction and widespread clientelism. In response, people have developed strategies to 'secure bare lives and to transcend them' in pursuit of 'normal lives' (Jansen 2015: 215), a process of 'gridding' which involves acting within a 'not-yet-state' (Jansen 2015: 215) that is widely held to be corrupt and broken but is sustained by people working within it. At the same time, these citizens yearn for the creation of a functional state, though their ideas about what this state should look like (centralized, further compartmentalized, fully divided, etc.) are radically different. The role of clientelism has also been explored by other scholars, most prominently Brković (2017), who has traced the way in which this practice shapes multiple aspects of the Bosnian experience today. Though eliminating clientelism has been a major focus of the post-war activities of the international community, Brković notes that a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report from 2009 (Nixon 2009) found that 95% of more than 1,600 Bosnians who were asked thought that a *štela* (roughly a 'personal connection') was required to access welfare, especially health-care and employment (Brković 2017: 2). In this context, she goes on to question whether attempts to change these practices have actually helped BiH, especially given that these attempts have utilized a view of clientelism that reduces it to a 'predemocratic' stage in the linear progression of states (Brković 2017: 3). Brković, quoting Husanović, then questions whether such 'therapeutic' politics threaten to undermine local agency in addressing the ongoing problems of the Bosnian state, or whether they in fact transform Bosnians 'into victims, passive and politically irrelevant subjects who do not have a right to a voice' (Husanović 2011: 269). Rather, Brković argues, clientelism should be seen as co-existing with democracy, and in fact as often mutually constitutive with it; rather than interpreting informal sociality as a 'response to the problems of post-socialist transformation', it should be seen as a way of reproducing personhood, as a consequence of global structural changes, and as a crucial part of the reproduction of power relations in the country (Brković 2017: 6).

In the context of these attempts to secure a ‘normal life’ in the context of endless transition, several scholars have noted that the value (or indeed existence) of ‘reconciliation’, as understood by Bosnians, is radically different from the way in which it is presumed to operate by the international community. Pre-war ethnographic work by Bringa (1995) has shown that Bosnians have long been acutely aware of living with cultural difference, and had already developed strategies for coping with this in the pre-war period. These strategies are often discussed in relation to the concept of ‘komšilik’: ‘good neighborliness’, a type of “social capital” that helped to foster co-existence in local communities in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina (Stefansson 2010: 69). Sorabji has subsequently shown that ‘komšilik is not primarily, or sometimes even at all, about regulating inter-ethnic relations’, and in some cases ‘did not erase ethnic differences but actually reinforced them through frequent observation of differences in customs’ (Helms 2010: 20). Nevertheless, Helms has noted that many analysts (e.g., Belloni 2001: 169; Pouligny 2002: 211) ‘have treated komšilik as the secret to pre-war inter-ethnic harmony and even as a key to the post-war restoration of a multi-ethnic state’ (Helms 2010: 20). As such, the term was seized upon by the international community as a model for (re)creating harmonious relations between ethnicities. This was despite the fact that, as others have noted, major aspects of Komšilik run directly counter to the way in which the international community assumed that reconciliation could be achieved. Namely, difference has primarily been managed by avoiding it, and by deploying a ‘strategy of silence’ (Helms 2010: 20) regarding both ethnic difference and war experience. After the Bosnian war, in the absence of a genuine atmosphere of reconciliation at the political or national level, several scholars have shown that this silence continued due to a ‘pragmatic need to avoid conflict in everyday life’, such that Bosnians sought to achieve stability not by seeking dialog (and possible confrontation) with other communities, but rather ‘by collectively silencing sensitive political and moral questions related to the recent war that could lead to renewed conflict’ (Stefansson 2010: 66) and by developing strategies for managing and passing on their memories of the previous conflict (Sorabji 2006).

The Political in BiH

This disconnect between the aims of the international community and the lives of ‘ordinary’ Bosnians in the ‘mature Dayton BiH’ has had significant consequences for the way in which certain groups relate to the politics of the country, and in some cases has led to a rejection of the idea of the ‘political’, as manifest in both party politics and internationally-driven reconciliation initiatives, and of the categories under which these initiatives have been pursued. Kolind (2007), for instance, has

shown that Muslims in Stolac, have developed discourses that run counter to the ethnic and moral categories that the international community and local politicians (respectively) have sought to impose upon them. The group that Kolind studied recognize, for instance, several different categories of Croat, and base these definitions on place of origin, political affiliation, and war experience rather than ethnic difference. At the broadest level, Kolind shows that the primary distinction made was between ‘decent people’ and ‘politicians’, with the latter viewed as inherently corrupt and cynical. This distinction also extends to a rejection of ‘politics’ in general, ‘as fundamentally immoral and removed from ‘the people’” (Helms 2007), and largely responsible for the war. Similar findings have been presented in several post-war ethnographies of the country: in the introduction to *The New Bosnian Mosaic*, Helms (2007) argues that this ‘widespread, longstanding perception of ‘politics’’, in which both local domestic politicians, ‘internationals’, and NGO-activists are perceived as ‘corrupt’ by many Bosnians has actively worked ‘against the emergence of a shared political community in post-war Bosnia’ (Helms 2007: 35). This rejection of politics also dovetails with the strategies of silence and memory management already noted, as shown in the work of Cécile Jouhanneau (2017: 440), whose informants (former camp detainees) chose to be intentionally voiceless in to deny a transfer of their individual suffering into political goals.

Perhaps paradoxically, this rejection of ‘politics’ has also been accompanied by an instrumentalization of the terms of the international community by certain groups. The post-war emergence of a ‘new transnational elite’, made up of the employees of international organizations and ‘local staff’ has been noted by several scholars (Coles, Helms, Jansen). This social class is in some ways merely a continuation of the ‘fourth ethnicity’ of the war, already discussed, who Kurtović argues sought social reproduction through their ‘alliance’ with the international community. After the war, the international community became a major source of income for many Bosnians, and ‘locals’ and ‘internationals’ directly interacted on a regular basis (Helms 2007: 18). Consolidating this ‘alliance’ in the post-war period meant adopting the terms of the international community, even where these ran counter to the everyday experience of living in BiH. At times, and as Helms (2013) has shown in relation to reconciliation initiatives, adopting these terms has even been used as a way of furthering ethnic (and other) differences. Helms shows that many foreign intervention agencies and donors charged with overseeing post-war reconstruction looked to women and women’s NGOs as ‘natural’ leaders of reconciliation initiatives (Helms 2013: 17), but that even in internationally-sponsored reconciliation events the very terms of ‘reconciliation’ have been used

to further ethnic difference by contrasting a particular group's (Bosniacs, in this case) willingness to enter into dialog with another's (Serbs) desire to 'continue living in hatred' Helms 2013: 28).

This view of politics, as simultaneously corrupt yet also a source of social reproduction for a particular social class, is mirrored in the view of many Bosnians of the country's place in the world, and its relation of its inhabitants to the international community. Within the country, Hromadžić has noted that many citizens face a 'struggle between being grateful to certain international organizations and individuals for their support', while simultaneously 'feeling subordinate and constrained by their governmentality' (Hromadžić 2015: 21). At the level of individual social interaction, though contact between local people and international 'elites' is common, at least for Bosnians of a particular social class, Coles (2007) has argued that the country inhabited by the two groups is radically different: that '[i]nternationals and Bosnians inhabited different landscapes' (Coles 2007: 51). She argues that internationals live in a kind of 'hyper-Bosnia' in which they are not subject to the same rules they were making for the local population, and as such 'the persons engaged professionally (and residentially) with creating one of the world's newest nation-states were the most disengaged with normal or typical services and regulations' (Coles 2007: 65). This division also arises when Bosnians move outside the country, and informs the way that the country is viewed on a geopolitical level. Jansen has characterized this view as one of 'semi-peripherality', in which BiH is trapped in the 'immediate outside' of Europe, simultaneously included and excluded from European discourses and bureaucratic systems. He argued in 2009 that the process of obtaining a visa can be seen as an institutional materialization of a wider experience of 'humiliating entrapment' (Jansen 2009: 818), and that such processes contributed to a process of subject-formation in which citizens conceptualized their place in 'everyday geo-political discourse' as excluded from Europe, while simultaneously being told that their country was (or would become) inherently European (Jansen 2009: 824)

Critically, the people who Jansen talked to, queuing outside the embassy to obtain leave to travel, were acutely aware of the difference between their current situation and that of before the War. They viewed the 'red passport', which they had previously held as citizens of Yugoslavia, as the 'normal' state of affairs, and their current state as abnormal (Jansen 2009), even while holding out little hope that it would ever change. As such, the visa queue becomes metonymic of the situation, and political views, of many Bosnians today. At the broadest level, the country can be seen as being 'trapped' in a peculiar spatiotemporal location, what Brković et al (2016) have called a 'chronotope'. Their suggestion is that, at the broadest level, BiH by 2016 can be most clearly

described by a number of interlinked metaphors: that of a ‘waiting room’, where citizens continually linger until the end of transition; a ‘swamp’, as a place where many people must struggle to keep their heads above water, whilst avoiding the ‘crocodiles’ of politicians and tycoons; or a ‘labyrinth’, from which only international ‘overseers’ are able to see the escape (Brković et al 2016: 15).

The Role Of Culture

Given the above remarks on the character of mature post-Dayton BiH, I wish to come full circle, and to return to the observation with which I started: it is not immediately obvious what contemporary art can do to improve the lives of Bosnians, or indeed to achieve the aims of the international community. It would appear, from the above review, that the terms under which international intervention in the country were undertaken were known to be problematic even when they were being applied. In the subsequent years, these terms have been sometimes rejected, and sometimes instrumentalized, by citizens who are largely concerned with maintaining ‘normal lives’ in the spatiotemporal context of permanent transition. Given these developments, the idea of funding contemporary art (and artists) in pursuit of democratization, reconciliation, and inclusion begins to seem increasingly strange. Nonetheless, alongside the international organizations I have already mentioned, many international cultural organizations became involved with post-war BiH. Their aims and methods, where they explain them, largely mirror those of more properly ‘political’ organizations: the strengthening of Bosnian civil society through the power of contemporary art to stimulate the public sphere.

Why, though, was contemporary art regarded as a good tool for doing this?

Chapter 3: Culture As Instrument

In this chapter, I will turn to the role of ‘culture’, and then contemporary art, in post-conflict BiH. ‘Culture’, as Raymond Williams famously argued, is ‘one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language’ (2014a: 49), and indeed a portion of my argument in this chapter looks at how definitions of the term have shifted over the past 50 years. Williams, alongside other definitions, draws a distinction between the use of the word to refer ‘primarily to material production’ and that which refers to ‘signifying or symbolic systems’ (Williams 2014b). Indeed, looking at the way that the international community sponsored culture in BiH implies such a division in itself. Whilst the most visible manifestation of this sponsorship is the production, display, and circulation of material objects, it is also designed to promote and strengthen a number of social, symbolic systems: not only the art system, but also a broader notions of civil society and the public sphere. In investigating the operation of the art system, therefore, this thesis can be said to be dealing with the ‘culture of culture’: the ‘cultural’ practices of a social system that produces paintings, performances, and other ‘material’ forms of ‘culture’. This makes referring to ‘culture’ somewhat difficult in the present context, and so I will limit my use of the term to mean, broadly, what is referred to as ‘culture’ by the international community. This, as I will argue, has changed over time, but is aligned closely with Williams’ sense of the word as ‘the independent and abstract noun which describes the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity ... culture is music, literature, painting and sculpture, theatre and film’ (Williams 2014b): that is, the material manifestations of intellectual and artistic work undertaken by a society.

In this chapter, I will explain the process through which culture (and then contemporary art) came to be perceived as useful tools in achieving the international community’s goals in post-conflict BiH. In order to do so, I will first describe the provisions that the Dayton agreement made for the administration of culture, or specifically the lack of them. The only form of culture provided for at a national level in the agreement was for monumental cultural heritage, and as such the majority of cultural programs in the post-conflict period have been funded and administered by the international community. The goals that these cultural programs are designed to achieve are largely identical with the self-stated aims of the international community in BiH more generally: primarily, there is a focus on the development of civil society as a mediator between the public and the political system, and as part of this culture is expected to contribute to the development of a number of subsidiary

discourses such as multiculturalism and reconciliation. I argue in this chapter that the reasons why culture was given this role can only be explained by contextualizing this within the ways in which culture was understood by the international community from WW2 onward. I will therefore describe the way in which the definition of ‘culture’, as well as the objectives it was expected to be able to achieve, developed over this period, and increasingly became seen as an effective ‘instrument’ for societal transformation. I will then turn back to my research questions, and argue that the reason why contemporary art was instrumentalized in BiH from 1995 onward was that the international community perceived particular characteristics in contemporary art exhibitions, institutions, and projects which suggested that funding such entities might ‘afford’ the type of outcomes desired in BiH.

Culture as Instrument

The Swiss Cultural Programme (SCP), a major source of funding for culture in BiH until 2013, explains its mission as follows:

To contribute to the promotion of democracy and freedom of expression, to conflict resolution and the respect of minorities through employment of cultural instruments and fostering of regional cooperation, thus facilitating the formation and preservation of independent and diversified cultural landscapes. (SCP n.d.)

The objectives of the SCP, in funding culture in BiH, are similar to those of many other organizations, both large and small, who also funded culture in the country after 1995. Whilst few of these organizations use the same terminology, the SCP’s reference to ‘cultural instruments’ provides a useful way of understanding the way in which culture, and the funding of it, has been understood by these organizations. Various forms of culture, contemporary art included, were employed in post-war BiH in an attempt to achieve political and social objectives. Culture has been used, in other words, as a ‘tool’ or an ‘instrument’.

Several reasons might be suggested as to why this was the case. The Dayton Peace Accords, which concluded the war in BiH in 1995, left the responsibility to safeguard and fund (most forms of) culture fragmented among a large array of entity- and canton-level administrations. This, given the broader context of international intervention in the country after 1995, meant that culture and art came to be included in broader interventions aimed at creating, in the words of the OHR, ‘a peaceful and viable democracy on course for integration in[to] Euro-Atlantic institutions’ (OHR

2014). The instrumentalization of culture in BiH, however, was also a manifestation of broader shifts in the way in which culture was perceived by international organizations, and its capacity to achieve political objectives. By 2005, culture was seen as being able to provide a way for political organizations to achieve many of the objectives of the international community in BiH. It had been ‘discovered to be useful’ (Fojut 2009: 17) in a number of ways: creating national symbols; reconciliation; the inclusion and empowerment of women and minorities; and ultimately the strengthening of civil society. Such a view is based on a number of assumptions. Most strikingly, it rests on the assumption that the critical power of culture, and its ability to question and ultimately change political and social landscapes, can be usefully leveraged by external political actors. My purpose in this chapter is to question this assumption, and also explain its presence in post-conflict BiH.

Cultural Policy in Post-Conflict BiH

The widespread instrumentalization of art in post-war BiH must be understood in relation to the cultural landscape of the country in 1995. One of the major criticisms of the Dayton Agreement has been that whilst it sought to establish a multi-cultural state, it did this by distributing power among a large and fragmentary set of political administrations. The provisions made for the administration of culture exhibit the same problems. As Fontana notes:

No state-level institution in charge of cultural policy was established at Dayton or in the following decades. This was despite the post-agreement increase in competencies of the central state, exemplified by the threefold increase in the number of BiH’s ministries since 1996. In fact, like education, culture was to be managed and financed at the level of the entities. (Fontana 2013: 453)

Accordingly, cultural policy was initially, and by default, devolved to entity-level administrations. In the RS, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Srpska assumed relatively broad powers in this field. However, in the Federation the responsibility for culture was gradually even further devolved to cantonal level, so that the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sport came to merely co-ordinate the activities of its ten cantons. As such:

Mirroring the whole general situation of the FBiH structure, this Ministry has no significant impact, normatively and financially weakened and oppressed, and cantons and cantonal governments are those that have a key

role and practically sole and full responsibility for the management of culture in this part of BiH. (Begagic et al. 2012: 28)

In practice, this has meant that national cultural policy in BiH has been characterized by stagnation, and also by vociferous argument between competing political organizations. In 2002, the MOSAIC Project, which aims to co-ordinate cultural policy across Europe, noted that ‘the cultural policy review process in [BiH] was completely different from other countries’, because ‘there is no National Report on cultural policy to which it responds’ (Landry 2002: 8). The result of this, as the report’s author notes, was that even by 2002:

Culture [was] still to a large extent considered narrowly as the high arts, the classics, the tradition and heritage without considering the broader spectrum of culture including its central role in the creation of identity, or as an instrument for establishing integration and cohesion as well as helping us understand cultural diversities. (Landry 2002: 3)

This lack of state-level cultural policy was also addressed in a report released the same year, *Togetherness in Difference: Culture at the Crossroads in Bosnia Herzegovina*, which suggested that the state should start working towards producing its ‘own unique cultural policy’ (2002). However, since this report was ‘received in a governmental vacuum without the necessary institutional structures, civil society, legal framework, skills, or capacities to action its proposals and recommendations’, as a later UNDAF report states, no such policy was developed (UNDAF 2010: 7). The result is that culture appears to be understood by the population of BiH in much the same terms as Landry noted. Research completed in 2010 by Prism Research on behalf of the UNDP noted that ‘the three most frequent associations with culture among respondents in B&H have to do with broader and more encompassing terms which involve person as a whole and their lifetime development’, and as such ‘the most frequent association to culture is education and family (upbringing) (45%), followed by life style and manners (30%), traditions, languages, customs and social or cultural communities (28%), and finally arts (25%)’ (Prism Research 2010: 14). ‘Each of the three most frequently mentioned associations in [the] B&H sample are present in larger percentages ... in EU 27’, the report continues, and as such ‘these data seem to indicate that the perception of culture in Europe is more strongly oriented toward specific artistic activities, whereas in B&H, the concepts relating to traditions, education and life style receive more prominence’ (Prism Research 2010: 15).

The most most striking outcome of the lack of national oversight of culture has been the closure, due to lack of funds, of the seven national cultural institutions of the Socialist Republic of BiH, all of which are (or were) situated in Sarajevo: the National Museum of BiH, the Art Gallery of BiH, the Historical Museum of BiH, the National Film Archive, the Museum of Literature and Theatre, the National and University Library of BiH and the National Library for the Visually Impaired. Fontana (2013) gives an overview of the argument that developed over responsibility for these institutions, and the reasons why each administration was essentially correct in its argument: the central government does not possess any formal obligation to finance these institutions; neither the FBiH or Sarajevo Canton have been instructed to fund them; and the Republic of Srpska (rightly) claims that it has no formal responsibility to finance cultural institutions situated outside its territory. More recently, the National Gallery of BiH has re-opened, albeit on a commercial basis, but the other museums remain (mostly, see Chapter 9) closed.

The closure of these museums, among other issues, led to calls for a national ministry of culture to be formed. Theoretically, there is no reason why such a body cannot be set up, even though it would require a constitutional revision. As Fontana notes, the idea:

Is not necessarily controversial: Ministries have been created in the decades since Dayton, and the extraordinary powers of the High Representative have helped to redistribute some of the entities' competencies to the state level. (Fontana 2013: 456)

Indeed, some competencies (notably defense (Short 2018), and the administration of the national football team) are dealt with at the national level. The problem, when it comes to culture, is that in forming a national cultural policy a deep disagreement over the nature of the Bosnian state would have to be overcome. The only national cultural policy that would be acceptable to the international community would be one based on the idea that BiH is a multi-cultural state, and this is not the view of many entity- and canton-level politicians. This is why 'setting up a national ministry of culture has proved more controversial than establishing a defence ministry' (Fontana 2013: 456). It is also why, after 1995 the Museum of Banja Luka changed its name to the Museum of Republic of Srpska, and began to see its mission as the preservation of Serb identity (Hajdarpašić 2008). Indeed, the debate over who should be responsible for culture, and even whether BiH possesses a national culture, is metonymic of the post-conflict nature of the state, and specifically the problems created by Dayton, so that 'far from being limited to the realm of cultural policy, the fault lines of this

debate mirror long-standing arguments over reform of BiH's constitutional structure and over whether and how BiH can move "beyond Dayton" (Fontana 2013: 457).

This lack of national governmental oversight has not meant that no cultural activities have taken place in BiH in the post-conflict period. Rather, it has meant that the responsibility for funding culture has been assumed by a variety of other organizations. Entity- and canton-level governments continue to (occasionally) administer and fund culture within their geographical remits. In Sarajevo, some organizations (the Bosniak Institute and Collegium Artisticum, for instance) rely on local donor networks that were established during the Yugoslav period. By far the most prominent source of funding for culture in the post-conflict period, however, has been international organizations. In addition, the largest of these organizations have also taken on administrative functions that would normally reside with a national culture ministry, co-ordinating cultural programs across BiH as a whole. Whilst this support was partially a response to local difficulties in the funding and administration of culture, this in itself is not sufficient to explain the extent of cultural instrumentalization in BiH post-1995. In order to fully explain this, it is necessary to take a broader view, and look at international (or at least Western) currents of thought from 1995 onward: these include the concepts of 'new interventionism' and 'transition', as already mentioned, but also changes in the way in which culture and contemporary art have been understood by the international community over this period.

These changes can be illustrated by reference to two of the largest international funders of art in post-war BiH: The European Cultural Foundation (ECF), and Pro Helvetia, which ran the Swiss Cultural Program in Southeast Europe and Ukraine (SCP) until 2013. Both organizations were among the first to argue for the value of culture in achieving the aims of the international community, both in BiH and the Western Balkans more generally. Indeed, the SCP was initially formed in the mid-1990s, with the aim of supporting initiatives 'drawing on the power of culture - and art, specifically - as a strategy for engendering tolerance in countries experiencing intense transformations and transitions' (SCP n.d.). The ECF started its involvement later, after Gottfreid Wagner, in his preface to the ECF report *The Heart of the Matter*, lamented the lack of EU engagement in culture during its early involvement in the post-conflict BiH. He argues that:

Almost incredibly – given the obvious power of perceptions, images and cultural patterns – EU politics excluded cultural programmes. It virtually amounted to a paradoxical neo-Marxism in which the power of the 'basis', of material investment, was given precedence

over the power of the ‘superstructure’ (*Ueberbau*) – with only education, which opened its cooperation mechanisms to the region step by step, granted exemption. (Gottfried Wagner, director of ECF, in (Behluli et al. 2005: 10))

Accordingly, between 2002 and 2005, the ECF consistently argued that the EU’s strategy in the Western Balkans should contain a cultural element. In 2006, the organization achieved its aim by establishing the Balkan Incentive Fund for Culture (BIFC), which funded educational and artistic projects throughout the region. In 2013, the BIFC was combined with the SCP, renamed the Balkans Arts and Culture Fund (BAC), and its operation passed to a local organization, ArtAngle, which currently administers the fund from its offices in Sarajevo. Despite local management, at present the BAC is still financially supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the ECF (ArtAngle n.d.).

For both organizations, part of the reason culture needed to be included in the international community’s involvement in BiH was because of the role of culture in legitimizing the conflicts of the mid-1990s. For the ECF, in particular, the power of art and culture to enhance civil society, and thereby build alternative narratives, was key because ‘during the late eighties and early nineties, artists and intellectuals of an earlier generation provided the rhetoric, the symbols and the excuses which fuelled nationalism and war’ (Behluli et al. 2005: 16). Landry, writing in a report commissioned by Pro Helvetia, argues that:

In no country in Europe is cultural policy more important than in BiH. Culture is both the cause and the solution to its problems. Cultural arguments were used to divide the country, yet culture might be able to bring people back together again through initiating cultural programmes and activity that increase mutual understanding and respect. (Landry 2002: 3)

The aims of both of these organizations have been extremely broad. The BAC focuses on ‘socially relevant, responsible and change-oriented contemporary artistic and cultural projects’ (ArtAngle n.d.), which empower local organizations and strengthen ‘their role as driver of social, economic and political, processes’. The SCP, for its part, explains that ‘the idea is that, through participation in art and culture, everyone can in principle be more creative, involved, engaged, and informed - and that this is significant in creating citizenship in transition countries’. This process can, among other things, challenge ‘decision makers’ through funding ‘uncomfortable projects that force leaders to debate and take a stand, such as by spurring them to look at their prejudices about migrants’, and

‘can empower people who have previously not expressed their views’, because ‘a community play devised with a local group can tell us much more than a typical political process’ (SCP n.d.).

In addition to these large projects, there has also been more erratic support and funding for contemporary art in BiH through a vast variety of smaller organizations. These have included USAID, the British Council, the Goethe Institute, the French Embassy in Sarajevo, and a number of companies and corporations. In most cases, the justifications and aims of these organizations are similar to those of the SCP and the ECF. Indeed, the similarities between the ways in which different organizations have justified their funding of culture in BiH means that it is possible to characterize a relatively homogeneous shared ideology. To this end, several general features of the instrumentalization of culture in BiH may be identified.

The first is that, at least in the early post-conflict period, it was undertaken almost exclusively by Western states and NGOs. Secondly, in almost all cases, culture has been thought of as an instrument for achieving particular policy goals. Culture, in the literature of these organizations, is almost always linked to political or social outcomes, and (like the broader international involvement) was most often justified under a ‘neutral’ human rights framework. Though, more recently, this combination of characteristics is noted by Jansen, who explicitly links cultural intervention in BiH to broader forms of intervention, arguing that:

Despite the recent vogue of rhetorically incorporating ‘culture’ into global governance, the predominance of the human rights framework allowed the portrayal of those intervention policies as a neutral, technical toolkit for post-war recovery rather than as a Western-derived, historically specific process of societal transformation. (Jansen 2006: 177)

Another feature of cultural intervention in BiH is that it has typically been embedded within broader programs, and that these have operated at many levels of geographical specificity. Most commonly, they were part of programs aimed at ‘Eastern Europe’, the ‘transition states’, the ‘Western Balkans’, ‘South-East Europe’, or the ‘Balkans’. Sometimes, as with USAID, they were embedded within global programs (USAID 2012). Many of these programs actually started in 1989 or 1990, with the fall of communism, and only after 1995 were applied to BiH. This approach has been criticized, in so much as it fails to take into account differences between the states that fall under such designations, thereby showing ‘how unprepared Western Europe was institutionally and politically for the new geopolitical order, and how culturally ill-equipped it was to cope with the isolated nations that the fall of the Berlin Wall set free upon the world’ (Dragievič Šešić et al. 2005: 83).

A review of the aims of these cultural programs, in terms of what culture was expected to achieve in post-war BiH, shows that these aims were very similar to those of broader intervention strategies already described in the previous chapter: concepts of nation-building, reconciliation, and inclusion are very prominent in this literature. Thus, cultural support is often justified in relation to state-building, because ‘international organizations in BiH’ can use culture to support ‘peace-implementation and statebuilding processes’ (Zaum 2003: 105). Culture can also, it is claimed, be involved ‘in the process of reconciliation’ (Cultural Heritage Without Borders 2017: 10). In terms of inclusion, culture can be used with the ‘aim of reducing poverty, increasing employment and improving socio-economic opportunities for the marginalized segments of the population’ (MDG Achievement Fund 2012: 81). In addition, culture is seen as an important part of “Europeanization, Eastern style”, because it can help with ‘adaptation to the exigencies of the advanced models of the West’ (Anastasakis 2005: 78). Perhaps the broadest statement, however, is that of The Embassy of Switzerland, which aims to make ‘a substantial commitment to the consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and the market economy in BiH’ largely through enhancing ‘culture as a driver for democratisation and socio-economic development’ (SCP n.d.).

Alongside all these specific aims, the policy literature also exhibits a focus on culture as a way of promoting and strengthening civil society. This is not surprising, because as Fagan notes:

Practically every international NGO, foreign donor organization and multilateral agency involved in the country makes explicit reference to civil society development as a key objective of their involvement. But it is not just the international community in BiH that has used the language of civil society promotion; local NGOs providing services within the community, running small education programmes or providing practical assistance to displaced persons, the elderly, or those with medical conditions also express their objectives in terms of civil society. (Fagan 2005: 406)

Accordingly, almost all of the organizations funding culture in BiH make reference to their role in developing civil society. This is sometimes done in reference to the role of civil society in achieving other aims, such as ‘strengthening democracy’ etc., but also in some cases because culture is a way of exhibiting ‘evidence of a civil society coming alive’ (Behluli et al. 2005: 33). There have therefore been many projects aimed at achieving these goals. The Open Society Fund BiH, for instance, states that it is ‘working to build vibrant and transparent democracy in which institutions are truly accountable to its citizens’ through ‘the empowerment of civil society’ (Open Society Fund BiH n.d.). The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), which operates

through the Embassy of Sweden in BiH, states that its ‘mission’ is ‘to reduce poverty in the world’, but also that its work in BiH is conducted as part of a program focused on ‘reform cooperation with Eastern Europe’, which aims to help Bosnia undertake ‘democratic, fair and sustainable development as well as to support progress towards the EU’. SIDA also states that as part of this development ‘it is crucial to support the development of civil society, which has an important role to monitor politicians and authorities’ and through which ‘vulnerable groups are able to organise themselves and demand their rights’ (SIDA n.d.). In programs like these, funding for culture was given an important role in civil society development, both as a way of strengthening democracy, but also as a mechanism through which these subsidiary objectives could be achieved.

Indeed, culture’s ability to strengthen civil society has been the primary objective of cultural programs in post-war BiH. This was put succinctly by Raymond Weber (2000), former Director General of the Directorate of Culture and Cultural Heritage in the Council of Europe, who when talking about the capabilities of culture in the ex-communist states of Eastern Europe, identified five objectives that culture could achieve: ‘reconciliation, reciprocal recognition, creation of a common discourse, imagining common solutions, [and] awareness awaking of multicultural challenges’, all of which required the stimulation and development of civil society. Indeed, the deep link between civil society development and culture, at least as presented in the policy literature, means that in many cases ‘culture’ was not a category under which funds were given at all, but instead was a subsidiary (or meta-) part of other streams such as ‘civil society development’ (Dragievič Šešić et al. 2005). In addition, many of the policy documents produced by organizations funding art in BiH propose the creation or stimulation of a viable civil society, through culture and other means, as the eventual goal of these programs. It is hoped that, after a period of external support and co-ordination, the civil society of BiH will become self-sustaining, and attain a stable and autonomous existence that will allow the international community to withdraw.

Another feature of cultural intervention in BiH in the post-conflict period was that the level of support provided to cultural projects fluctuated over the period 1995 – 2018. As noted above, it took some years for culture to be included in international development programs, but equally it appears that from 2008 the level of international support given to culture in BiH began to decrease. Authors disagree about when the ‘peak’ occurred, but it seems that this funding increased until about 2005, and then began to decrease. Thus:

Although foreign support for cultural activities ... greatly influenced the local cultural scene in the Western Balkan countries from the nineties ...

since the year 2000 there has been a general tendency towards the withdrawal of some of the most significant funders that have either completely retreated from the region or have revised their own priorities, ended their programmes or restructured their cooperative cultural programmes. Funds from UNESCO, the Council of Europe, Soros and other international organisations do not support projects in the region as before. (Mišković 2011: 16).

A number of reasons might be suggested for this gradual reduction in funding. It is in line with a more general reduction in the level of aid of all kinds given to BiH (see chapter 1), and so it does not represent a 'turning away' from culture in itself. Rather, two factors might be raised in explanation: that from 2000 there was a shift in Western foreign policy away from transition and toward the global war on terror; and from 2008 overseas development budgets for many Western countries were significantly reduced in the context of the global financial crisis. The level of support given to culture by the international community, whether in 1995 or 2018, is extremely hard to measure. Part of the difficulty in assessing the annual level of international support given to culture in post-conflict BiH is that in many cases the mechanisms used to fund culture have been very complex. Often, funding given by national governments is mediated through international organizations or cultural foundations. This funding is then typically given to local organizations such as NGOs, galleries, or locally administered development foundations, who then use a portion of the funds to convene exhibitions, erect public art, run workshops for artists, and to undertake a wide range of activities loosely associated with the production, promotion, and dissemination of culture. This, in turn, points to one of the major difficulties of analyzing the instrumentalization of culture in post-conflict BiH: assessing its extent.

One way to assess the extent of this instrumentalization would be to calculate the amount of funding given to culture by international organizations in the period 1995 – 2018. This is not possible. The reasons for this are multiple, and relate to the points I have made above. Many of the international organizations that have funded culture over this period include this funding as an indistinguishable part of larger funding streams. This is partially because small cultural interventions typically accompany larger projects, as for instance when a photography show accompanies an outreach program. In addition, much of this funding has been channeled through local NGOs, thousands of which were formed over the period in question. Many of these NGOs are no longer active, and virtually no trace of their activities remains. Indeed, this 'explosion' of NGOs has been noted as a

problem outside of the cultural sector, and points to another difficulty in assessing the amount of funding given to culture in post-war BiH: corruption. As Sampson notes:

Activists and project coordinators conclude that of the thousands of registered NGOs, no more than 10% are truly active. The rest exist only on paper, or have been formed only to obtain funds, or are a cover for a single person's activity, or simply a cover for tax free business, or even worse. (Sampson 2002: 3)

Potential corruption, the complex mechanisms through which culture was funded in the period, the inclusion of culture within broader funding streams, and the lack of documentation on the activities of local NGOs makes assessing the extent of instrumentalization difficult, at least in monetary terms. This is why, though hundreds of reports have been produced since 1995 on the cultural activities of individual organizations in BiH, there is (to my knowledge) no totalizing study of the 'cultural economy' of this period which manages to give a summation of the total amount of funding provided by international organizations. In reality, furthermore, merely aggregating all of the funding that was given to culture in this period would arguably not provide a measure of how dominant the international instrumentalization of it was. Culture, in comparison to maintaining peace-keeping forces (for instance), is relatively inexpensive, but arguably has a much larger effect on civil society. Indeed, this magnification of effect is one of the reasons that makes culture such an attractive site of instrumentalization. Accordingly, perhaps the best way to assess the impact and extent of this instrumentalization is to observe its effect on the cultural scene of BiH from the perspective of those who work in the field. This is what my the present thesis seeks to do.

The International Culture Doctrine

Having described the objectives that culture was expected to achieve in post-conflict BiH, I will now describe the processes through which culture was given these responsibilities. In doing so, it is first worth noting an exception to my argument above. Though neither the Dayton Agreement nor any subsequent constitution of BiH created a national cultural ministry, there is one area of cultural policy that has been overseen by a national administrative body: the protection of cultural heritage, and specifically the protection of national monuments. Indeed, the Dayton agreement itself 'symbolically invested heritage with a pivotal role in post-conflict reconstruction and intercommunity reconciliation in one of its Annexes – Annex 8,' which was 'dedicated to the creation of a Commission [hereafter: the Commission] to Preserve National Monuments' (Musi

2014: 2). There are several reasons why cultural heritage, and not other forms of culture, was specifically provided for in the Dayton agreement. One is that by 1995, the international community had come to regard cultural heritage as a 'global public good' and 'the shared legacy of all humanity' (Isar 2011: 39), and therefore sought to protect it. Though this paradigm, which Musi calls the 'international heritage doctrine' (2014), was initially focused on cultural heritage, in the years since 1995 more and more forms of culture have been included within it. As such, an increasingly large number of cultural activities were deemed worthy of international protection, but also increasingly expected to be able to achieve political aims. A discussion of this process is found in the next section.

Several more immanent reasons why Dayton specifically included mention of cultural heritage is found in some of the assumptions that underpin the agreement. Specifically, the cultural destruction that occurred during the Bosnian War meant that it was felt necessary to protect evidence of a multi-cultural, pre-conflict BiH. The agreement recognized that the 1990s violence in BiH was:

Legitimised with reference to the incompatibility of competing conceptualisations of 'home', understood as 'homeland' ... [and that] opposed nationalist discourses represented their military campaigns as defensive operations, protecting and/or creating a territory where their nationals would be 'at home'. (Jansen 2006: 179)

Because of this focus on ethnically pure 'homelands', the destruction of heritage, in turn, became an 'attempt to rewrite history to erase physical evidence that the other party was ever there' (Viejo-Rose 2011: 106). Accordingly, Dayton sought to return 'nationally heterogeneous patterns of residence' (Jansen 2006: 191) by restoring the pre-war patterns of habitation. In this context, the positioning of Annex 8, which set up the Commission to Preserve National Monuments, is telling, because it comes immediately after Annex 7, which provides for the return of 'Refugees and Displaced Persons,' and therefore 'implicitly links heritage to the territorial dimension of the cultural identity of groups' (Musi 2014: 4) and at the relevance of the process of heritage reconstruction in relation to 'identity formation and the re-creation of physical and psychological landscapes' (Viejo-Rose 2011: 54). In short, since Dayton conceptualized people as 'collectively rooted in a particular place through culture, [and] deriving their identity from this territorialisation,' refugee return was a method 'to restore the 'natural' order of the world' (Jansen 2006: 180), and so it was important that monuments relating to particular ethnic groups (Muslim graveyards, for instance) were not destroyed in an effort to legitimize narratives of ethnically pure areas. Further, it

has been noted that in many cases post-conflict collective memory is possessed of a ‘telescopic’ nature, in which events of recent conflict are aligned with those of the more distant past. This is undoubtedly the case in BiH. As Karamanić & Šuber (2012a) note, during the Bosnian War the media disseminated narratives which explicitly invoked WW2-era atrocities as justification for the contemporary use of military force. This ‘telescoping’ has now come full circle. Following the conflict, acts of ethnic cleansing and the sites on which they occurred are now seen as mirroring ‘similar’ atrocities committed during WW2 (Duijzings 2007). Such sites, therefore, are associated with nationalisms either historical or contemporary; with either Yugoslavia or with their more recent co-option by nationalist parties (Bougarel et al. 2007: 25; Džihic et al. 2010: 21). In line with the broader intervention in BiH, it was felt that one way to diffuse these tensions was to place the Commission under direct international supervision. Thus, though Annex 8 states that ‘the Commission shall be composed of ‘professionally competent staff, generally representative of the ethnic groups comprising BiH and Herzegovina’ (Annex 8, Art. III, par 1), i.e. ‘Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs, as constituent peoples (along with Others)’, it continued to be overseen by the international community. As such, ‘the initial years of the work of the Commission were ... characterised by direct collaboration with foreign, internationally appointed personnel and UNESCO, and the Commission’s staff maintained an international component’ until 2012 (Musi 2014: 10).

Mostar

The most high-profile project undertaken by the Commission, alongside international partners, was the re-construction of the bridge in Mostar. Indeed, the bridge is an excellent example of both the reasons for the formation of the Commission, and the issues raised by the application of the ‘international heritage doctrine’ in the Bosnian context. The bridge, which was destroyed by the Bosnian Croat army in 1993, was rebuilt between 2001 and 2004 by The World Bank, UNESCO, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and the World Monuments Fund, with additional funding provided by the governments of Italy, the Netherlands, Turkey, and Croatia, the Council of Europe Development Bank, and the Bosnian government (Armaly et al. 2004). There are several reasons why the bridge was seen as powerful symbol for the cultural reconstruction of BiH. The city of Mostar is ethnically divided, and the bridge acts as a literal and metaphorical linkage between the communities. In addition, its symbolism is potent: the physical bridge stands for a metaphorical reconstruction of dialogue between the cultures of BiH, such that ‘old or new, “authentic” or rebuilt,

[it can] become a place of discussion, communication, and hence reconciliation’ (Daniel Thérond & Council of Europe 2009:74). More broadly, the bridge represents:

A blend of local and international notions and practises, where the principles of what I call the ‘international heritage doctrine’, fashioned through UNESCO and Council of Europe’s texts and conventions on heritage, encounter a local Bosnian experience of heritage annihilation. In BiH, this international influence has been strengthened by a direct involvement of the International Community ... and by the endowment of heritage with pivotal functions in post-war reconstruction, reconciliation and intercultural dialogue. (Musi 2014: 3)

Despite these intentions, the re-built bridge has not become a symbol of inter-cultural dialogue, still less of reconciliation, and the rebuilt bridge has not reunited Mostar. As of 2001, the European Community alone has spent €200 million in the city, but it remains divided (Belloni 2001: 166). Indeed, within the Croat section of the city, a Croat National Library has been established as an attempt to rival the National Library in Sarajevo. Despite its metaphorical potency, the bridge cannot become a national symbol in a country that has such a difficult relationship with the ‘national’. It does not represent BiH. Indeed, it stands in a region that saw much fighting during the 1990s, between three ethnic groups, only two of whom recognized the independence of BiH. It therefore, as Musi says, illustrates ‘one fundamental pitfall of the international heritage doctrine fashioned by UNESCO and the Council of Europe,’ which is that this doctrine ‘implicitly relies on the nation-state as the carrier and developer of collective cultural memory and identity, overlooking settings where the primary mode of group identification and legitimisation occurs at different (lower) levels, as in BiH’ (Musi 2014: 1).

Culture: A Bridge To Development

Despite these problems, the reconstructed bridge in Mostar became an iconic symbol of post-war reconciliation for at least one group involved in BiH after 1995: the international community. The symbolic power of the bridge was such that it became, in 2012, an iconic representation of a new global initiative. Proposed in 2011 by Irina Bokova, then Director-General of UNESCO, ‘Culture: a Bridge to Development’ used the bridge in Mostar as a representation of UNESCO’s understanding of the power of culture in BiH and elsewhere. It aims at:

Promoting innovative and creative approaches which enhance culture as a bridge to sustainable social, economic and human development, and at

better enhancing creativity, cultural industries and cultural heritage in all its forms as a powerful and unique tool for sustainable social, economic and human development, job-creation opportunities social cohesion, education and mutual understanding. (UNESCO n.d.)

Thus, though the bridge had initially been rebuilt because it represented the cultural heritage of post-war BiH, it came to represent an approach to culture, and an understanding of its role in development, that extended far beyond 'heritage'. The new initiative sought to build 'genuine bridges' within civil society between a large range of actors: 'artists, intellectuals, teachers and creators', with a view to 'create networks' and build 'cultural bridges ... among professionals, civil society and politicians, [so that] it will be easier for them to participate in urban, economic and social development projects'. Among these groups were included those working with 'modern art, networks of young artists, media, [the] cultural industries, [and] cultural tourism', all of which were understood to be 'powerful accelerators for growth' (Bokova 2011).

The range of cultural forms and processes that were included in the new initiative are indicative of broader shifts in the way in which international organizations understood the power of culture, and the objectives it could be expected to achieve, after the signing of the Dayton agreement in 1995. These shifts, in turn, represent the outcome of a number of interlinked discourses: a gradually expanding definition of 'heritage' that came to include contemporary cultural expressions; a recognition that these were examples of the 'diversity of cultural expression'; an attempt to justify culture in relation to neo-liberalism; the gradual recognition of the power of 'culture for development'; and ultimately an expanded understanding of what culture could be expected to achieve in developing societies. These shifts can be illustrated by looking at the way that one international organization, UNESCO, understood culture and its abilities over this period.

Heritage and Culture

The forms of culture that have been afforded international support and protection has gradually expanded since the founding of UNESCO in 1945. Initially, the focus of such programs was on material and monumental cultural heritage, which was afforded protection under international law in 1954 under the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which states that 'damage to cultural property belonging to any people whatsoever means damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind, since each people makes its contribution to the culture of the world' and therefore 'heritage should receive international protection' (Convention for

the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, The Hague 1954, Preamble). In the following years, UNESCO gradually came to see more and more forms of heritage as worthy of protection, as seen in the expansion of the categories of heritage that were afforded protection, starting with built heritage, and expanding to natural heritage, and most recently to intangible heritage. Bortolotto (2007) writes that this was partially driven by a change in the way that UNESCO understood heritage. She argues that ‘intangible human heritage’ was not defined so much by its ‘intangibility’ as by the fact that cultural heritage was now seen as a process rather than an outcome. Ultimately, this meant that almost any aspect of a society came to be regarded as heritage. ‘Today’, she writes, ‘heritage is suddenly everywhere ... and does not apply simply to 'cultural objects' but also to the way of making them, and to the people who are the bearers of this technical knowledge, to ways of life, of worshipping gods, of healing people - ultimately to all aspects of life within a community’ (2007: 29). The range of this definition is seen clearly in the work of a number of scholars. It is evident, for instance, in Amselle’s review of the role of contemporary art and performance in UNESCO’s approach to ‘Africa’, where he notes that:

Protecting intangible African heritage is thus as much encouragement of the creation of contemporary works as preservation of what is labelled as traditional, because tradition is defined as the product as well as the permanence of a heritage. (Amselle 2004)

Equally, Loulanski has written about the ways in which contemporary art was gradually included within programs that nominally focused on ‘heritage’, and indeed was regarded as one of the most important forms of cultural heritage expression to protect. Contemporary art is, she writes, the ‘most dynamic form of cultural heritage’ (Loulanski 2006: 210). Others have argued that:

‘Contemporary art’, regardless of subject matter or style, is doubly charged, doubly purposeful, as a sign of cultural continuity and renewal. That is to say, it is both the sign of ‘heritage’ being sustained and the sign of a particular culture being renewed for and into the future. (Stone et al. 2008: 291)

This expanded definition of what constitutes heritage is also seen clearly in the symbolic role of the bridge in Mostar. Though the re-construction of the bridge was originally justified in terms of protecting cultural heritage, the initiatives that came after it, and used it as an emblem, were focused on a much broader range of cultural activities. This parallels broader shifts: though the work of UNESCO and other international organizations was initially justified in terms of the protection of

cultural heritage, the vastly expanded definition of what constituted heritage meant that initiatives were increasingly justified in terms of ‘culture’ more generally.

Diversity and Globalization

The expansion of the forms of culture which were to be afforded protection under international instruments was driven partially by concerns about the homogenizing effects of globalization on local cultures. This gave rise to a focus on protecting the ‘Diversity of Cultural Expressions’ as a core concern of UNESCO and similar organizations. This also represented a shift in the way in which culture was understood. Stoczkowski’s review of the history of UNESCO (2009) divides the history of the organization into three periods. He argues that at the formation of the organization in 1945, it was thought that human diversity was the cause of war. Accordingly, in line with the organization’s remit to ‘build peace in the minds of men’, it initially sought to standardize education, and saw globalization as a way of increasing dialogue between national cultures. By 1985, Stoczkowski writes, this view had changed. Now, the diversity of human cultures was to be protected. Despite what many saw as a rise in ‘cultural racism’, due to the ‘retreat into local identities’ (2009: 10), UNESCO chose to support and protect the diversity of cultural identities and expressions as a ‘panacea that will resolve all the problems of humankind’ and replace ‘human unity as the universal solution to all problems’ (2009: 11). In addition, rather than being seen as a source of unity, globalization was now seen ‘as a threat to cultural diversity’ (2009: 10). This thinking reached its apex, he writes, with three new documents adopted at the beginning of the 21st century: the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO 2001), the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2003), and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO 2005) (Stoczkowski 2009: 10).

In BiH, these discourses encountered a complex local context. The understanding of the war as an ethnic conflict meant that the three ethnicities were understood as cultures whose right to expression needed to be secured. However, the fact that Bosnian ethnicity is based on religion means that ‘multi-culturalism’ in BiH was actually understood as ‘multi-confessionalism’ (Hajdarpašić 2008). In some cases, furthermore, it is not entirely clear which ‘culture’ was being protected and promoted by these processes. The UNESCO Venice Office supported, for instance, the 2003 pavilion of BiH at the Venice Biennial. This was done with explicit reference to the 2001 Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, under which the office sought to ‘promote the diversity of

cultural expressions’, and later justified in the terms of the 2005 convention, which ‘seeks to strengthen the five inseparable links of the same chain: creation, production, distribution, dissemination, access, and enjoyment of cultural expressions as conveyed by cultural activities goods and services’. However, neither the artists nor the artworks which were exhibited referred to ethnic association. The project is therefore best understood, perhaps, as the protection of the ‘de-territorialized assembly’ (Kurtović 2012) that had emerged during the Siege of Sarajevo: the de-ethnicized ‘fourth ethnicity’ that envisioned BiH as a multi-cultural state. That this culture was the one deemed worthy of protection under the 2001 convention has been seen by some as an exercise of power by the international community: the promotion of a ‘synthetic’ culture for political ends, justified in terms of ‘protecting’ the diversity of cultural expression (interview with Amila Ramović, Deputy Director of Ars Aevi, 19th May 2013). In this, the decision to sponsor the pavilion is an example of broader criticisms of UNESCO’s definition of culture. Raj, in reporting on a seminar held to mark the publication of the first UNESCO *World Culture Report* in 1998 (1998), notes that the anthropologists in attendance (in particular) were critical of the way that conceptions of culture, rather than safeguarding and protecting cultural rights, can actually be used as instruments of power. ‘The definition of culture itself’, it was claimed, ‘is used to flex positions of authority - the authority to define what culture should be about’ (Wright, quoted in Raj 1998).

Culture for Development

A parallel change in the way that UNESCO has seen culture, and in some senses one that contradicts the desire to protect local cultures against globalization, can be seen in the rise of the discourse on ‘Culture for Development’. Starting in 1988, UNESCO began to stress the importance of:

Incorporating culture into all development policies, be they related to education, science, communication, health, environment or cultural tourism and, on the other hand, at supporting the development of the cultural sector through creative industries. (UNESCO 2010)

The rising importance of these ideas is seen in a variety of documents and initiatives. It is seen, for instance, in the fact that 1988-97 was designated the ‘World Decade for Cultural Development’, the objectives of which were ‘to stimulate cultural activities as an expression of identity, to make for greater access and participation for everyone in cultural life, to encourage the flowering of creation and creativity and to strengthen cultural exchanges and co-operation’ (UNESCO 1988: 7). The 2005

Convention also makes mention of similar ideas, noting that there existed a ‘need to incorporate culture as a strategic element in national and international development policies, as well as in international development cooperation’, because ‘cultural activities, goods and services have both an economic and a cultural nature’ (UNESCO, 2005). Similarly, the 2004 Human Development Report ‘Cultural Liberty in Today’s Diverse World’ states that ‘If the world is to reach the Millennium Development Goals and ultimately eradicate poverty, it must first successfully confront the challenge of how to build inclusive, culturally diverse societies’ (UNDAF 2010: 6).

This shift, in which support for culture was increasingly justified in terms of economics, can also be seen as the outcome of the rise of neo-liberal governments in the period leading up to the 2005 convention. Neo-liberalism meant that funding for arts and culture was increasingly expected to be justified against specific policy aims. For both Gray (2007) and Vestheim (1994), it was in the economic transformations of these times that the post-war ‘welfare state consensus’ in Western societies began to be questioned, and state management of cultural industries was subsequently reformed (Gray 2007: 208). This process, in the words of Gray, stemmed from ‘the increasingly common view of the arts as simply another policy arena that must be subsumed to the wider, instrumental, interests of governments’ (Gray 2007: 204), and can be seen as part of a broad ‘commodification’ of public policy, in which arts and culture are valued for their exchange value: that is, for the things with which they might be ‘exchanged’, including their effects on wider society. Secondly, individuals and organizations within the cultural industry itself ‘attached’ their work to these same political objectives, because there was a “need” for arts and cultural policies to demonstrate that they generate a benefit over and above the aesthetic’ (Gray 2007: 203). The outcome of this is that today, arts and culture policy must be seen as an inherent part of a broader policy environment, in that it has often been directly instrumentalized by those in control of this environment, and has also sought to align its objectives to it (Gray 2007: 205). In this context, culture came to be seen as a tool for ‘investment and profit, creating places of work, preventing depopulation, creating attractive places to live, strengthening the creative ability of the society (locally and regionally), attracting highly skilled labour’ (Vestheim 1994: 65), and as useful in social cohesion and economic development (Marcuse 2007: 20).

The association between culture and economics has long been noted, and long been criticized. It forms, for instance, seen in Adorno’s concept of the ‘culture industry’ (Adorno et al. 1997), through which, he argues, the critical role of culture has been fatally undermined by its subservience to economic imperative. Gray and Vestheim argue, however, that the rise of neo-liberalism saw this

linkage made in more explicit terms than it had been before (Gray 2007; Vestheim 1994): In Adorno's conception, the way in which culture is used to affirm political and social systems is essentially hidden. With the rise of neo-liberalism, it came to be explicitly stated. In some senses, linking culture to economic development would seem to undermine UNESCO's fear that globalization can lead to cultural homogenization. Stoczkowski argues, for instance, that UNESCO supports 'flows between cultures' in order to protect these same cultures, but ultimately these flows can lead to the homogenization of them (Stoczkowski 2009: 11). There is also a fear that a 'commodification' of culture has led to cultural policy being devised and measured in exclusively economic terms. That, though 'culture is a powerful global economic engine' (UNESCO 2010: 5), cultural 'goods and services ... must not be treated as mere commodities or consumer goods' (Gray 2007: 206). This is of concern not only because it risks making culture entirely subservient to market forces, but also because an over-eager commodification of culture is believed to have more general negative effects upon society (Marcuse 2007: 23). It is worth noting that UNESCO themselves argue that culture must not 'be treated as solely having commercial value' (UNESCO 2005), and that in fact their definition of 'development is not synonymous with economic growth alone. It is a means to achieve 'a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence' (UNESCO n.d.). Nevertheless, in BiH this presumed link between culture and development again encounters a problematic local context. The 'forced transition' (Jansen 2006) of the country to a market capitalist society, in which many of the economic reforms desired by the international community are designed to open the Bosnian market to international capital, can be seen as a kind of forced globalization. Thus, in transition states there may seem to be something of a paradox in regarding culture as both the protector of cultural expression against processes of globalization, and simultaneously one of the driving forces behind economic development and reform.

The Uses of Culture

These criticisms notwithstanding, the conceptual linkage made between culture and development can be seen as both the outcome of, and a driving force behind, an expansion in the perception of what culture could be expected to 'do' in transition societies and elsewhere. By 2014, the range of objectives that culture was expected to contribute to was extremely broad. This is seen, for instance, in the report *Heritage and Beyond*, (2009) released to explore the background and consequences of *The Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Heritage for Society* (the Faro

Convention). In the report, Fojut outlines a division between the ‘intrinsic value’ of culture, and its ‘instrumental value’, through which it is seen ‘as a contributor to some other social objective’ (2009: 18). Recently, he writes, as well as culture being ‘valued for its own intrinsic worth, it ha[s] been discovered to be useful’ (2009: 17). The UNESCO leaflet *The Power of Culture for Development* (2010) also gives an extremely broad definition of culture and the ends to which it may be put. The leaflet stresses the rapidly expanding definition of both culture and development, such that today the concept of development includes ‘human qualities tied to historical, social and cultural factors’ (Vestheim 1994: 62), and culture is seen as a ‘fundamental component’ of such diverse goals as economic development, social cohesion and stability, environmental sustainability, and ‘creating resilient communities’ (UNESCO 2010: 2). The implication, at least, of such wide definitions is that there is now almost no policy area to which cultural policy cannot contribute.

Given this, it is not surprising that culture was given an important role in post-conflict BiH. The otherwise extensive international involvement in the country, combined with a lack of national structures for the administration and funding of culture, provided both the justification and space for international cultural intervention. The fact that culture had been linked to development, both economic and otherwise, and that it was seen as being able to contribute to an extremely broad range of political and social objectives, meant that it was seen as being able to contribute to the broader aims of the international community in BiH. Thus, the widespread cultural instrumentalization that occurred in BiH after 1995 has to be understood as driven by both local, national, and international discourses: it was, in some senses, a pragmatic solution to a lack of national cultural policy; it was also, however, a manifestation of much broader ideas of what forms of culture were important, and what these could achieve. A good summary of these objectives is, in fact, given by a UNDAF report from 2010, which states that:

Culture was an integral part of the conflict in BiH. At the same time, the re-visioning and revival of culture in BiH is crucial to its future, and is imperative for the social, political and economic development of the country. This can only take place through a broadening and deepening of what culture means in contemporary BiH, which takes into account the broad notion of culture underlying international standards of protecting and promoting cultural diversity, encompassing in addition to literature and the arts, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs. There is [also] a need to take the current role of culture in BiH and transform it into progressive development approaches that include contemporary arts, tourism, sports, design, digital media and cultural

Chapter 3: Culture as Instrument

activities in the broadest sense, and to fuse tradition and heritage to modernity in order to promote the emergence of hybrid cultural forms that can symbolise both intercultural understanding and a shared sense of identity. (UNDAF 2010: 5)

Among culture's abilities by 2010, it seems, were the building of a nation, reconciliation, giving a voice to minorities, and ultimately the creation or stimulation of civil society. Among the forms of culture that could be used to achieve this were cultural heritage, theater, film, music, and my focus for the remainder of this work, contemporary art.

Chapter 4: The Affordances of Contemporary Art

Contemporary art has been one of the forms of culture that was instrumentalized by the international community in post-conflict BiH. Like other forms of cultural activity, contemporary art did not form a significant part of international intervention in the country for a number of years after 1995. However, by 2005, funding and support of contemporary art had come to form an important part of broader cultural programs. I have discussed some of the reasons why contemporary art was included in these programs in the previous section: by 2005, the definition of culture, as understood by international organizations, had become broad enough to include contemporary, and sometimes highly conceptual, art. In addition, and as a form of ‘cultural instrument’, by this time contemporary art was also expected to be able to achieve particular social and political goals that would ‘traditionally have been considered to be largely, if not utterly, irrelevant to the functional requirements of the sector’ (Gray 2007: 210). It shared this with other forms of culture. However, I will argue, contemporary art also possesses a number of distinct features that make it particularly attractive to those seeking to use culture to achieve political or social change.

To state my argument in this way is to imply a question of definition: what distinguishes contemporary art from other forms of culture? Much of this chapter will be concerned with answering this question, which will be approached via a detailed discussion of the features that contemporary art shares, and does not share, with other forms of culture. Nevertheless, a few preliminary remarks on the relationship between contemporary art and culture are necessary here, in particular in order to draw attention to an often-invoked difference between contemporary art and the other forms of culture described above. This is that for many recent scholars, a defining feature of contemporary art, in contrast to other forms of culture, is the internationalized (and often homogenizing) ‘global art world’ with which it is mutually constitutive. For Steyerl (2017), in particular, contemporary art cannot be separated from international flows of capital. This means that, wherever contemporary art appears, it is a manifestation of global capitalism, rather than any particular local culture. If true, this gives the sponsorship of contemporary art in BiH a different character to the instances of funding for cultural heritage (such as the Mostar Bridge). Funding the reconstruction of a bridge, a historic building, or even forms of art deemed to be ‘traditional’ within

BiH is underpinned by the assumption that these objects and practices are representative of local cultures, that their reconstruction affords opportunities for dialog, and also stands as a sign that a culture has not been destroyed.

Contemporary art, at least defined in the mode of Steyerl (2017), does not operate in this way. Rather, as seen through this mode, it always represents globalized capital and the ‘international art world’. Whilst this might seem to remove the ability of contemporary art to represent local cultures, it also suggests one immediate reason why contemporary art is attractive to those seeking to integrate BiH into a global ‘community of nations’: that contemporary art is seen as an internationalized practice that will help BiH become similarly internationalized. In some senses, however, this may appear to put contemporary art in tension with other forms of culture in BiH today. In particular, attempts to preserve cultural heritage are based on the assumption that they are able to express cultural difference, and it might be feared that the simultaneous stimulation of an internationalized contemporary art practice will work in the opposite direction: homogenizing and ultimately destroying local forms of culture. Several observations can be made in this regard. The first is that if the sponsorship of contemporary art suppresses forms of culture that were implicated in building support for the war, replacing them by an international and homogenized support for liberal democracy, this could be seen as desirable for the international community, though it is unlikely to admit this. Second, the difference between contemporary art and others forms of culture might not be as clear as it seems at first. Though contemporary art is undoubtedly part of an international system, so is cultural heritage, as I have shown in the previous chapter. Similarly, the aims to which other forms of culture are expected to contribute in BiH are also those of the international community. Lastly, contemporary artists in BiH, as has been suggested above and as will be illustrated throughout this work, do not regard contemporary art as an alien form: rather, contemporary art is as much Bosnian as French, or ‘international’. This is not to say that individual Bosnian contemporary artists do not find themselves in conflict with the ‘international art system’. Indeed, this is a common cause of complaint among them. However, this is not unique to BiH, nor to contemporary art as a form of culture: musicians are also integrated into globalized markets, for example, as are theater performers.

As a result of these observations, I do not base my definition of contemporary art here on its integration into the global art markets. Instead, and like my discussion of the term ‘civil society’ above, I prefer to work with the term as it is defined emically. All of the pieces of contemporary art I discuss here are defined as such because their creators and their audiences think of them as

contemporary art. This is not to say that the global art world has no presence in my analysis. Where it arises, however, it is always embedded in the local and personal context of the actors involved, as well as the international context of intervention agencies. As such, this work seeks the kind of ‘continuous shuttling back and forth between macro and micro, global and local perspectives: reading artworks as thoroughly embedded in institutional contexts, funding streams, cultural policies and curatorial and art-historical mediations’ that Bishop suggests (6 Claire Bishop, ‘On Making Art Global,’ 120).

Rather than define contemporary art according to the way in which it is perceived as part of an abstract international system, therefore, my proposal is to discuss it according to how it differs from other forms of culture in what it can do, or at least what it is understood to be able to do. My starting point is therefore that there exists an ‘art sphere’ which is nested in the wider ‘cultural sphere’. As such, sometimes the differences between contemporary art and wider cultural practices are overlooked (perhaps even erased) in the work of international agencies, as will be seen throughout this work. In other cases, and particularly in that of artists, a major concern is precisely to distinguish contemporary art from other forms of culture, and indeed from other forms of art. My argument in this chapter is that, in the terminology of Gibson (1979), contemporary art exhibits certain characteristics that means that the international community perceives that it might be able to ‘afford’ particular outcomes. In order to illustrate these, I will first describe a number of high-profile instances of the instrumentalization of contemporary art that took place in the period preceding my fieldwork. I will then use these to illustrate a number of characteristics of contemporary art: its relationship to the public sphere; its relationality; its criticality; and its ambiguity of ‘meaning’. My central argument is that the spaces produced by the art system, and which can be produced by funding institutions and organizations involved with it, are a manifestation of the type of public, open social space that the international community has sought to create in BiH, and these spaces also contain a mechanism, artworks themselves, which can guide the discussions and interactions that occur in such spaces without overtly determining their content. Thus, in seeking to strengthen civil society in BiH, both for its own sake and in order to promote the development of a number of other discourses, the international community came to value phenomena such as exhibitions and public art as a way of creating public space, encouraging citizens to engage with it, and to promote the discussion of particular themes. There was a perception, in other words, that ‘using’ contemporary art by funding groups and institutions associated with it would afford the creation of exactly the kind of public, open, critical spaces that would contribute to civil society development.

SCCA

In order to illustrate this argument, I will give two examples of the instrumentalization of contemporary art in BiH in the years immediately following 1995. The first is the work of the SCCA: originally the Soros Center for Contemporary Art, later the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art. Both the SCP and ECF, mentioned above, have also supported contemporary art as part of their activities, as have other organizations, but the exemplary value of the SCCA is that it was (and is) an organization devoted to the development of contemporary art, as opposed to other forms of culture. Its approach to contemporary art, therefore, may be seen an exemplary of broader attitudes towards contemporary art on behalf of the international community. At the broadest level, the center saw its work, and contemporary art more generally, as ‘a corrective agent to local artistic and public life’. It was was one of 19 opened in former socialist countries in the early 1990s by the Open Society Institute, itself established by the US philanthropist George Soros. These centers’ ‘primary role was the modernization of the artistic discourse in the former socialist countries and the republics of the former USSR’ (Octavian 2014). As such,

SCCA has produced and organized numerous exhibitions, art actions, workshops, seminars, lectures and presentations in Sarajevo, BiH and Herzegovina and abroad; the Center has supported the production of artworks, produced a number of multimedia works, art videos and films, published catalogues and other art publications, and assembled art documentation. (SCCA n.d.)

In 2000, the Open Society Institute decided to remove funding from the center, after which it was renamed the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art and began to operate as an ‘independent, non-profit professional organization’ funded by ‘domestic and international grants and donations on the basis of proposed projects’ (SCCA n.d.). The objectives of these centers are an excellent articulation of the way that the purpose and powers of contemporary art had come to be seen by the year 2000. The SCCA’s description of its goals makes reference to a ‘new cultural model’, and the emergence of new concepts related to ‘a change in the artistic paradigm, but also to a change in the understanding of the function of culture and art’ (SCCA n.d.). Indeed, the intellectual background of centers is strikingly close to that of ‘transition’ as a broader discipline. Soros’ tutor at the LSE had been Karl Popper, who in *The Open Society and its Enemies* (1951) had been one of the first to argue that the transformation of ex-communist countries into liberal democracies required an active public sphere. After 2000, these centers were increasingly defunded, perhaps because ‘the initial goal of re-integrating Central and Eastern European artists to the rest of the world had been more or

less accomplished' (Czegledy et al. 2009: 259), or perhaps for more pragmatic reasons. Nonetheless, the SCCA was an important part of the post-conflict art scene of BiH, and many of the successful artists of that period initially displayed their works in the center.

However, the activities of these organizations, in Sarajevo and elsewhere, attracted almost immediate criticism. This was along a few lines. One of these was that whilst this funding was presented as neutral, as 'protecting the cultural expression of minorities', in UNESCO's terms, it largely flowed to the 'de-territorialised assembly' (Kurtović 2012) that had emerged during the war. That is, although such organizations claimed to be using contemporary art as a means to secure the 'cultural expression' of each ethnicity, in practice the association of contemporary art with the 'fourth ethnicity' meant that the majority of this funding went to this group. This was because, although this group 'often bemoans its minority status, it also possesses enormous cultural capital, skills, education, and control of a few key media outlets', and so 'much of its post-war power continues to stem out of its alliance with the "international community" and its various funding agencies, which provide important financial and political support to its initiatives and projects' (Kurtović 2012: 224). This group, in the immediate post-war years, favoured 'anti-nationalist, multi-national and social democratic' policies, and preferred 'to engage via NGOs and informal activist groups' (Kurtović 2012: 224), and as such contemporary art became an important way for the articulation of these views. A second criticism of the Soros Centers stemmed from their effect on contemporary art itself. In reference to the SCCA, Šuvaković wrote in 2002 (2002) that 'what characteristically occurred soon after the creation of the Centres was the appearance of similar new art in entirely different, sometimes even incomparable, cultures'. Indeed, such was the similarity of this art that Šuvaković suggested it constituted a whole new genre – Socialist Realism had now made way for 'Soros Realism'. This new movement, in Šuvaković's words, created a 'formula for 'the genesis' of a work that *has a go* and that receives theoretical and financial support' (Šuvaković 2002). That is, work that was recognizably 'contemporary' in its use of then-new media, and received funding because it broke taboos, revealed oppression and uncovered long-hidden truths.

Ars Aevi and UNESCO

My second example of the instrumentalization of contemporary art in post-conflict BiH is the way in which Ars Aevi, already mentioned, came to be supported by the international community. I will describe this process at greater length, because the reasons why the project was funded is a good example of the characteristics of contemporary art that I will describe, and because Ars Aevi was

arguably the highest profile project to receive international support in the immediate post-conflict period. In addition, the eventual failure of the Ars Aevi project, as represented by a particular artwork that formed part of its collection, would come to have a large effect on the way in which the international instrumentalization of contemporary art in BiH was seen by the period of my fieldwork. This artwork is *La Place des Drapeaux* by Daniel Buren, which I have mentioned above. As I described, Buren donated this work to the Ars Aevi collection in 1998, and it was initially displayed by Ars Aevi at the 21-22 June 1996 meeting of the European Council in Florence. Following this exhibition, however, the piece would attain great importance for Ars Aevi, who displayed it on the site of the museum they planned to build.

1999 represented a milestone for the Ars Aevi project, and for *La Place des Drapeaux*, in several respects. In this year, the project moved back to Sarajevo, and its collection was temporarily housed in the Historijski Muzej (Historical Museum). It also began to attract international support and, eventually, funding. Hadžiomerspahić, the founder and leader of the project, traces UNESCO's decision to fund the project to the exhibition held in Vienna in 1998, which 'opened up the way for the Project towards the UNESCO General Direction, and definitely affirmed Ars Aevi as an inevitable, respected and culturally-, artistically-, politically- and globally-relevant fact' (2005: 68). Accordingly, in 1998 the UNESCO Director General granted UNESCO patronage for the project 'Ars Aevi 2000, the Museum of Contemporary World Art in Sarajevo' (UNESCO Office in Venice 2007). This patronage was then extended to include that of the Council of Europe (1999) and European Commission (2000). The project also received support, if not funding, from UNHCR, and resources from the Italian government. This international recognition, through which Ars Aevi became a 'network of international collective will' (Ars Aevi 2006), led to the expansion of the project, both in terms of the number of artworks in its collection, and in its ambitions for the future museum. Still without a permanent home, the project was envisaged as a 'virtual museum' (Hadžiomerspahić 2005: 68) which would eventually evolve to include 'the construction of 'a number of different locations or modules dispersed across the urban space of Sarajevo, forming an architectural complex that will connect the old' and new parts of the city' (Hajdarpašić 2008: 121). 1999 also saw the first concrete plans made for the future museum. A site was chosen in what was optimistically referred to as Sarajevo's 'future museums district', and Renzo Piano, in his role as UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, designed a building. The building, similar to many museums of contemporary art that were built in the period, made extensive use of glass and concrete, and was designed to utilize and link several areas of public space around the Historijski Muzej. In the words

of Carolo, the building ‘combined the features of ‘temple’ (the permanent collection) and ‘forum’ (the complex of different activities),’ and ‘represented the new prototype of the cultural consumption of ... society,’ in that it provided space ‘for studying, meeting up, shopping, eating, listening to debates, [and] strolling around’ (Carolo 2016: 28).

In 2001, Ars Aevi received the first, and to date only, contribution of funds from the international community. The impetus for this funding came initially from the Italian government, with the General Director for Cooperation and Development of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Direzione Generale per la Cooperazione e lo Sviluppo, Ministero degli Affari Esteri*) allocating USD \$1 million to the organization via the UNESCO Funds in Trust mechanism. These funds were not allocated to building the museum, but ‘focused on creation and development of activities related to the establishment and sustainability of the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Sarajevo’ (UNESCO Office in Venice 2007). The larger part of the funding, \$600,000, was devoted to setting up and running the Ars Aevi Open International University: a program of exhibitions, seminars, and workshops which took place between 2001 and 2002. This program was designed to encourage artists, representatives of contemporary art museums, and critics to continue their involvement in the cultural scene of Sarajevo. Over the period it operated, many established artists visited the city (among them Pistoletto, Kosuth and Buren), as well as several museum directors (Szeemann, Pacquement and Corà), and art critics (Millet, Meyrick-Hughes and Chambert). The remaining \$400,000 was allocated for the provision of a more permanent home for the collection, albeit not the construction of the planned museum. Instead, these funds went toward the realization of the ‘Art Depot’, in Sarajevo’s Skenderija shopping center, as a temporary exhibition space for the collection.

The designation of Ars Aevi as ‘UNESCO’s most important development project in BiH’ (Hadžiomerspahić 2006: 33) appears to have significantly changed the nature of the project. The project had started as a small collaborative initiative among a number of Italian galleries and municipal governments. However, when Ars Aevi moved back to Sarajevo and came into contact with large international organizations, it ‘evolved into a large scale activity increasingly oriented towards UNESCO, [and] therefore ... included within the internationally promoted programs for BiH’s cultural reconstruction’ (Carolo 2016: 90). In practice, this meant that the aims of the Ars Aevi project were increasingly justified in the terms then used by international organizations, most notably those of ‘multiculturalism’. Hajdarpašić (2008) has traced the ways in which this discourse gradually became an important way of justifying the Ars Aevi project, such that:

In its early catalogues this group made very little use of the term, preferring instead the term ‘International Cultural Project’ and the idea of ‘intercultural dialogue.’ However, its more recent promotional materials (especially those published after 2000) have stated that the evolving objective of Ars Aevi is ‘to create an International Multicultural Center,’ one that among other things will organize ‘Multicultural Seminars’ on art in ‘Sarajevo, Multicultural Capital.’ (Hajdarpašić 2008: 126)

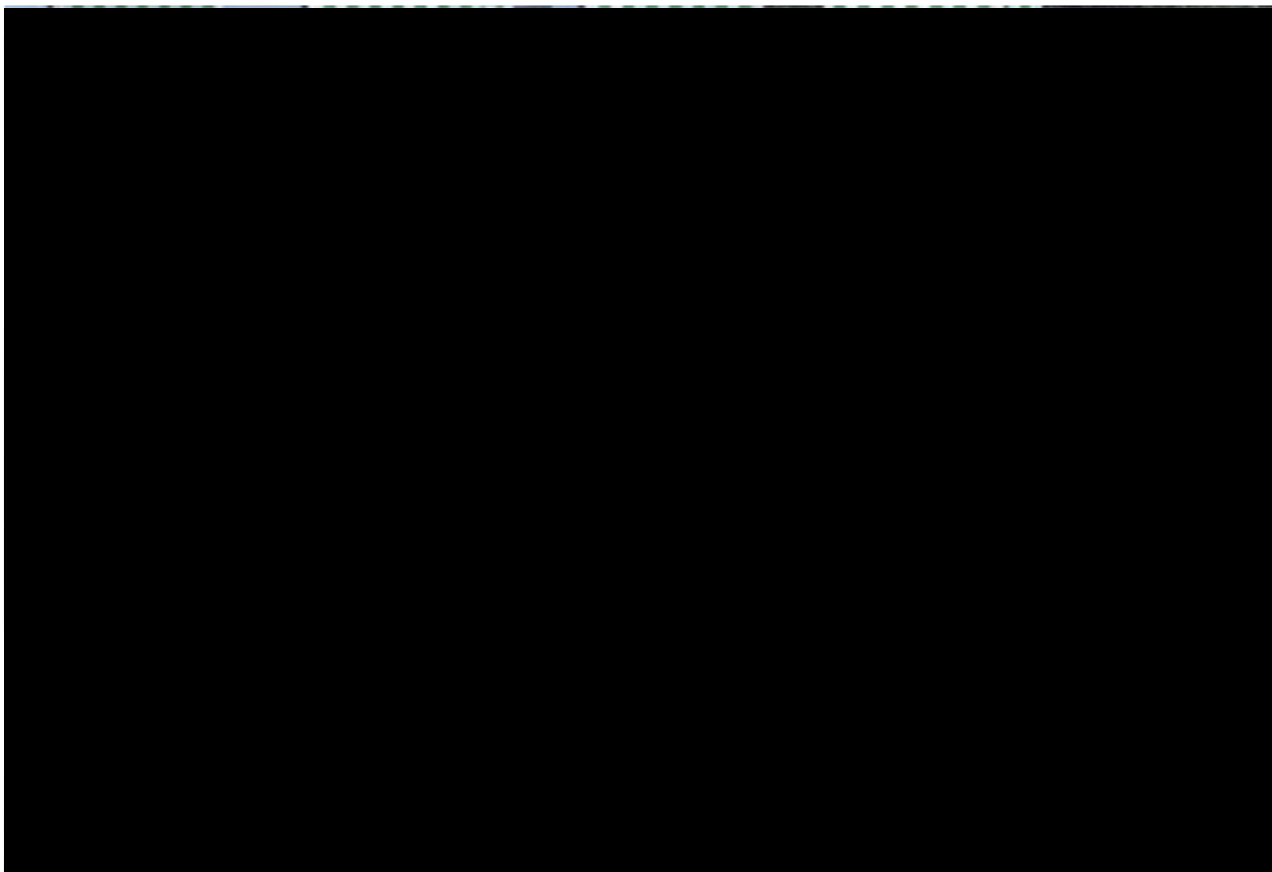


Fig. 6: Daniel Buren at the 2001 exhibition of La Place des Drapeaux (credit: Ars Aevi)

As I have noted, in practice the way that the international community understood multiculturalism, at least in the immediate post-conflict period, was in terms of multi-confessionalism: that is, as an attempt to mediate between Catholic, Muslim, and Orthodox groups, and to ensure equal representation for each. For an organization such as Ars Aevi, this posed something of a problem, because the project had acquired its collection through donations, and had focused on representing ‘international’ cultures rather than giving equal weight to the ethnicities of BiH (Ramović 2013). It had attracted many works that sought to criticize the ethnic nationalist political order, but did not possess a representative sample of the work of each ethnic group. The project, therefore:

Found itself in a paradoxical situation. It is one of the few institutions to bring together artists who articulate far-reaching criticisms of the nationalist political order (as in the *Between* exhibit and in other events); yet in order to secure a viable place of its own after the siege, it has had to adopt one of the chief postwar conventions: the discourse of multiculturalism. (Hajdarpašić 2008: 127)

Despite this apparent paradox, international support meant that Ars Aevi entered its most active period between 2001 and 2007. During this period, several exhibitions were held on the site of the future museum. During one of these, on 22 July 2001, *La Place des Drapeaux* was installed in its present position (Fig. 6). All of these exhibitions were, to a greater or lesser extent, site-specific: they used the fact that they occupied the future site of the Ars Aevi project to reflect on the position of artists, and culture more generally, in post-conflict Sarajevo. The way in which these exhibitions were curated seems to have been designed to achieve two purposes: to protest against the fact that the museum had not been built; and to continue to use contemporary art as a way of convincing domestic and international organizations to continue and finish the ‘cultural reconstruction’ that had been promised. Both of these themes can be seen in the motivations that drove the installation of *La Place des Drapeaux* in 2001. The artwork been used, three years before this, to encourage delegates at the EU Council Meeting to support the Ars Aevi project. Its appearance in Sarajevo, on the site of the promised and planned museum, was designed to achieve the same purpose, as Amila Ramović, Executive Director of the Ars Aevi project, told me in 2013 (Ramović 2013). Further, the conceptual history of the piece, and the fact that at this time similar pieces by Buren were appearing on contemporary art museums around the world, drew attention to the lack of a museum on the Ars Aevi site. Indeed, if pieces such as *La Place des Drapeaux* had been designed to draw attention to the ideological frame of the museums in which they stood, it was felt, *La Place des Drapeaux* could equally draw attention to a notable *lack* of such a frame in Sarajevo, and the lack of political will that this was beginning to represent: ‘we felt it could be a kind of protest ... or a sculpture of a protest, of people holding up signs, in place all the time’ (Ramović 2013). These intentions were even more directly expressed in an exhibition that occurred two years later, *Between* (June 2003, illustration 4), in which rows of UNHCR tents were pitched on the site, and young artists’ works were displayed inside. As Asja Mandić, the curator of the exhibition, told Hajdarpašić, the tents, ‘suspended in between space and in between time,’ became:

Symbolic of the situation and atmosphere of the Ars Aevi Project, and of the position of young artists who have nowhere to show their works, as it is of

the reality of Bosnia and Herzegovina in which life as a refugee is part of everyday experience. (Hajdarpašić 2008: 124)

Whether such comparisons are valid or not, they reveal an important part of the Ars Aevi project: that in some senses it was conceived of as a permanent protest, and a continual call for cultural assistance for the people (and cultural workers) of Sarajevo. In this sense, the project, and indeed the installation of *La Place des Drapeaux*, can be seen as a direct continuation of much of the artistic work that was undertaken and displayed during the Siege, which called for the international community to ‘witness’ what was happening in Sarajevo, and called for them to intervene in order to stop it. Though these exhibitions continued this tradition of protest, they occurred in a period which arguably saw the most progress for the Ars Aevi project. In 2002, the first element in the planned museum, the Ars Aevi Bridge across the nearby Miljacka river, was finished. The place where the bridge stands had been a checkpoint during the siege, when the Grbavica neighbourhood that it connects the Ars Aevi site with had been occupied by Bosnian Serb forces. Though noted neither in the literature on the Ars Aevi project, nor by my own informants in Sarajevo, I would argue that the fact that a bridge was the first (and, to date, only) part of the museum to be realized is telling. Not only does it further reveal the focus on multi-confessionalism that had become a focus of the Ars Aevi project by 2002, but in echoing the bridge in Mostar (and, indeed, the name of a UNESCO program) it perhaps suggests the influence of the metaphor of the ‘bridge between cultures’, that by 2002 seems to have become very prominent in the thinking of the international community.

Besides the bridge, Ars Aevi had a number of other successes in the period 2001 – 2007. It was through Ars Aevi that BiH was first represented at the Venice Biennial in 2003. This was also done in collaboration with UNESCO, who hosted the BiH pavilion at the Zorzi palace, their headquarters in the city, for which ‘the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed their gratitude to UNESCO [that] enabled them to take part ... and thus to make known four artists of their country’ (UNESCO Office in Venice 2007). The four artists represented, Nebojša Šerić Shoba, Maja Bajević, Edin Numankadić, and Jusuf Hadžifejzović, had all donated works to the Ars Aevi project. However, care was taken to ensure that the works chosen ‘offered a provocative commentary on a variety of issues instead of posing as authentically Bosnian works’ (Hajdarpašić 2008: 122). Because of this, though the Biennial exhibition was the first artistic representation of BiH as an independent nation at an international art show, Hajdarpašić argues that the artworks themselves

were overshadowed by the opportunity for politicians to give speeches about the importance of art in the country. 'For most ministers and other officials in Sarajevo', he argues:

Bosnia's debut at the Biennale was an opportunity to make yet more public appearances and speeches about the importance of nurturing culture, education, and the arts. Among the many declarations was the pledge by the cantonal and federal authorities to provide funding and land for a future Ars Aevi Museum. Needless to say, not one of these promises bore fruit, and no ground was broken for the new museum. (Hajdarpašić 2008: 123)

Back in Sarajevo, the Ars Aevi collection slowly moved into its new exhibition space, a 10,000m² installation in Sarajevo's Skenderija Centre. By this time, both cantonal and municipal governments in Sarajevo had become partners in the project, and with the financial support of UNESCO (as described above) the space was reconstructed and renovated 'in order to make appropriate conditions for proper preservation and presentation of the collection pending the construction of the new Museum Building'. The Skenderija center opened on 27 April 2007 (UNESCO Office in Venice 2007). The way in which this space was realized, and the way in which the collection was displayed within it, are revealing as to the ongoing concerns of the Ars Aevi project. The space is explicitly presented as a warehouse of artworks in transit. Each artwork is displayed next to the chipboard packing crate that is used to transport it, and indeed the walls of the space itself are covered in the same material. A portion of the space is taken up by a display of plans for the museum. Thus, despite the successes of the Ars Aevi project between 2001 and 2007, the Skenderija space is neatly aligned to the mode in which the exhibitions of 2001 – 2003 operated: it is, in some senses, conceived as a permanent protest against the slow progress in building the museum.

Throughout all of these movements and exhibitions, *La Place des Drapeaux* continued to mark the site of the future museum. By doing so, it came to be read as a similar protest against the lack of progress in building the museum, but also as representative of the Ars Aevi project as a whole. Images from 2007, when it had already been installed *in situ* for six years, show that the metal flagpoles had already begun to rust, and the flags had started to fray. In the years after 2007, it would further deteriorate, and the flags would be taken down during the winter months. The artwork, however, lost none of its representative power as a symbol of the stalled Ars Aevi project, and of the success (or lack of it) of the political discourses that Ars Aevi was an integral part of.

Museums Boom

The funding given the Ars Aevi project by UNESCO can be seen as a manifestation of a broader phenomenon: what some have called the ‘museums boom’ of the 1990s and early 2000s (Starn 2001: 96; Tali et al. 2011: 167). This comprised the construction of similar museums of contemporary art in countries throughout Central and Eastern Europe, sometimes with international assistance, but almost always with the intention of using such museums in processes of nation-building. Such was the scale of this phenomena that Lorente has called it the ‘greatest museum phenomena of our time’ (Lorente 2011: 11). He also notes that many of the states in which these museums appeared already possessed art museums, and even museums of modern or contemporary art. However, he argues that these new museums share a set of particular attributes, all which are present in the Ars Aevi project.

One of these attributes is the architectural style of such museums, which took New York’s MoMA as their model, were often designed by internationally recognized ‘starchitects’, and often used acronyms as their official names (Lorente 2011: 9; Tali et al. 2011). The aims of these architects seems to have been ‘either to differentiate their buildings from the immediate surroundings, or promote the creation of a new architectural canon’ (Tali et al. 2011: 178). Thus, both in architecture and in the collections they built, these museums were ‘symbolic of internationally-focused cities, a new situation for CEE’ (Tali et al. 2011: 178): they stressed that the new museum, and by extension the city and state that had built it, was connected to the international community. The broadest purpose, as understood by Lorente, was the construction of ‘cathedrals of urban modernity’ (Lorente 2011), composite (and sometimes empty) symbols of nations’ tolerance, equality and artistic prowess. All of these attributes are highly visible in the Ars Aevi project, from the choice of Piano as architect to the way in which the project stressed its international character.

These museums also had an intimate relationship with processes of nation-building in the states in which they appeared. At a more general level, the connection between museums and nation-states has been noted by a number of authors (Anderson 1991). However, in transition states the purpose of such museums seems to have been less to stress the historic continuity of a national culture, and more to represent the (re-)incorporation of these states into the international community. This was partially because such states were emerging, or being liberated from, administrative divisions of larger nations (Roeder 2007), and therefore possessed no unproblematic ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 2006) of their own. In addition, the construction of brand new museums avoided one of the problems facing post-Soviet museums after 1989: the need to ‘overcome the feeling of aversion

of the audiences' for communist-era institutions which had 'served the totalitarian regime to a smaller or greater degree' (Stransky 1992). This, in turn, might also suggest why it was contemporary art museums, and not museums of other types, that largely made up the museums boom. In much of the Eastern Bloc contemporary art had been suppressed, and so building a museum to a previously prohibited form of culture can be seen as the symbolic rejection of Soviet rule. The status of contemporary art in Yugoslavia was, as I have explained (see chapter 2), more ambiguous than in the rest of the Eastern Bloc. Nevertheless, the Ars Aevi project exhibits these same features: by building a collection (and eventual museum) that was inherently international in nature, *La Place des Drapeaux* included, the project sought to stress the recent origin of the Bosnian state, and its abrupt break with the Yugoslav past.

Though it has been argued that such museums are important in 'creating a national identity and [representing] often fulfilled national ambitions' (Kaplan 1994: 9), the way in which such museums were understood to aid nation-building processes are complex and somewhat vague. It is clear that, although these museums contained collections of contemporary artworks, it was not (in most cases) the artworks themselves that were expected to be the symbolic representation of the nation-state. Rather, it was the museum itself, manifested as both contemporary architecture and as institution, that was expected to provide this representative function. The work that museums were designed to perform was therefore cultural: a nation-building project, rather than a state-making one (Smith 1986). Such 'museum buildings [were] intended to become icons of their cities and states' (Tali et al. 2011: 180) in several key ways. Firstly, there was a perception that having a contemporary art museum was an integral part of a modern nation's symbolic order, alongside a flag and an anthem. Gstraunthaler & Piber, (2011), quoting a member of the organizing committee of the Lithuanian Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, reveals that the impetus to build a contemporary art museum in the country:

Came from the official state policy because every modern state, independent nation state has to have their museum of modern art, because the museum of modern art is an institution, which grounds and visualizes the national identity. (Gstraunthaler et al. 2011: 274)

Similarly, the very cost of these museums became part of their attraction, insofar as this allowed previously under-developed states to prove their new affluence. Such museums became an 'account of the transition from the pre-modern state to the present day' (Gstraunthaler et al. 2011: 263). Thus, in the very expense of the planned Ars Aevi museum may be found a compelling reason for its

construction: to some degree, the successful completion of a new contemporary art museum in BiH would have been an indication that the country had completed its transition to stable, successful capitalism.

Despite the connection often made between these new museums and nation-building processes, however, it should also be noted that in several key ways their relationship with the 'national', at least as classically understood, is more problematic than it appears. Indeed, in many cases these new museums (Ars Aevi included) excluded the word 'national' from their names in order to stress the 'international' nature of their collections and operations (Tali et al. 2011: 173). Further, the close connection between the museums boom and transition processes meant that the former phenomena incorporated some of the ideology, and therefore the faults, of the latter. These new museums overlooked the differences between states, and sought to de-politicize transition processes by presenting these as an unproblematic incorporation of disparate art scenes into a international art community. Crucially, many of the museums of contemporary art built in this period, Ars Aevi included, relied on international funding for their realization. The reasons why this funding was given to contemporary art museums, and not other types of museum, may be suggested in relation to the preceding discussion: contemporary art museums, rather than stressing the historical continuity of such states, were able to articulate their abrupt transitions. In turn, the reason why this funding was given to museums, rather than individual artworks, may also be suggested: one of the major concerns of the international community in transition states, BiH included, was the creation of public space, and therefore the strengthening of the public sphere. By funding the Ars Aevi project, rather than individual works, UNESCO were able to provide a public space in which authentically Bosnian works could be shown alongside their international peers, simultaneously creating public space for discussion and defusing possible claims of undue influence. The Ars Aevi museum, therefore, would come to represent both renewed public space, and the nascent state of BiH.

This interpretation of Ars Aevi as part of the museums boom, and therefore as part of the nation-building processes of BiH, is given extra weight by the site which was chosen for the construction of the new museum, and on which *La Place des Drapeaux* now stands. The site is next to two other museums, each of which were built to represent a previous incarnation of BiH: the National Museum, and the Historical Museum. The former museum was founded in 1888 by the Habsburg authorities, who had gained control of BiH at the 1878 Congress of Berlin. The purpose of the museum was to foster a Bosnian identity encompassing the major ethno-religious groups in the

country, distinct from that of the Serbian Kingdom and aligned to that of the multinational Austrian empire. As Fontana notes, its most famous possession is the Sarajevo Haggadah, a 14th Century manuscript which has come to embody ‘a plural past of coexistence and hybridity,’ and ‘remains a powerful symbol of an identity founded on pluralism and on resistance to violent aggression for Sarajevo and its citizens’ (Fontana 2013: 450). The Historical Museum, by contrast, was built during the early years of Yugoslavia, and focuses on the way in which the federal state emerged as a consequence of WW2. As such, and as Fontana argues, the founding of these two museums was:

Paradigmatic of the political function of cultural institutions in newly established states. Cultural institutions are one of the many instruments employed to convey and propagate particular cultural systems of reference, markers of identity, or myth-symbol complexes to citizens. (Fontana 2013: 450)

As such, the siting of the planned Ars Aevi museum next to these museums can be seen as an attempt to use a new museum, in this case one of contemporary art, in order to represent the most recent incarnation of BiH. By 2001, when UNESCO began to support the Ars Aevi project, this process was more important than ever. Immediately following the war, it was felt that ‘the two institutions presented an almost unique instrument for conveying new state- and nation-building narratives through pre-existing structures,’ and that through a change of emphasis ‘the National Museum and the History Museum ... and their emphasis on coexistence, multiculturalism, and a shared past for BiH’s diverse population would foster reconciliation’ (Fontana 2013: 452). This did not happen, because these museums were two of those affected by the widespread arguments over what constituted national culture in BiH, and the responsibility for funding it. As such, both museums were already struggling for funds in 2001, and closed completely some years later.

La Place des Drapeaux

Throughout this period, *La Place des Drapeaux* continued to stand on the site of the future museum. As such, it was widely read as a representation of the Ars Aevi project, and by extension as a ‘expression of international collective will’. It acted, above all, as a symbol of the international community’s commitment to Sarajevo, the continuation of this after the Siege, and of BiH’s proximity to the international community. It also stood for a ‘promise’, in the words of one of my informants, of the support BiH was to receive in its ‘cultural reconstruction’ (interview with Asja Mandić, curator, 23rd May 2013). In this interpretation, although the installation of *La Place des*

Drapeaux continued to act as a reminder to politicians of the commitments they had made, it also represented a monument to the relative success of the Ars Aevi project in attracting and securing international support. It could have been expected, at the time that Ars Aevi received UNESCO funding, to problematize the role of art museums in legitimating works of art. This was one of the reasons why it was installed on the future site of the museum (interview with Amila Ramović, Deputy Director of Ars Aevi, 19th May 2013). However, the fact that the museum had not yet been built in 2001 subtly changed the interpretation of the work. It was, in a sense, a signifier without a signified, and to some degree this inverted its meaning: whilst Buren's pieces have been read as a way of critiquing the role of institutions in legitimating art, *La Place des Drapeaux* came to represent an assertion for the *necessity* of such institutions. It also represented the promise of the international community, a fresh start for BiH as a new state, and the beginning of the cultural reconstruction. That the piece was able to assume this representative function, further, was partially a consequence of its physical prominence in the city. Though it did not create the public space that the Ars Aevi museum would have provided, its installation as public sculpture allowed it to achieve a prominence within the public sphere that is barred to artworks displayed in more private spaces. In terms of the international community's wider objectives in instrumentalizing such artworks, in fact, this can be seen as the primary success of their involvement in Ars Aevi. Whatever the interpretation of the piece, and despite its limited ability to create the kind of national symbols that the Ars Aevi museum was designed to become, the very visibility of the piece achieved something that would have been difficult through other means: it came to articulate, at least for some of my contacts and at least for part of its biography, the international community's commitment to BiH, created discussion about the possible need for a contemporary art museum in BiH, and it managed to project these ideas into the widest public space possible.

The Affordances of Contemporary Art

Having thus reviewed two of the early instances of the instrumentalization of contemporary art in post-conflict BiH, I will now return to the research questions I outlined in Chapter 1. The first of these asked: why did the international community fund art in post-conflict BiH? A much fuller answer to this question may now be provided.

My central argument, here and in this work more generally, is that the international community saw in contemporary art a set of characteristics which suggested that it might be able to 'afford' particular things. This term was originally elaborated in the work of Gibson (1979), but has since

been extended and elaborated by a variety of scholars. Hutchby (2001: 447), for instance, defines the affordances of objects as ‘the possibilities they offer for action’, and notes that although Gibson limited his discussion to natural objects, artifacts can also possess affordances. In this case, there are ‘social and technological rules’ which delimit their function, and these may be learned by users (Hutchby 2001: 449). The utility of the concept in relation to the instrumentalization of contemporary art in BiH is that since affordances are defined in a relational manner (Hutchby 2001: 448), they depend not only on the objects in question, but also on the capabilities and motivations of those seeking to use them. As such, different actors will perceive the affordances of an object in different ways. In terms of contemporary art, for instance, an artist might perceive that the production of contemporary art affords self-expression, a way of critiquing (and perhaps even changing) society, or merely a way of getting rich. An art collector might perceive that buying artworks affords a beautiful home, or (again) a way of getting rich. The affordances that particular artists and collectors, among others, perceive in contemporary art form part of the findings of the present work, and many instances of these are included in the ethnographic material presented in chapters 6 – 8. In terms of my argument here, however, the concept of affordances is useful because it focuses attention on the way that the international community perceives contemporary art, the ways it can be worked with and through, and the outcomes it is perceived to afford. In other words, it links phenomena that otherwise appear to have little connection: a desire to ‘democratize’ BiH, for instance, with the appearance of a set of flags in a square in Sarajevo, as in *La Place Drapeaux*.

Specifically, the concept of affordances draws attention to a number of factors that may be used to explain why the international community funded contemporary art in BiH. The ability and motivation to use contemporary art as a tool or instrument requires three things, and these may be put in terms of affordances: that contemporary art possess a ‘handle’ by which it may be utilized; that it possesses characteristics that mean it is perceived to afford particular outcomes; and that these outcomes are believed to be desirable. The ‘handle’ with which the international community can utilize contemporary art is, essentially, funding it. By selectively sponsoring particular groups, galleries, museums, or (less frequently) individual artists, particular forms of art and social space may be created or promoted. The way in which the the international community perceive contemporary art is partially explained by my argument above, in which I showed that the abilities it was believed to possess expanded over time, but also rely on a more microscopic perspective: the perception of what contemporary art does *in situ*, as part of an exhibition or in a public square. The desired outcomes for the international community in BiH have also already been explored above,

and comprise a diverse set of objectives, but can essentially be expressed as the creation of ‘a peaceful and viable democracy on course for integration in[to] Euro-Atlantic institutions’ (OHR 2014). This is not, of course, to imply that the affordances that the international community perceive in contemporary art actually exist: my second research question asks whether, in fact, the use of contemporary art as a tool produced the outcomes it was expected to. The implication that it did not is also implied within my usage of the concept of ‘affordances’. The work of Gaver (1991) for instance, explores ‘false’ and ‘hidden’ affordances. Hidden affordances are those which are possessed by objects but that are not perceived by the user. The expanding range of the powers of culture, as summarized above, can be seen in such terms, as a gradual discovery of the affordances of culture. In addition, objects may have false affordances: they might suggest certain possibilities for action that they do not, in fact, possess. Thus, though certain affordances emerge in a relational manner between contemporary art and the international community, a detailed analysis of the way in which they actually function suggests that these might, in fact, be false.

My argument is that contemporary art possesses a unique set of characteristics that mean it is perceived, by the international community, as a particularly effective tool in achieving their stated aims in BiH. These characteristics are: the similarities between the kind of spaces created by the art system and the idealized public sphere; the fact that many contemporary artworks and exhibitions rely on active audience participation; the expectation that contemporary art will necessarily critique existing social and political norms; and the ambiguous ‘meaning’ of many contemporary artworks. Though contemporary art shares each of these characteristics with other forms of culture, it possesses a unique set of them. Whilst a display of historical artifacts may create public space, for instance, these artifacts are unlikely to prompt critical discussion on contemporary social themes. Literature can possess an ambiguity of meaning, but it does not, in most cases, give rise to public space. Theater comes closest, perhaps, as a cultural form that both convenes public space and, in some cases, also possesses an ambiguity of ‘meaning’. However, it is notable that the more ambiguous theater gets the more it is considered ‘performance’, and the more closely associated it is with contemporary art.

The Public Sphere and the Art System

Arguably the most important of the characteristics of contemporary art that mean it is perceived as a useful tool in BiH is the apparently close resemblance between the spaces produced by (idealized) contemporary art practices and the (idealized) public sphere. Whether this is the case is highly

debatable, and indeed a review of who regards this view to be true reveals a fault line between those funding art and those working with it. For those viewing and writing about the art system from outside, whether this be employees of international organizations or even scholars of the public sphere, the manifestations of the art system in exhibitions, public sculpture, etc., are often viewed as the kind of ‘democratic’, ‘critical’ spaces that the idealized public sphere is built on. Those writing from inside the art system, artists and scholars of art, are much more skeptical about the ability of contemporary art to produce this type of social space.

Before coming to these criticisms, it is worth outlining the perspective of those that view contemporary art as a valuable (and sometimes unproblematic) part of the public sphere. It is certainly possible to make an argument for the similarity of the public sphere to the manifestations of the art system, and indeed an argument that is built on the earliest work on the public sphere. As I have noted, Habermas’ public sphere was also based on a form of culture being discussed in public spaces: specifically discussions of literature in coffee shops, and which then informed the press (1989). Some of the spaces which the art system produces, specifically those in which artworks are exhibited, form a close analog to this. The ‘exhibition’ of artworks, of course, may take many forms: a gallery show, a private tour around a private art collection, or a situationist happening, among others. Further, the art system also produces spaces that are not exhibitions, such as workshops and studios. These spaces exist at various levels of ‘publicness’: the artist’s studio is still a social space, albeit also a private one; galleries are more public, but still half-private; large public museums are even more public; and at the extreme end there is public sculpture, which exists in public space by definition. As such, the spaces may bring a vast variety of people into contact with each other: art lovers, politicians, artists, and perhaps even ‘ordinary people’. Some of the spaces produced by the art system appear to be exactly this kind of space.

There are other forms of public space, of course, but in order to see the value of the spaces produced by the art system it is worth noting what unites these spaces, and differentiates them from other examples of public space, such as an airport terminal. This is that exhibitions, studios, and other spaces produced by contemporary art practices, are social spaces with artworks on the wall (or on the floor, or being performed, or in close proximity, for example). These artworks, however, do more than just mark the space as an exhibition, or beautify a public square: they can determine the social characteristics of the space. In the first instance, they may attract particular audiences. For an artwork in a public space, of course, this audience is confronted with the artwork, and thus the ‘audience’ for such works is both truly public and composed of whoever happens to be walking by.

For other spaces, however, the type and quality of artworks displayed can attract and determine an audience. The fact that the space is an art gallery at all, as opposed to a library, already determines who will attend. Further, the reputation of the artist, a good flyer, or the inclusion of artworks dealing with a particular theme will also determine this to some degree. Secondly, artworks may determine (to an extent) the type of discussions had in the spaces they inhabit, though the way in which they perform this second function is complex, and I will return to it below.

After an exhibition opens, it may also generate press coverage, and thus extend the topics raised by the artworks into a truly public realm. This is because the art system is not constituted entirely by such physical spaces as museums, galleries, and studios. It also includes a much broader and more diffuse set of actors: not only audiences who attend art exhibitions, but also newspapers, radio shows, and other audiences. It thus forms part of the public sphere. This is seen in Mitchell's *Art and the Public Sphere*, and Barrett's *Museums and the Public Sphere* (Barrett 2012; Mitchell 1992) where the 'cultural sphere' is seen as a portion of the larger public sphere, but largely functioning in the same way to it. Thus, like Habermas' public sphere before it (1989), this sphere operates at two interlinked levels: it gathers private individuals into a public arena in which discussion may be conducted, whilst simultaneously producing publicly visible critical comment on cultural, social and political themes. Other scholars have extended these ideas, so that in Calhoun's (2011) conception of 'counterpublics', the public sphere can be understood to be composed of multiple, competing counterpublics, of which the art public is one. These multiple counterpublics each have their own characteristics and modes of operation, but are also analogous to the public sphere. In this way, the art sphere is both a constituent of, and an 'oligoptic' model of, the broader public sphere: a delimited space, but one in which broader themes and processes may be read (Harrison 2014). This gives rise to a fractal understanding of both the public and art spheres. At one level of analysis, the 'art sphere' forms one counterpublic within the broader public sphere. At a deeper level, the art sphere is itself made of competing publics: such as painters and sculptors, for instance, or Serbs and Croats. The same may be said of other forms of culture, so that it is possible to talk of a 'theater sphere', or a 'literature sphere'. This resemblance between cultural spheres and the public sphere makes culture a particularly attractive mode of instrumentalization: if what is sought in BiH is a vibrant public sphere, it might seem logical to stimulate institutions and social systems which not only seem to resemble the desired model, but can also contribute to it. In addition, and as Kappler has argued (2012) the strengthening of a 'cultural sphere' which is intermediate between private and public spheres can help to legitimize the latter in contexts, such as in BiH, where the public sphere

seems distant from everyday concerns. Thus, by using contemporary art to strengthen the art sphere, two primary outcomes may be achieved: not only will a renewed art sphere directly contribute to the vitality of the public sphere, but the art sphere will also act as an idealized model for the public sphere. Given this, one of the most important features of art, and culture more generally, is that the operation of the art system, seen as a social system, appears to parallel that of the broader public sphere.

The development of civil society, and by extension the public sphere, is central to the objectives of the international community in BiH. In many cases, and as explored above, this is regarded as the primary function of the instrumentalization of culture and contemporary art in the country. In addition, even where instances of instrumentalization are focused on some other objective (reconciliation, for example), culture is presumed to achieve this through the stimulation of the public sphere. If culture can 'do work', in other words, the public sphere is the material that it works with and through. In funding contemporary art, the international community can produce social spaces in which connections can be made, discussions can be had, and ideas can be changed. For example, the European Cultural Foundation's report *The Heart Of The Matter*, claims that 'by documenting and evaluating the independent cultural initiatives of surprising energy and scope which have emerged ever since the beginning of the war ... this would produce evidence of a civil society coming alive' (Behluli et al. 2005: 33), and that 'the independent arts scene as a part of civil society, as well as its visibility and will to cooperate across borders, need to be actively strengthened, e.g. through creating and sustaining cultural centres for the performance, production, research and incubation of innovative, often multidisciplinary arts' (Behluli et al. 2005: 62). In terms of 'affordances', this means that the close resemblance between the art system and the public sphere means that the international community perceive, in contemporary art, a way of promoting and strengthening the public sphere. By using a particular 'handle', the selective funding of contemporary art, more such spaces may be opened, and particular topics of discussion promoted within the public sphere.

Art Against The Public Sphere

This affordance described, it is worth pointing out that its use in BiH, or indeed in post-socialist states more generally, is deeply problematic. This is because of three reasons. One is that many major artists of the post-socialist era have been very critical of the role of art in the public sphere. Second, some scholars have drawn attention to the way in which art moves between public and

private spaces, and argued that even the ‘public’ spaces created by art are driven by, or are perhaps merely a by-product of, processes of capital. Thirdly, and in this context, others have questioned whether the recent vogue of ‘making art public’ is indeed the most effective way of ensuring its contribution to the public sphere.

The first of these observations, that many artists of the post-socialist period have been highly critical of the role of contemporary art in the public sphere, is perhaps the most paradoxical in the present context. The views and work of these artists have been given extended treatment in Anthony Gardner’s (2015) *Politically Unbecoming, Post-Socialist Art Against Democracy*. Gardner argues that in the post-socialist period ‘democracy’ became something of a code word that allowed the international community to impose a range of practices on artists that bore little resemblance to the commonly understood meaning of the term. Like the concept of ‘civil society’ itself, which grew in importance and usage to cover almost every instance of international sponsorship and intervention in BiH, ‘democracy’ became an empty sign under which ‘radically opposed agendas’ could find ‘their rationalization in the same cooptable signifier (Gardner 2015: 5). Primarily, citizens and artists came to see ‘democracy’ as a ‘handsome visage behind which lay the ravages of that same rampant neoliberalism’ including processes of ‘restructuring’ and ‘civil society development’, understood as the imposition of Western capitalist models and the promotion of unelected elites.

Gardner then illustrates how post-socialist artists turned away from ongoing arguments about how ‘best’ to further ‘democracy’ in their countries, and instead turned against the very term itself: creating ‘anti-democratic’ artworks that sought to criticise the totalizing and homogenising force of the concept itself in order to undermine the ‘rhetoric and practices of triumphalist democracy’, and instead to ‘develop nonconformist politics and aesthetics of their own’ (Platt 2017: 353). Gardner illustrates this point through a variety of examples, of which a number are particularly apposite here. He traces, for instance, the development of the 1991 contemporary art biennial Manifesta through an analysis of the funding structures of the festival itself and the SCCAs which contributed to it. Though conceived of as a project driven by artists from post-socialist states, ultimately Gardner argues that the mutual interdependence of the two organizations meant that they were unable to ‘reconceptualise the recently unified Europe away from their own self-interests’ (Hughes 2016: 120), and ultimately ended up re-producing the same categories of analysis, including ‘civil society development’ and ‘democratization’, that were (and are) used (and imposed) by the international community.

This ‘anti-democratic’ turn is also visible in the late work of NSK, already mentioned above as one of the primary exponents of the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde. During the closing years of Yugoslavia, during the Yugoslav wars, and for some years after, the collective produced work that presented liberal democracy as merely another ideology that had been imposed upon Yugoslavia. In a similar fashion to Groys’ (2010) characterization of Russian conceptualists in post-1989 Moscow, ‘in lieu of the emphasis on the external, outside, world, as guided by the futuristic Utopian goal of the communist project, conceptualist artists wanted to reverse the direction of the gaze from future to present, and ended up finding the spectacle of contemporaneity permeated by the void, emptiness and marginality’ (Semetsky 2012: 430). Indeed, in the work of the Moscow conceptualists that Groys covers can be seen a pre-figuring of the work of the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde of the 1990s. Groys’ argument is that the notion of ‘privatization’, which referred to the transfer of state-owned properties into private hands following the Soviet collapse, can be extended into the space of Soviet ideology, ‘which was equally subject to private appropriations, and that many works of late and post-Soviet art can be understood as examples of this process’ (Weibgen 2011: 111). In Yugoslavia, this ‘privatization’ also occurred, albeit under the auspices of ‘transition’, ‘democratization’, and ‘civil society development’, and artists of the post-socialist period equally sought to criticize the colonization of the space left by the collapse of Yugoslav ideology by one of Western liberal democracy. Gardner demonstrates, for example, how ‘NSK’s exaggerated adoption of the tropes of fascism and neo-nationalism operated against the dominant treatment of the year 1989 as ‘the “year zero” for [Europe’s] amnesiac program of democracy’ (Gardner 2015: 101). Given how widespread this rejection was, it would seem strange to sponsor artists to promote democracy, when many saw this very term as a cover for the imposition of neoliberalism.

A number of further criticisms might be made of casually eliding the spaces produced by the art system with the public sphere. One originates in the arguments made by Steyerl in *Duty Free Art* (2017). Her arguments rest on two premises. One is that the space of the commons has rapidly increased in recent years, such that the internet and mass media now constitute a more participatory space than ever before, a ‘site of commonality, movement, energy and desire’, in her words. On the other hand, she is also deeply sceptical of the ability of this expanded commons to be the kind of open, democratic space desired by those seeking to use contemporary art to develop the public sphere. This is because she sees the manifestations of contemporary art, even where they appear to provide participatory spaces, as being driven by the logic and interests of private capital. As such, these vast new spaces are ‘a cultural refinery for [a] set of post-democratic oligarchies’ (Steyerl

2017). Ultimately, she sees this dominance as stripping contemporary art of its ‘duty’ to further liberal democracy, or indeed any ideology that is opposed, in her view, to the interests of private capital. In this context, other contemporary theorists of the public role of contemporary art have questioned whether public display is the most effective way for art to strengthen civil society. This involves moving away from a model in which contemporary art *should* always be public, in order to explore how mixed modes of ownership and display, incorporating both public and private elements, can be used to amplify art’s role as a driver of responsible social change. This shift is seen, for example, in the work of Nina Montman (2005) and Raunig (2009), who both attempt to re-imagine what the ‘public institution’ means in the context of closures and austerity. Montmann ‘highlights the need for cultural producers not to work exclusively on exhibitions or shows, but to work behind the scenes in an environment of ‘temporary withdrawal’, and Raunig argues for a ‘conceivable new institution of critique’ which ‘maintains and expands its participation in (semi-) public space, and at the same time creates free unbranded spaces and negates dependencies’ (Raunig 2009: 158). Raunig then makes the link between these spaces and the public sphere clear, by imagining them as the kind of ‘diasporic public spheres’ that are described by Arjun Appadurai, which open up a ‘new role for the imagination in social life’ (Appadurai 2001: 4). ‘On the level of funding’, Raunig argues, ‘groundbreaking new private as well as public foundations are required to create self-sustainable, independent and powerful alternatives’ (Raunig 2009: 159).

These criticisms suggest that sponsoring the art system in order to create the kind of open, democratic space that is desired in order to strengthen the public sphere of BiH may be doomed from the outset. The spaces produced by the art system may not be what they are commonly (and perhaps naively) believed to be. This is because many of the artists who receive this funding might be highly critical of the very idea of using art in this way, and indeed may see ‘democratization’ as a cover for the economic exploitation of the country. Further, it might be that even where contemporary art is used in the service of creating public space, it actually serves the interests of capital. Lastly, an over-emphasis on ‘the public’ as the most effective working site of contemporary art can lead to equally efficacious, if more hidden, spaces being overlooked. Nonetheless, it is clear from the policy literature outlined in the previous chapter, and will become more so from the ethnographic chapters that follow this one, that the idea of contemporary art exhibitions as valuable public, critical space is one that persists, at least among those funding such spaces.

This critical function is provided not just by the fact that such spaces gather together different types of people, but also because they contain artworks, and it is to these that I now turn. As mentioned

above, in assessing the efficacy of contemporary art as a tool, it must also be noted that the type of discussions generated by contemporary art can be determined, to a degree, by the artworks 'on the wall'. This holds for the immanent space they inhabit, the discussion in the pub after, in the press, and thus in the public sphere. The way in which they do so, however, is complex. The ambiguity of meaning of most contemporary art means that in the majority of cases what they present is neither a political opinion nor a set narrative. Rather, most artworks invite reflection on the themes they deal with, without determining the outcome of this.

Relationality

In addition, some artworks are valuable because of who produced them, or their use of sociality as an artistic tool. This characteristic of contemporary art might be termed the 'sociality' or 'relationality' of contemporary art: its ability to draw disparate and under-represented groups into common public space. This is an characteristic that art shares with other forms of culture, but recent developments in contemporary art practice mean that contemporary art, in particular, has been seen as pre-eminent in this regard. These developments have been explored from several different perspectives. Foster, in *The Artist as Ethnographer* (1995), describes an 'ethnographic turn', arguing that there has been a (problematic) recent predilection for art to take the cultural practices of particular groups (and normally those seen as excluded from mainstream discourse) as material for the production of art works. He also notes that the participation of non-professional artists in such works has been facilitated by the gradual shift of medium that has taken place in contemporary art itself, away from craft-based disciplines such as painting and drawing, and toward installation, photography, and ready-mades, where arguably the training required for the production of art works is reduced. A chiral analog of this movement is seen in the work of Schneider (2008; 2003), and the authors who contributed to *Between Art And Anthropology: Contemporary Ethnographic Practice* (Schneider et al. 2010), which describe the ways in which anthropologists have used artworks, and the process of creating them, as an ethnographic tool to engage with minority groups.

Alongside this movement has been a related one, where sociality has itself become a medium for the creation of contemporary art. 'This idea of considering the work of art as a potential trigger for participation', writes Bishop, 'is hardly new: think of Happenings, Fluxus instructions, 1970s performance art, and Joseph Beuys's declaration that "everyone is an artist"', as well as Umberto Eco's *The Open Work* (1962; Bishop 2006: 61). However, she argues elsewhere, it has recently undergone a huge expansion, and 'this expanded field of post-studio practices currently goes under

a variety of names: socially engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, interventionist art, participatory art, collaborative art, contextual art and (most recently) social practice' (Bishop 2012: 1). These artworks take as their theoretical starting point the argument put forward in Althusser's 1969 essay 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in which it is argued that rather than artworks being merely determined by their social position, they produce them (Bishop 2004: 63). Arguably the most influential exposition of the recent 'participatory turn' has been the work of Bourriard, who coined the term 'Relational Aesthetics' (2002) for it. Bishop, who it should be noted is a fervent critic of Bourriard's approach, contrasts this work with Eco's *The Open Work*, where Eco 'regarded the work of art as a reflection of the conditions of our existence in a fragmented modern culture', and against which 'Bourriard sees the work of art producing these conditions'. 'The interactivity of relational art' for Bourriard, Bishop continues, 'is therefore superior to optical contemplation of an object, which is assumed to be passive and disengaged, because the work of art is a "social form" capable of producing positive human relationships ... as a consequence, [such] work is automatically political in implication and emancipatory in effect' (Bishop 2004: 62). In the years following its publication, Bourriard's work has attracted a great deal of criticism. However, and again like the description of the relationship between contemporary art and the public sphere outlined in the previous section, it is also worth noting that the policy literature surrounding the instrumentalization of contemporary art in BiH replicates, perhaps in a naive fashion, some of the ideas of Bourriard and others, who seek to use participation as an inherently democratic tool. This policy literature suggests that the value of relational artworks in the country today is dual: these artworks both allow under-represented groups access, via the art system, to the public sphere; in addition, the production of contemporary art is also believed to facilitate the kind of 'memory work' which is felt to be an important part of reconciliation processes.

The focus on the inclusion of minority groups in the country means that ethnographic artworks are attractive insofar as they are able to work with, and give voice to, previously under-represented minorities. Relational artworks, in addition, inherently include sociality as part of their design. If contemporary art is designed to work 'through' the public sphere, that is, through similarly social mechanisms, these works could be said to already include, in their very design, part of the purpose of instrumentalizing them. There are many examples of exhibitions which seek to provide minority groups access to the public sphere through the production of artworks, but the way in which such processes work can be illustrated in relation to a specific case. The exhibition *Pod Istim Krovom*

(*Under The Same Roof*), took place at Java Gallery, a small commercial gallery in Sarajevo, in November 2013. The exhibition was sponsored by Civil Rights Defenders and the National Endowment For Democracy (NED), who provided funding for administration, curation, printing, hiring the gallery, and producing the catalogue. The exhibition consisted of photographs by young artists, for many of whom this was their first exhibition. Instrumentalization and the deployment of relationality in this exhibition worked as follows. The goal of the NED program under which this funding were made available is 'strengthening visibility of the most discriminated groups in the Western Balkans'. That is, one of their objectives is to promote the political, social, and cultural inclusion of under-represented ethnicities in Bosnia, and primarily the Roma people. The curation of the exhibition was somewhat ethnographic in character: that is, the photographs were partially chosen in order to illustrate the social and economic condition of the Roma people. As a result, though the exhibition contained the work of many different artists, it was clear that agency, in this exhibition, was not being assigned to the individual artists, but rather to the Roma people as a whole. Such exhibitions are common, as is the process of assigning individual artists responsibility for representing entire ethnic (and, indeed, gender) groups. This practice is so common, in fact, that Brković et al, in their introduction to *Negotiating Social Relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2017), include it as one of the 'chronotopes' that BiH can be seen as today: the 'round table', around which are sat individuals who are each representatives of their ethnic community.

The second value of the relational character of many contemporary artworks is that they have been seen as a good tool for working through potentially traumatic memories, because some have seen the creative process itself as therapeutic. This appears to be based on two ideas. The first is a Freudian ontology, in which returning to an uncovering repressed memory is seen as necessary to the healing process (Dragović-Soso 2010: 34). The second rests on the ambiguity of meaning of contemporary art, from which it is assumed that producing works of art involves the abstract expression of ideas and memories that would be too traumatic to express in more concrete terms. 'Because of the arts extensive use of non-linear and creative methods of expression,' Zelizer writes, 'I believe they can often provide an avenue for facilitating increased understanding and positive interaction between groups in conflict in appropriate settings' (Zelizer 2003: 63). The production and exhibition of such works can therefore facilitate the creation of public spaces, and public discourse, in which 'memory work' can be performed. In the context of collective memory, this function is particularly important because individuals' memories and the societal framework in which they exist are inherently related. The reciprocity of this relationship is such, it has been

argued, that no personal ‘memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections’ (Halbwachs 1992: 43) and, conversely, personal memories shape and inform ‘public discourses and images of the past that speak in the name of collectivities’ (Dragović-Soso 2010: 30). Thus, individuals’ memories of the Bosnian War are shaped by the society-wide discourse built around them, and then iteratively come to effect this discourse through their public expression, as manifested in contemporary art or in other forms. By encouraging artists to perform memory work through their artworks, therefore, these artworks can be project comment into the public sphere, and also form reference points for audiences’ discussion about memories of the past conflict. It is felt that if many artists and arts based processes have been used to reinforce nationalist ideologies, foster divisions and provide justification for barbarous acts, they may also be used to achieve the opposite (Zelizer 2003: 63).

The relationality of contemporary art therefore has two values. Because many contemporary artworks seek to use sociality itself as an artistic tool, funding such works may be used to create analogs of the kind of process that the international community deem useful for two of their primary objectives in BiH. Through sponsoring exhibitions that include the work of under-represented minorities, this sponsorship may permit these groups direct access to the public sphere. Similarly, by eliciting memory work, albeit via the production of contemporary art, spaces may be created in which traumatic memories are worked through. As Alacovska has put it in the Macedonian context, ‘these socially engaged practices signify a shift from artistic goals towards social goals, caring and mutual aid. Creative work-cum-art-for-social-change enshrines active hope that a better world is possible and that creative careers are nonetheless viable in circumstances of total despair’ (Alacovska, A. 2018. ‘Keep hoping, 13). Expressed in terms of affordances, it can be said that this particular characteristic of contemporary art means that the international community perceive that in funding it two objectives may be achieved: the inclusion of minority groups in the public sphere, and the promotion of memory work.

Whilst the idea of participation, and contemporary art’s embrace of it, therefore appears to afford a number of outcomes that are seen as desirable for post-conflict BiH, a more detailed examination of this affordance suggests that it too might be false. Like the discussions on the role of art in the public sphere outlined in the previous section, the assessment of the value of participation in artworks is split largely according to the expertise of the scholar analyzing the issue. For policymakers and scholars of transitional politics, participatory artworks are often seen as inherently inclusionary. For scholars of contemporary art, the opposite appears to be the case. As

mentioned previously, Bourriard's work, as one of the most influential expressions of the value of participation in contemporary art, has been the focus of much of this criticism. Bishop's 2004 essay *Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics*, for instance, points out that the type of spaces produced by participatory artworks are replications not of the variety and harmony of society at large, but rather the homogeneity of particular parts of it. She notes that Bourriard requires that 'we must judge the "relations" that are produced by relational art works', such that 'in front of any work of art, we can ask what social model the piece produces; could I live, for instance, in a world under the organizing principles of a Mondrian?' (Bishop 2004: 64). Doing this in relation to many contemporary pieces of participatory art, Bishop argues, produces a false sense of harmony between participants, simply because many of them are drawn from the same backgrounds or share the same concerns. These pieces, in turn, are not truly 'democratic', because the 'public sphere remains democratic only insofar as its naturalized exclusions are taken into account and made open to contestation', and so 'conflict, division, and instability, then, do not ruin the democratic public sphere; they are conditions of its existence' (Bishop 2004: 64). Elsewhere, Bishop has argued that a way out of this difficulty might be found in work of Ranciere, who 'in calling for spectators who are active as interpreters ... implies that the politics of participation might best lie, not in anti-spectacular stagings of community or in the claim that mere physical activity would correspond to emancipation, but in putting to work the idea that we are all equally capable of inventing our own translations' (Bishop 2006: 16).

Several criticisms of this can be raised. One is that mentioned by Gardner, who is opposed to Bishop's legitimization of antagonistic democracy as a political idea' (Hughes 2016: 119) largely because he believes post-socialist societies to be antagonistic enough already. A second criticism, to extend this point, might be that Bishop's sharp division between antagonistic and affirmative 'democracy' is itself too antagonistic, and too essentialist. In BiH, to take a specific example, it could be argued that a *degree* of communal exchange would be beneficial, and that this need not include the most extreme representatives of differing political opinions in order to be of value. Lastly, and on a more general level, it could be argued that certain participatory artworks, and certainly those promoted by Bourriard, are informed by a deeply utopian strand of thinking, and that utopias need not be 'antagonistically democratic' in Bishop's terms. Though a 'utopia' that included only New York artists and art dealers (like that of the piece in Bishop's *Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics*) is not one that is likely to be advanced as a serious proposal, it is a legitimate proposal. Indeed, in the Bosnian context it could be argued that whether participatory artworks are

exclusionary or not, their value lies in their ability to manifest an imagined utopia, and that indeed this line of thinking has a long history in the country and region. Namely, the ‘utopia’ that Groys’ (2006) Moscow conceptualists spent their working lives mourning the non-appearance of, and the modernist ‘utopia’ that many state-sponsored Yugoslav artists sought to depict, are no lesser imaginings of utopia than the liberal democratic state that the international community aims to create in BiH.

This last criticism, nonetheless, opens up a fruitful line of inquiry that goes to the heart of the ability of artworks to achieve the goals of the international community in BiH today. It might be, of course, that some citizen’s idea of a utopian BiH is highly exclusionary, and perhaps mono-ethnic. Certainly the war would suggest so, as does Jansen’s work (2015). Equally, and to take Bishop’s wider point, it is unlikely that this vision of BiH will ever be seriously proposed in art, whether participatory or not, because it directly contradicts the views of those organizations funding such art. Any participatory artwork convened in BiH today is therefore likely to contain only a tiny subset of the views of the population of the country. Whether this is a problem or not depends, in turn, on one’s proposed mechanism for the precise way in which such artworks can effect social change. If contemporary art, whether participatory or not, is designed to act as a vehicle through which ‘ordinary people’ can drive ‘democratization from below’, then their lack of engagement with such works is certainly problematic. If, on the other hand, one sees contemporary art as a tool through which a liberal, middle-class, vanguard can drive social change ‘from above’, then the exclusionary nature of participatory artworks can actually be one of their great advantages, connecting members of an avant-garde who hold the ‘correct’ type of ‘subversive’ views: those shared by the international community.

Criticality

A further characteristic of contemporary art that means it is perceived as being useful in achieving specific aims in BiH is what may be termed its ‘criticality’: the idea that contemporary art is almost always concerned to produce critical, sometimes subversive, comment on political and social themes. This, to an extent, is a characteristic that contemporary art shares with other forms of culture. However, the historical association of contemporary art with counter-cultures means that it is also pre-eminent in this regard. Indeed, some scholars have argued that the very definition of contemporary art lies in its association with counter-cultures, and therefore in its inherently critical

form. For Heinich (summarized in Danko 2008), contemporary art is defined by its effort to continually transgress aesthetic, moral, or social boundaries. It initially appears as crass, immoral, or un-artistic, before being legitimized by critics, curators, and journalists (Heinich 2012). Further, in many cases the value (both cultural and monetary) of particular artworks is tied to this process, insofar as those works which generate the highest level of initial controversy, and require the greatest effort to legitimate, are often then held in the highest regard. This said, the extent to which contemporary art and artworks are actually critical, and whether this imputed criticality has any effect upon the societies it arises in, has been one of the primary concerns of scholars of contemporary art.

Primarily, these questions have been discussed in reference to the concept of the avant-garde. Therefore, though I have already mentioned the avant-garde several times, in this section I will look in detail at the way that it has been conceived of, in order that the way in which contemporary art affords critical comment (if it does) may be illustrated. The first point to make is that criticality in contemporary art is, in turn, dependent on it being autonomous, at least to a degree. Though work on the autonomy of contemporary art has a long history, I start here with the work of Adorno. Adorno's argument, as put in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) and *Aesthetic theory* (1970) is that though the works of the 'culture industry' are automatically, inherently, and inescapably co-opted by capitalism, contemporary art has a special status among them. This is because, through a process of commodity fetishism, pieces of contemporary art are reified by capitalist systems. In turn, it is their very reification by capital that allows them to escape being completely determined by it, and to criticize capitalism itself. Works of art are able to do this, for Adorno, via the dialectic of enlightenment itself. They are, in the words of Whitworth, 'a rational refuge for mimesis in a world in which the mimetic impulse of thinking is progressively suppressed in classificatory thinking' (Whitworth 2007: 123). As such, they can become a 'fetish against commodity fetishism', because 'The work of art is an object which makes an illusory claim not merely to be valuable as a for-another but also as something in itself' (Whitworth 2007: 124). A work of art therefore acts as an 'absolute commodity' which openly proclaims, 'rather than desperately concealing, its own character as surplus labour, production for no need at all, for its own sake' (Whitworth 2007: 125). I will return to these points below, and throughout the present work, but a few initial observations can be made that will presage that discussion, because from the discussion to this point there are already some obvious problems with applying Adorno's theory to BiH.

The first relates to the ability of art, even if it attains autonomy through the process outlined by Adorno, to produce critical comment. For Adorno, the idea of using a piece of art to criticize, for example, discrimination against Roma people in BiH is absurd. This is because, and again in the words of Whitworth, art works cannot ‘criticize some particular good or bad action, as though actions could be weighed outside their increasingly total context, but the whole framework within which practice takes place. Accordingly, works of art cannot simply be pressed into the service of a just practice, because what they criticize is the depracticalization of practice itself’ (Whitworth 2007: 127). The second two observations relate to two of the pre-requisites for Adorno’s theory to work. The first of these is that, in order for contemporary art to attain the status that Adorno says it can, it needs to be a genuine ‘refuge for mimeises’. This is another way of saying that the dialectic of enlightenment needs to retain its dialectic character: if a society becomes completely dominated by purposive rationality, there is no such ‘refuge’. The existence of this refuge, in turn, is reliant upon sources of funding for art, or at least sources of support for the livelihood of artists, that are distinct from institutions who are inherently and purposively rational: governments, and other political agencies. This source of funding, for Adorno, is the art market. Unfortunately, in seeking to apply this theory to the Bosnian context, one quickly comes up against the difficulty that the art market is essentially non-existent. This means that the process through which Adorno imagines art works to gain autonomy, first in being ‘for nothing’, then being reified by the market because of this, is blocked at two stages. The art system has been almost completely colonised by purposive rationality, and so very few works ‘for nothing’ make it to public visibility. Even if they were to, the lack of capital in the BiH art market blocks them from gaining fetish status.

Following Adorno, several scholars have sought to further analyse the role of the avant-garde, and whether this work can be truly autonomous. In exploring this work, it is instructive to compare two scholars who take opposing opinions on the matter: Bürger and Roberts. Bürger’s *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1984) has become extremely influential. Bürger argues that Adorno is too deeply immersed in the institution of art to reflect critically on its categories. In bourgeois society it is not so much the artwork which is autonomous from society as the entire institution of art. As such, and in his own words:

The European avant-garde movements can be defined as an attack on the status of art in bourgeois society. What is negated is not an earlier form of art (a style) but art as an institution that is unassociated with the life praxis of men. When the avant-gardistes demand that art become practical once again, they do not mean that the contents of works of art should be socially

significant. The demand is not raised at the level of the contents of individual works. Rather, it directs itself to the way art functions in society, a process that does as much to determine the effect that works have as does the particular content. (Bürger 1984: 49)

As such, he argues, the original exponents of the avant-garde were a truly critical and autonomous force, albeit in seeking to bring 'art' closer to 'life'. Though he does not say so as bluntly, one of this central arguments is then that this was achieved, albeit not by the actions of the avant-garde themselves, but rather by the culture industry. As such, though during the time of the original avant garde the 'attempt to do away with the distance between art and life still had all the pathos of historical progressiveness on its side', by mid-century the 'the culture industry has brought about the false elimination of the distance between art and life' (Bürger 1984: 50). As such, for Burger the neo-avant-gardes ended up institutionalizing the critique that was genuinely advanced by their predecessors.

Roberts (2002, 2011) has argued that Bürger's conclusions are too cynical. He criticizes, following Foster (1994), the 'mixture of Romantic fatalism and "endism"' that characterizes Bürger's work (Roberts 2011: 717). This millenarian impulse, he continues, means that art produced after the 1950s in the name of the neo-avant-garde tends to be seen as the pastiche of that of earlier periods, and that Burger (among others) is too quick to call the (Soviet) avant garde a failure.. Since the earlier avant-garde left behind artistic and intellectual resources that can be used, Roberts argues, if it failed it did so 'constructively' (Roberts 2011: 719). As such, the autonomy of avant-garde may be rescued, and art has a genuine utility in 'its capacity to address or intervene in real-world problems, be they practical or ideological' (Roberts 2011: 722). For Roberts, the way in which art can do this is by producing 'noninstrumental "thought experiments" without direct utility and, as such, to reinvest aesthetic reason with universal emancipatory content: free, unalienated labor' (Roberts 2011: 723). Roberts sees this work as positioned between two opposed forces that both seek to reduce the autonomy of art: one of these is 'total revolutionary praxis', or rather the memory of this; the other is the 'pragmatic exigencies of autopoiesis'. Each threaten to overwhelm the autonomy of art, by training its power into 'social effectivity' and aesthetic sublimity, respectively (Roberts 2011: 724), and so what is required is a 'position on art's autonomy that is nondualistic and nonidentitary, a position that recognizes that the strength of art in the epoch of its total administration lies precisely in its resistance' to these forces Roberts 2011: 724). Ultimately, therefore, Roberts argues that the avant-garde today has passed into what can be called a 'third space':

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Neither the space of revolutionary transformation as such (the building of a revolutionary culture; the production of “thought experiments” as part of a mobilization of the working class), nor the pragmatic adjustment of critical and radical art to the new postwar administration of modern art (the neo-avant-garde), but the concrete implication of artistic practices in the critique of capital, the state, labor practices, and the official institutions of art. (Roberts 2011: 726)

Some have been critical of this view, as being based on a false division of artists into those producing work as part of ‘official art institutions’ and those who produce ‘post-art’, and whom Roberts then grants autonomy (Suchin 2015). In reality, even the most critical of artworks is still able to move from an oppositional gift economy, from which it can critique ‘capital, the state, labor practices, and the official institutions of art’ to the marketplace, which then defuses this critique (Suchin 2015: 35).

Indeed, for many scholars of the avant-garde, and of the autonomy of contemporary art more generally, it has been the institutionalizing affect of the art market that poses the biggest threat to this autonomy, because it threatens to turn otherwise critical pieces of art into commodities. The way in which this occurs has been addressed and problematized by Beech (2015), who notes that each group involved in the debate characterizes their opponent’s view as claiming that art is independent of economics: the statements of wealthy collectors and important curators are claimed to prove that they have a vested interest in keeping art separate from normal commodities; whereas those on the left are claimed to hold the opinion that ‘capitalism always corrupts’, and that ‘true’ art should resist this (Beech 2015). The strand of scholarship that descended from the western Marxist tradition, Beech then contends, has often failed to pay attention to the modes of production of art, and instead has focused on art’s ‘subsumed’ existence within capitalist society (D. Beech 2015). For Beech, art’s metamorphosis into a commodity occurs (if it occurs) in circulation not production, and so art cannot be easily elided with other luxury goods. As such, though Beech accepts that art is a commodity, and therefore subject to the affirmatory affects of the market, it remains an exceptional example of a commodity for a number of reasons: artists do not sell their labor-power but rather a product for which they own the means of production; they do not work for a capitalist giving the latter their surplus-labour over and above the time needed for their sustainment; no capital is advanced for art’s production; the means of art-making have not been organised to maximise profit (at least not on a social scale); and the prices of art bear no relation to the cost of its production’ (Shaked 2018: 184).

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In returning to the Bosnian context, it will be observed that much of the scholarship on the autonomy and criticality of art assumes access to a large, global art market, which then exerts a powerful homogenizing force upon art. Given the economic situation in BiH today, and particularly the limited extent to which the broader economy is integrated into world markets, there is immediate reason to suspect that this might not be the case in the country. Indeed, given the dominance of one country (the USA) in the 'global' art market, it is debatable whether the Marxist fear that the market can colonize contemporary art is applicable in many non-Western contexts. Given the relative lack of an art market in BiH (see Chapter 6) in fact it might be naively possible to see the Bosnian art market as the kind of pre-capitalized utopia that many artists and theorists of (neo-)avant-garde have sought. It is certainly true that, as will be seen, the artworks produced in BiH are not frequently determined by international movements of capital. However, this is not to say that the work produced in the country is autonomous, and indeed the degree to which it is is one of my primary focii here. Instead of being determined by the global art market, I contend, contemporary art in BiH is determined by another process: direct instrumentalization by (normally foreign) governments, who have sought to yoke the practice to purposive rationality. Thus, contemporary art has lost its autonomy less through being turned into a commodity, and more through being used as a political tool.

Many artists in the country have struggled against this, as will become apparent in the following chapters. However, for my immediate purpose of sketching the reasons why contemporary art was regarded as a useful tool in achieving the goals of the international community in BiH I would argue that the ongoing debate regarding the limits and efficacy of the criticality of contemporary art is evidence that it is, at least, still *expected* to produce critical comment, even if in practice this is impossible or ineffective. Further, for those attempting to use art to achieve social or political change in BiH, this is a particularly attractive characteristic, because it means that funding contemporary art is an 'automatic' way of producing challenging ideas and discussions. In terms of affordances, it can be said that in the criticality of contemporary art the international community perceive that it might be able to afford the production and promotion of critical comment, and therefore societal transformation.

Finally, and to leave aside (for now) the question of whether contemporary art can ever be truly autonomous, it is also worth noting that instrumentalizing it in order to produce critical comment may seem to give rise to a contradiction. This is because there has been a fear that that instrumentalizing contemporary art may inadvertently lead to its homogenization: that particular

ideologies and forms of expression will become dominant, either through their direct sponsorship or through actors tailoring their work toward perceived policy goals. That is, that if instrumentalization becomes dominant in a particular art system, this homogenization could lead to art losing its primary value: its critical function. Several scholars have noted this problem. In the words of Vestheim, 'if policy making and planning in the cultural sector become dominated by purposive rationality alone, there is a real danger that politics in this field loses its creative and critical dimension' (Vestheim 1994: 69). This is also seen in the criticisms made of the work of the SCCA, as outlined above. The emergence of 'Soros Realism', the 'appearance of similar new art in entirely different, sometimes even incomparable, cultures' (Suvakovic 2002), for instance, is exemplary of this criticism. Again, however, it is not clear that this is actually a problem from the perspective of those organizations seeking to use art to achieve social and political change in BiH. Indeed, it might be desirable to instrumentalize the art sphere to the degree that it only produces work sympathetic to the vision of the international community: that is, the creation of a multi-cultural, democratic, European state. Indeed, doing this may also be seen as valuable because it suppresses the public visibility of *truly* subversive work, as seen from the perspective of the international community: that is, work that argues for the legitimacy of ethnic cleansing, mono-ethnic states, dictatorship, against EU accession, or, critically, against the instrumentalization of art itself. The only issue with pursuing instrumentalization to this degree, in fact, might be that in homogenizing contemporary art within BiH, it loses credibility because it comes to be seen as propaganda. This can be avoided, to some degree, by adopting indirect forms of sponsorship, such that, in the words of Gray, those sponsoring contemporary art can 'avoid being held directly responsible or accountable ... [and] can avoid accusations of censorship or undue political influence' (Gray 2007: 214). Indeed, the centrality of the development of civil society would also argue for such an approach to the exploitation of contemporary art, in that by adopting indirect forms of sponsorship the international community is able to claim that it is 'merely' providing the opportunity for artists to 'speak for themselves' within the public sphere. This may, to some degree, defuse criticisms of undue influence, as does another affordance of contemporary art: its ambivalence of meaning.

Ambivalence of 'Meaning'

The final characteristic of contemporary art that makes it particularly attractive as an instrument in BiH is its ambivalence of 'meaning': that many contemporary artworks do not project an unitary, unproblematic, clear meaning. The way in which contemporary art carries meaning, if it does at all,

has also been a major concern of scholars. Barthes, for instance (1993), pluralizes and distributes the production of ‘meanings’, so that no individual, not even the artist, has a claim to have definitively defined them. In addition, his work on the concepts of ‘studium’ and ‘punctum’ draws attention to the multiple levels on which images operate, such that it is possible to assess such works both as working within established cultural codes and as ‘bruising’ one with their affective power (Barthes et al. 1981). From an anthropological perspective, in addition, Geertz (1976) has drawn attention to the difficulties involved in writing and talking about artworks, and argued that therefore the meaning of artworks is ‘beyond the reach of discourse’ (1976: 1473), and Gell (1998) has argued that art is not a form of, or a replacement for, language, and that its meaning cannot be mapped to linguistic utterance. As a result, it is almost impossible to talk of an essential ‘meaning’ that lies ‘within’ an artwork. This ambiguity, further, initially appears to raise a problem regarding the ability of contemporary artworks to contribute to the public sphere. This is because the public sphere, at least as classically conceived of, is based on ‘rational discourse’ (Crossley 2006). That is, almost exclusively textual utterances which can be disproved, or ‘falsified’ in Popper’s conception (Lynd et al. 1951). This is one of the reasons why contemporary art was excluded from the public sphere by the scholars immediately following Habermas. However, more recent work (Mitchell 1992), as well as the policy literature outlined above, suggest that contemporary art should be regarded as part of the public sphere, and is regarded as such by the international community. This is partly because, irrespective of the meaning of particular works of art, the instrumentalization of art is expected to produce social space, an art sphere, in itself. Indeed, if this is the primary function of these instrumentalization processes, the meanings of works of art is somewhat arbitrary to their success. Indeed, for many works that use relational or ethnographic techniques, the creation of sociality is the artwork itself, and is in some senses the meaning of such pieces.

Furthermore, even if one takes the most ‘skeptical’ position possible on the way in which artworks communicate with their audiences, it is clear that their content does *something*, even if this is hard to define. Even the most abstract painting invites reflection on the nature of abstraction. Even an exercise in ‘non-painting’, as in *La Place des Drapeaux*, invites reflection on the nature of museums and galleries. If the international community fund a contemporary art exhibition under the theme of ‘reconciliation’, the artworks displayed are likely to prompt discussion on this theme. As such, in the present work I will focus primarily on the ways in which contemporary artworks ‘guide’ audiences toward discussion and reflection on particular themes. Indeed, this indirect form of communication is one of the reasons, I would argue, why contemporary art is so valued by the

international community. Instead of containing an essential and unitary meaning, the multiple meanings of contemporary artworks may be regarded as arising through a complex interplay between artist, artwork, location, audience, critic, and (critically) social space, and as such artists can utilize the ambiguity inherent in their work to make veiled criticisms of extant political or social discourses which are only understood by those sharing a common critical discourse. In addition, this inherent ambiguity is also particularly attractive to those seeking to instrumentalize art, in BiH and elsewhere, because it combats one of the problems already noted. By sponsoring contemporary art, as opposed to other means of achieving societal change, international organizations may avoid accusations of undue influence: since artworks do not have definable meanings, they cannot be a channel through which the international community imposes its message. In the Bosnian context, where many commentators have criticized the undue influence of the international community, this characteristic may be particularly valued, because even where artworks are directly sponsored by the international community, the fact that many works do not possess a clear meaning bars them from being seen as direct ‘propaganda’.

Livelihood and Labor

Taken together, the affordances of contemporary art described above would appear to form a description of a powerful tool for achieving social and political change in transitional BiH, albeit a tool with some inherent risks. It should also be pointed out, though, that this tool is always applied to particular circumstances, and that the affordances I have described to this point are largely those perceived by the international community. Artists and citizens of BiH may perceive, in contemporary art, different affordances. Critically, for artists one of the things that contemporary art affords is a means for survival, a livelihood, and a career. I will therefore conclude this chapter by looking at contemporary art from another perspective, that of artists and citizens in BiH, in order to situate the actual production, circulation, and appreciation of contemporary art in the Bosnian context.

The first remark to be made in this regard is that if, as Jansen has consistently argued (2009, 2015), the primary concern of Bosnians in BiH today is to maintain ‘normal lives’ within the peculiar spatiotemporal context of ‘eternal transition’, then contemporary art must be seen as a part of this. This is true of artists, whose production of art can be seen as a strategy that affords survival in a state characterized by high unemployment and limited opportunity, but can also be applied to those

visiting contemporary art shows, for whom such visits can be seen as re-affirming ‘everyday activities’ that occurred before (and, indeed, during) the war. This said, whether contemporary art is in fact an efficacious tool for achieving these outcomes is highly debatable. Many scholars have drawn attention to the precariousness that characterizes the lives of artists and other cultural producers, and then questioned why so many individuals continue to work in the sector. Alacovska, for instance, has argued that answers to this question have been attempted in two modes, seeing artists either as ‘cold calculators’ or as ‘exploited dupes’ (Alacovska 2018: 2). She further notes that, in post-socialist and transitional contexts, this particular contrast between creative work and ‘normal’ work is less striking than in other contexts, because in ‘post-socialist societies, precarious creative work ... happens in a context of ‘radical precarity’ itself, characterized by a fragile private sector, inefficient public administration, virtually inexistent welfare protection, rampant unemployment and protracted fiscal crisis’ (Alacovska 2018: 4). The fact that this state of precariousness has now gone on for so long, in addition, means that the traditional explanations of why artists continue to ‘put up with’ precarity must be re-thought. If there is no possibility of post-precarity, ‘strategic and grandiose future-orientation ceases to be a practical, emotional or cognitive resource for traversing from precarity to stability’ (Alacovska 2018: 5). Instead, Alacovska argues, the concept of ‘hope’ might be used to suggest how ‘creative workers hopefully reorient, readjust and retune their self-image, knowledge and agency as a method of constructing habitable, modest, sane and ‘normal’ work-lives’ (Alacovska 2018: 14). This means that, rather than seeing Bosnian artists as ‘cold calculators’ who perceive in the production of contemporary the possibility of future riches, the practice should be seen as a repository of hope for the future, even if many are dubious that this future will ever arrive.

The precariousness that characterizes creative work, whether in the Balkans or elsewhere, also has significant consequences for the way that artists (and others) function on an everyday basis. One of these is that, as will be seen, much of the ‘economy’ of contemporary art system is based on a transactional, informal system of exchanges, volunteer work, and personal favors. Again, in this regard the difference between the art system and the broader social system of BiH is not as apparent as in many other countries, simply because the ‘economy’ of BiH already contains a large transactional element. Many scholars have written about the way in which such transactions work in post-war BiH. Brković (2017), for instance, has shown how systems of personal obligation are used to obtain basic services in the country, and Veters (2014) has traced in detail how the citizens of Mostar worked with the terminology of refugee return in order to obtain housing, and did so in

ways which drew on socialist-era systems and a ‘spatially structured imaginary of redistribution’ (Vetters 2014: 33). From the perspective of the international agencies involved in BiH’s transition, such clientelism has often been seen as a huge problem, in that many scholarly and popular depictions of it have seen it as ‘diametrically opposed’ to ‘democratic’ state-society relations (Vetters 2014: 22). In this regard, also, however, the transactional nature of the contemporary art system can be seen as a mirror of the more widespread transactionalism that characterizes the country as a whole.

Therefore, even if the work of artists in BiH today is precarious and transactional, it is difficult to distinguish this from the lives of other citizens. While in more affluent societies these features are those of undesirable work, in BiH they are the features of many kinds of work. As such, it is not immediately apparent that artists are ‘relatively’ precarious in BiH. Indeed, in some senses creative work, undertaken under the sponsorship of the international community, is one of the most stable, well-paid, and desirable livelihoods in BiH. This point has been made before by several scholars. As Baker (2014) has written, the local employees of international organizations have come to form a ‘a new Bosnian social class’ (Baker 2014: 99), albeit one with some unusual features, in that the organizations who employed these workers tended to think of them as no more than ‘a quasi-group that will disappear as the international presence declines’ (Baker 2014: 46). This means, Baker argues, that ‘to speak of this workforce only as part of a transnational ‘precariat’ misses some important aspects of its character and origin’, but that equally to speak of it only as an elite ‘projectariat’ may risk ‘lifting the people who have happened to do this work away from their counterparts with similar values’ (Baker 2014: 103). Nevertheless, it will become clear that many of the artists in BiH today, in contrast to many of their western counterparts and many of their fellow Bosnians, possess relatively stable and well-paid livelihoods. Indeed, it could be argued that artists are among the best qualified individuals to take advantage of the current situation of BiH. This is because, first of all, the persistently transactional nature of the Bosnian economy means that artists who mobilize monetary and other forms of support from their families, which is often seen as distasteful nepotism in the west, are merely taking advantage of a *štela*, something which is required to work in many professions (Brković 2017). Secondly, in the context of international sponsorship which prioritizes the expression and exploration of cultural difference, cultural workers can quickly mobilize ‘skills and values’ (Beech 2015) to take advantage of this, in that their work is already concerned with issues of culture and representation.

As such, the outcomes that contemporary art affords for Bosnian artists and other cultural workers are radically different from those it affords to the international community. Primarily, for many of my own contacts, one of the values of contemporary art is simply that it allows them to earn a living in a state afflicted by high unemployment and lack of opportunity. Though this employment is precarious, this does not distinguish it from other forms of work in post-Dayton BiH, and indeed it is actually more lucrative than many other professions. Nevertheless, in closing this section it should also be noted that the necessary reliance of artists on the art system gives rise to another affordance, albeit one of a slightly different type to those I have discussed to this point. This is that, perhaps tautologically, the production of contemporary art affords the future production of contemporary art. Put another way, those involved with cultural production in BiH today have a vested interest in the continuation of the art system, because they rely on it for their livelihoods. This is certainly true of artists, but (as will become apparent) it also appears to be true of many employees of intervention agencies. This concern, of course, is not one that is evident in the policy literature on the sponsorship of art in post-conflict BiH, where it would be seen as the sponsorship of a 'a new Bosnian social class' (Baker 2014: 99) by an unaccountable international elite. Thus, and to re-iterate a point made above, the sponsorship of contemporary art in BiH is most commonly explained in different terms: as discrete projects focused on somewhat vague notions of 'democratization' and 'reconciliation', as part of which intervention agencies can indirectly sponsor the production of 'critical' comment which in reality affirms the goals of transition.

Conclusion

The fact that contemporary art has typically been indirectly sponsored does not mean, however, that the type of artwork produced by instrumentalization processes has not been criticized. It is clear from the policy literature outlined above, and from my own fieldwork in BiH, that art produced by instrumentalization processes does possess a particular set of values and aspirations, and that these match those of the international community. Indeed, it could be argued that the entire history of the cultural policy in BiH, as described here, has been characterized by an attempt to inculcate these values within the art sphere, and by extension the public sphere, of the country. The lack of a national culture ministry allowed the international community to dictate the cultural landscape of the country, and promote the 'correct' kinds of work. As the population grew weary of direct international involvement, culture and art were given an increasingly prominent place within broader intervention policies, and this was justified using international doctrines of what constituted

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culture, the value of this, and what it could be expected to achieve in transition societies. Ultimately, the choice of contemporary art as a part of these broader instrumentalization processes relied on several features of contemporary art itself: its ability to directly strengthen the public sphere; the fact that it could be expected to automatically produce critical comment; and its ambivalent meaning, which allowed the international community to deny its role as propaganda.

Chapter 5: Methodology

In this chapter, I will describe the methodology I developed to study the aims, outcomes, and effects of the instrumentalization of contemporary art in BiH. This methodology is primarily based on the work of Marcus (1995) and Kopytoff (1986), in that it relies on ‘following’ individual artworks through the art system and building ‘biographies’ of them. As such it also builds on a wider ethnographic literature on ‘art scenes’, ‘art worlds’, and ‘art systems’ (van Maanen 2009). I will begin, therefore, by describing a working model of the art system, and describe how artwork’s paths can be traced through it. I will then extend this discussion to include the way in which artworks are constituted by a multitude of processes, including those of instrumentalization, and can therefore be regarded as complex ‘things’, in Ingold’s terms (2011). I will then describe why participant-observation is necessary for following these ‘things’. Finally, I will describe the way in which I processed the emergent data into the chapters that follow this one. My focus, here, is to explore how the application of the theoretical models I have described in previous chapters are manifested ‘on the ground’, in the sites where culture is made and displayed: to provide a microscopic perspective on the macroscopic themes and theory I have outlined. This is because, as Bennett (2007) points out, quoting Latour:

Culture does not act surreptitiously behind the actor’s back. This most sublime production is manufactured at specific places and institutions, be it the messy offices of the top floor of Marshal Sahlins’s house on the Chicago campus or the thick Area Files kept in the Pitts River (sic) museum in Oxford. (Latour 2005: 175)

I deployed this methodology during several periods of fieldwork. Though the major portion of my fieldwork took place between October 2014 and October 2015, I was engaged with the same issues and people both before and after this date. My own engagement with BiH began during fieldwork conducted for an MA thesis in 2013, and continued until June 2018. Over that period, I lived in BiH for approximately two years over five separate periods. This included a portion of time in which I had interrupted my PhD studies, and was myself working for an international organization in the city. I have thus had contact with many of the people and organizations mentioned here for more than four years, and have seen their careers and ideas develop during this time. Though I would hesitate to say that this has brought a synchronic element to my research (for which I feel a much

longer period of engagement would be required), this extended period of less intensive fieldwork has also informed the analysis undertaken here.

In order to describe this methodology, it is instructive to return to my research questions. The first asked why the international community funded contemporary art in post-conflict BiH. The argument I have presented thus far may be seen as a working hypothesis in answer to this question: a number of characteristics of contemporary art mean that the international community perceive that it can afford particular outcomes that are desirable. Primarily, it is valued for the way in which it creates public space, though the artworks exhibited in such spaces may also promote the discussion of particular discourses. My other research questions ask whether the funding provided to contemporary art is achieving the aims it is designed to, and whether this is having unintended effects. This is a more difficult question to answer, and one that requires an 'embedded' perspective.

The Art System

My arguments above have focused on the sites in which artworks are 'exhibited', whether this be in a private home, an artist's studio, or a gallery show, because it is through such sites that art may be expected to 'do work'. These sites, however, do not exist in isolation. They form nodes in a large and distributed 'art system', and can only be fully understood in relation to it. Accordingly, my methodology makes much use of a model of the art system, which is shown as Fig. 7. This model is based on that proposed by van Maanen in *How to Study Art Worlds* (van Maanen 2009). In this work, he discusses a succession of scholars who have attempted to explain the structure of the art world. Starting with Danto's definition of the term in 1964 (Danto 1964), van Maanen traces the ways in which this concept has been worked with by Dickie (1997), Becker (1984), Bourdieu (1984), Latour (2005), and Heinich (Heinich 2012; as summarised in Danko 2008), before proposing his own model (van Maanen 2009: 12). Following van Maanen (2009), my own model of the art system splits this system into four functions: production, distribution, reception, and external support. It is not proposed that this model is able to capture all of the complexities of the art sphere: firstly, the model suggests a static approximation of a dynamic social system; second, it implies a division between roles that may not be the case in reality, in which artists also write articles, and curators also form part of audiences.

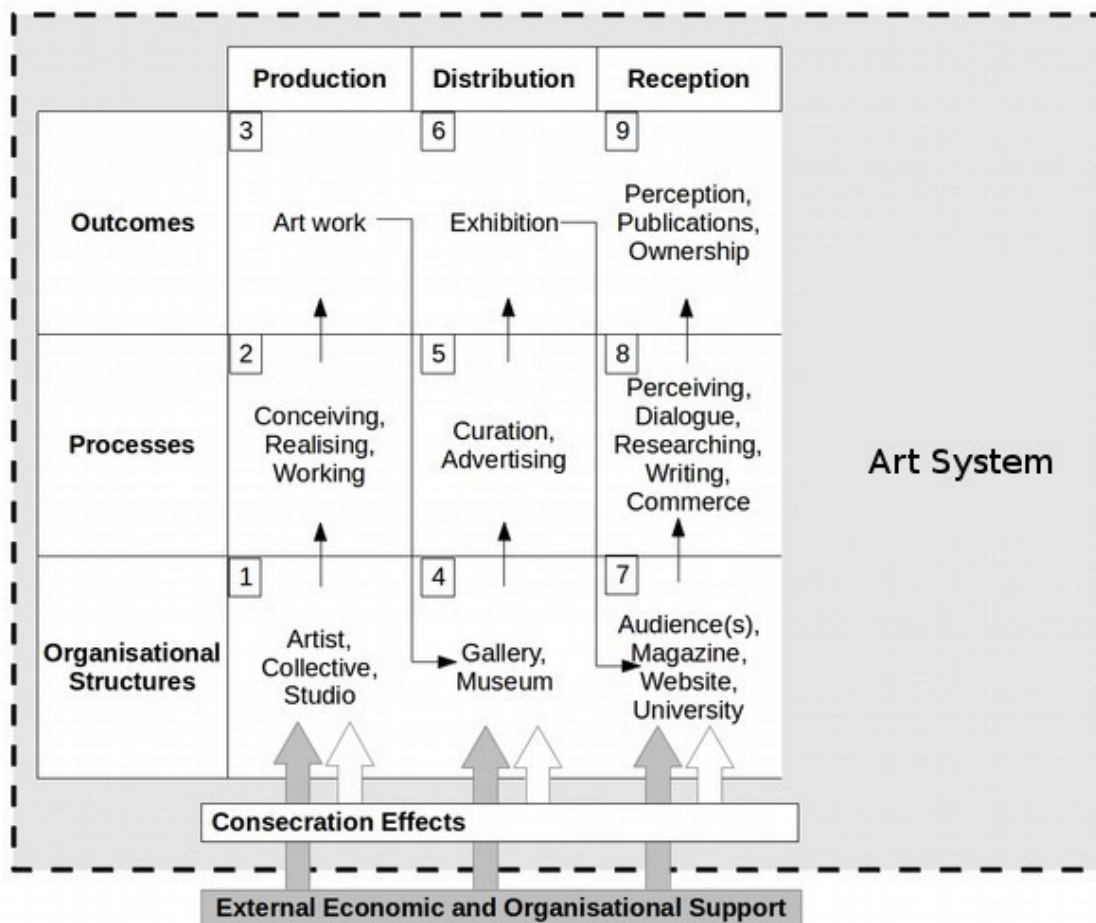


Fig. 7: Model of the Art System, after van Maanen (2009)

These sites are linked by the movement of artworks. Referring to Fig. 7, I envisage works of art moving through nine sites of varying character from their point of conception to their eventual critical appraisal. These sites are numbered from (1) to (9), starting at the bottom-left of the diagram, moving up each column in turn, and finishing at top-right. The sites are grouped along two axes to account for their varied nature. Horizontally, they are grouped into fields of production, distribution, and reception, denoting more-or-less separable functions of the system. Vertically, these sites are separated into categories which denote pre-requisite structures for the operation of the art system, the processes undertaken within it, and the outcomes of these processes, labeled organizational structures, processes, and outcomes, respectively. A particularly important aspect of this model is the series of arrows that appear toward the bottom of the diagram, labeled 'consecration effects' and 'external economic and organizational support'. This support is not, in itself, a new phenomenon in the art system: patrons, nation states, companies, and religious institutions have all provided support to the arts. However, in the present context these arrows

represent the process of international organizations instrumentalizing contemporary art by providing various forms of support to it. Though this support could be provided at any level of the art system, and indeed to any process, in the majority of cases in post-conflict BiH it has been provided primarily to the processes, organizational structures, and outcomes involved in the distribution category: that is, primarily to galleries, museums, and exhibitions. The close proximity of these arrows to those labeled ‘consecration effects’ is also significant, because it stresses the close relationship between these two processes. It is through providing support to galleries and similar organizations that international organizations may open public space, and therefore achieve one of the primary motivations in using contemporary art as instrument: the strengthening of the public sphere. However, artworks passing through such exhibitions are also ‘consecrated’, in Bourdieu’s terms (1984), or ‘singularized’, in Kopytoff’s (1986): afforded visibility and status within both the art system and the broader public sphere.

Livelihood and Labor

At this point, it is also worth noting that many scholars of the art system have argued that one of its defining characteristics is the way in which it bars entry to those without the necessary skills, values, or social capital, and drawn attention to the way that it contributes to the process of social and class reproduction. Indeed, for Bourdieu, this is one of the primary ‘functions’ of the art system and of many of the processes through which it operates. Seen in this mode, the barriers of entry into the art system, whether monetary or social, ensure that those involved with it, after paying this ‘entry price’, have a vested interest in the continuation of the same system. In BiH, as already mentioned, this would imply that one of the primary reasons why artists continue to act as artists, and the international community continue to fund the creation of their works, is that each group is invested in the continued existence of contemporary art in the country.

While ensuring the feasibility of the art system is ultimately dependent on capital investment, for actors involved in the reproduction of the system this is only infrequently acknowledged. Instead, Bourdieu (1998) has argued that the cultural work necessary for the continuation of the system is dependent on a ‘deferred’ or ‘delayed economy’, in which the rules of entry into the system requires the short-term creation of an illusion of disinterestedness in money. ‘In the short run’, as Alacovska puts it, this means that ‘newcomers act contrary to their own economic interests, putting up with precarity (paltry pay, long unpaid hours and dismal working conditions), all the while accumulating

social and symbolic capital', in the hope that exposure, prestige and reputation will later be converted into pecuniary benefit' (Alacovska 2018: 4). This means that the art system, as I have defined it here, should not be viewed as distinct from broader processes of social reproduction in BiH today, and indeed should be seen as one of the strategies that Bosnians deploy in order to maintain their status (and employment) as artists, writers, photographers, etc. I will return to these points below, but for now my concern is to delimit my field site, and I propose that this may be done by following the artwork.

Object Biography and Following the Artwork

Defining the art system in this way also suggests a number of approaches to investigating it. These are the approaches of 'object biography', as outlined by Kopytoff (1986), and that of multi-sited ethnography, as explored by Marcus' (1995). By using these approaches it is possible to trace the path of an artwork through the art system, and explore how it is affected, and how it affects, the sites it moves through. This 'biographical' approach can be traced to Igor Kopytoff's (1986) contribution to Arjun Appadurai's (1986) book, *The Social Life of Things*. Kopytoff's premise is that since 'we have similar biographical expectations of things' as we do of people, through tracing the biography of artworks, 'the cultural response to such biographical details reveal a tangled mass of aesthetic, historical, and even political judgements, and of convictions and values that shape our attitudes to objects labeled "art"' (Kopytoff 1986: 67). For Kopytoff, objects gain their meaning through spatially and socially specific situations, because they are 'culturally constructed entities, endowed with culturally specific meanings, and classified and reclassified into culturally constituted categories' (Kopytoff 1986: 68). This means that the biography of an artwork 'becomes the story of the various singularizations of it, of classifications and reclassifications in an uncertain world of categories whose importance shifts with every minor change in context' (Kopytoff 1986: 90). In addition to providing a way to understand the ways in which artworks are both a product and contributor to social space, the concept of object biography also provides tools that are particularly useful in understanding some of the concerns that accompany the instrumentalization of art. Kopytoff points out that 'culture is a way of distinguishing between things, and maintaining some things as sacred by removing them from the category of commodity' (Kopytoff 1986: 75), and that because 'there is clearly a yearning for singularization in complex societies' (Kopytoff 1986: 80), people strive to keep some objects free from commodification. This is seen clearly in one concern about instrumentalization processes that has already been mentioned: that though art is believed to

be ‘useful’, it is feared that instrumentalizing it could accidentally lead to it becoming a mere commodity, and thereby lose its critical power.

Another value of Kopytoff’s work is that it reveals the processes by which objects move between these categories: in the words of Miller, such approaches have ‘the virtue of softening the dualistic frame in to which this debate about gifts and commodities had [previously] become lodged,’ and that therefore the ‘analysis of exchange and indeed the larger social life of things’ (D. Miller 2005) need not be blindly wedded to either. That is, that though artworks are (or can be) commodities, gifts, transcendent, or mundane, understanding them must stem ‘from below’, and from locating them in their typical (and atypical) sites of operation and exchange. In order to do this, several recent ethnographies have made use of the methodology outlined in Marcus’ (1995) *Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography*, in which objects and concepts may be followed through the ‘chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions’ (1995: 105) which connect them. Using this method, the ways in which the effects of artworks are transformed by different social situations can be investigated, whilst also recognizing the analytical value of seeing the artwork as a material object. Such an approach has been seen in Marcus and Myers’ edited volume *The Traffic in Art and Culture: New Approaches to a Critical Anthropology of Art* (1995), Myer’s article on the production of discourse(s) on Aboriginal contemporary art (1991), and Steiner’s (1994) *African Art in Transit*. In my own methodology, the ‘chain’ connecting various field sites is the movement of artworks.

The Artwork as Thing and Agent

‘Following the artwork’, however, does not mean just following its physical manifestation. Referring to the model of the art system above, it may be seen that the existence of the artwork pre-dates, in some senses, its realization, and there is a period between it being conceived and being made. The production of artworks involves various processes, ideas, and materials: not just the physical materials that constitute a painting or sculpture, for instance, but also ideas that may influence the artist. Further, even when the artwork is deemed ‘finished’ by the artist, it continues to be transformed by the social spaces and processes it comes into contact with. Even if a painting is destroyed, or a performance never performed again, it can remain in public consciousness through its traces in the public sphere. Indeed, an artwork being covered extensively in the press, and being discussed long after it has ceased to be displayed, might be seen as a form of success in using contemporary art to develop and affect the public sphere.

Because of this, the way in which the artwork is conceived needs to extend beyond its physical existence, and a methodology for following such artworks must take into account the way in which they are in a continual state of 'becoming'. Indeed, such a perspective may be extended to all objects. Ingold argues that rather than 'the conventional image of a network of interacting entities', 'things' should be seen in a 'meshwork of entangled lines of life, growth and movement' (Ingold 2011: 63). Seen in this way, artworks resemble Ingold's example of the stone (Ingold 2007) whose essence exists not 'merely in the mind of the observer or practitioner', but instead 'emerges through (its) involvement in its total surroundings – including you, the observer – and from the manifold ways in which it is engaged in the currents of the lifeworld' (Ingold 2007). To Ingold's 'currents' of making, drying out, etc., the process of 'instrumentalization' may usefully be appended. Thus, when encountering a work of art that has been affected by instrumentalization processes, however indirectly and however long ago, these can be regarded as one of the currents that make it a 'thing'.

Indeed, for those seeking to instrumentalize art in BiH, the fact that their influence is just one of many processes that constitute artworks may be part of the reason why contemporary art has been chosen as a instrument of social change, and why artworks are often funded indirectly. As noted in the previous chapter, one of the criticisms that has been made of instrumentalization processes is that they risk undermining the critical function, and therefore the credibility, of contemporary art itself. By funding galleries, festivals, or local NGOs, rather than individual artworks, international organizations may avoid the accusation of undue influence, in that they may claim that they are 'merely' facilitating the public display of artworks, rather than dictating their content. However, even when artworks are instrumentalized through indirect mechanisms, the process of instrumentalization is still important in constituting them as composite things. Indeed, funding an exhibition in which an artwork appears may form one of the most important factors in determining the success, interpretation, and extended life of such an artwork. In many cases the existence of an artwork in a particular space (both physical and social) can only be explained as the result of instrumentalization. This means that the effects of artworks are closely intertwined with the spaces they have been produced for, and the organizations that have attempted to instrumentalize them. In addition, one of the primary motivations for instrumentalizing the contemporary art of BiH is that this process will eventually allow the art system, the public sphere, and civil society to attain a sustainable and autonomous existence. Thus, though some artworks may not be directly affected by instrumentalization, the very existence of an audience for them may be a product of broader instrumentalization processes. If, as I argue, international organizations have become dominant

within the art system of BiH, then arguably *no* contemporary artwork is unaffected by these processes.

For international organizations, avoiding accusations of undue influence by funding exhibitions rather than individual artworks relies on the assumption that audiences will read such artworks as expressing the ‘agency’, in Gell’s terms (1998), of artists rather than the sponsoring organization itself. This is not always the case, and so the methodology I developed also included a mechanism for assessing the ascribing of agency in individual artworks. The concept of ‘Soros Modernism’ (Šuvaković 2002), where the agency of artworks has been ascribed to the international community rather than individual artists, is one way in which this has been expressed, and may be used to illustrate this aspect of my methodology. One of Gell’s central concepts is that when encountering an artwork, the viewer reads agency through it. Gell argues, in the words of Bowden, that:

When viewers of artworks respond primarily to what is depicted, rather than how it is depicted, the prototype exercises greater agency in relation to the patient than the producer of the prototype, i.e. the artist. But in situations where a viewer responds to an artwork primarily because of how it depicts something then the artist exercises greater agency than the prototype. (Bowden 2004: 311)

This idea, in which artworks act as social agents, was not new in 1998 (Layton 1991: 43; Wolff 1993: 24), and Appadurai had noted in 1986 that ‘in many historical societies, things have not been so divorced [as in contemporary Western thought] from the capacity of persons to act’ (1986: 4). The idea had also emerged in material culture studies, because, as Miller (2005) puts it, ‘we naturally tend to imagine there must have been some kind of social agency whenever we encounter an effect’, and ‘we seem to have a love of imputing agency to other persons and to things’. The concept of ‘Soros Modernism’, however, provides a useful example of how these ideas may be extended: here, Šuvaković is reading the agency of the international community into the artworks that they have instrumentalized. Even artworks that have been very indirectly instrumentalized, and are in themselves quite abstract, he claims, are often read as the expression of the international community’s agency. Whilst this process of ascribing agency might be problematic for those organizations seeking to avoid accusations of undue influence, in some cases the art they fund relies on similar processes. Specifically, the focus on ‘giving a voice’ to women and minorities through the art system of BiH, which has been a major focus of instrumentalization processes, partially relies on viewers reading art works as the collective expression of these same groups.

Inbetweenness

Thus, artworks to be followed can be seen as complex assemblages of processes, intentions, and actions: ‘things’ in Ingold’s terms. In addition, Gell’s concept of agency may be extended in order to regard an artwork as having many authors, some quite indirect, but all of whom exert agency through it. Among the processes that contribute to some artworks is instrumentalization, and in these cases international organizations (for instance) are sometimes regarded as agents. Such an approach is useful in understanding the way in which artworks produce effects within the spaces in which they are exhibited, and how they are interpreted in relation to their social surroundings. However, this approach alone is not adequate to understand the full extent of what artworks are expected to achieve in BiH. This is because the most extreme interpretation of such an ontology has the curious effect of obscuring the artwork as a material object. It becomes, in some senses, merely a cipher through which other processes may be manifested and read.

In other words, an undue focus on the artwork as a site of becoming may obscure the processes that occur around it. There is, to re-iterate, a duality involved in what instrumentalized artworks are expected to achieve in BiH: not only is the art system prized for its ability to create social space, but the artworks that appear in these spaces are expected to affect those present, and guide them toward discussion and action. Thus, in order to understand instrumentalization processes it is also necessary to understand ‘social relations in the vicinity of objects mediating social agency’ (Gell 1998: 7) and ‘the social context of art production, circulation, and reception, rather than [just] the evaluation of particular works of art’ (Gell 1998: 3). This, in turn, focuses attention back on the artwork as a material object which inhabits social space. The primary purpose of funding an exhibition of contemporary art, for instance, might be to produce a social space in which discussion is encouraged. Though the artworks exhibited in this space may guide this discussion toward particular themes, equally they may not: their value in the exhibition may be merely as decoration, or in fact merely to mark the space as an exhibition. In this conception, the possible interpretations of artworks, the way in which they have been made, and to whom their agency is ascribed, are all somewhat arbitrary. What is important, for those seeking to use such artworks to transform BiH, is that artworks form part of a system that creates social space. In this can be found an echo of Miller’s ‘humility of objects’ (1987), where objects become more powerful the less they are noticed. As such:

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The less we are aware of them the more powerfully they can determine our expectations by setting the scene and ensuring normative behavior, without being open to challenge. They determine what takes place to the extent that we are unconscious of their capacity to do so. (2005)

An artwork can gather together diplomats, for instance, and *may* be better able to do so if it makes no striking and potentially unpalatable comments. If one of the purposes of the instrumentalization of art in BiH is to create social space, it *could* be argued that this is better achieved without artworks that are too distracting: that is, artworks that are interesting enough to gather together cultural elites, but not so interesting that they derail the conversation. In reality, however, there is a constant interplay between the meanings of artworks that emerge from their social contexts, and the way in which such artworks contribute to these same contexts.

The dual nature of what is expected of instrumentalized artworks means that a dual approach to their investigation is required. The way in which artworks themselves ‘become’, and produce public comment, can be understood through an investigation of the multiple processes, movements, and decisions that constitute them, of which instrumentalization is one. Simultaneously, artworks also exist as material objects which contribute to social space. Ingold has seen a contradiction between these approaches, and has criticized some scholars for their undue focus on consumption practices, on materiality, and on what he characterizes as ‘a world of objects . . . already crystallized out from the fluxes of materials and their transformations’ (Ingold 2007). However, Basu has pointed out that there is no necessary contradiction between the approaches. He argues that Kopytoff’s (1986) earlier concept of ‘object biography’ ‘seeks to map the material and immaterial fluxes and transformations, the crystallizations and the disintegrations that Ingold alludes to’ (Basu 2007: 11). Even Ingold himself, as Basu also points out, contends that the network metaphor ‘logically entails that the elements connected are distinguished from the lines of their connection’ (quoted in Basu 2017: 11; Ingold 2011). In striking a balance between these two approaches, Basu writes about the concept of *inbetweenness*, an approach that seeks to see things as ‘not only material metaphors that evoke, express or represent ideas’ (Basu 2017: 2), but also to recognise that in many cases we approach, and analyze, objects as ‘already crystallized . . . readymades’ (Basu 2017: 12). Thus, while objects are ‘constituted by movement and mediation’ (Basu 2017: 2), they are also mediators themselves.

Thus, it is possible to see artworks as both composite ‘things’, and as unitary material objects that contribute to social interaction. In the former conception, it is the artwork that is always becoming,

and represents the coming together of innumerable strands of intent. In the second, the artwork is a material object which itself contributes to the creation of social space. Indeed, in practice it is necessary to swap between these modes of understanding, because the artwork as ‘carrier of affect’ and the artwork as ‘prop for social interaction’ continually interact. If artworks can strengthen the public sphere, the first stage in this is affecting their immediate surroundings, which in most cases means the social situation they form part of. Conversely, whilst the purpose of funding an exhibition may be the creation of social space, it is likely that artworks deemed interesting enough to attract a large audience will form part of the discussion between audience members. In practice, therefore, there is a constant oscillation between the two modes, with the artwork acting as both the product and creator of social space, and the interpretations, agency, and effect of it to be found somewhere ‘inbetween’ these modes.

Observations

The ‘thing’ to be followed and the system through which it moves thus defined, a set of observations were made that would allow me to answer my research questions. As I have explored, the primary way in which the art system may be used to achieve the international community’s goals in BiH is through the creation of (various types of) ‘exhibited’ artwork: that is, social space in which artworks are exhibited in some way, whether this be an exhibition in a gallery, a street performance, or a large monumental public sculpture. Through such spaces, individuals may be brought into contact with each other, and interaction may be promoted, perhaps guided by the artworks in their vicinity. There are therefore several types of observation that are key in investigating such sites. Firstly, an assessment of the audience in attendance was made: how many people were in attendance in such spaces, and who they were. Secondly, the topics of discussion and forms of interaction were recorded, paying particular attention to whether these aligned to the themes of the artworks displayed in such spaces. Thirdly, a more diffuse set of observations were made, aimed at coming to a deeper understanding of these spaces and exhibitions: these included the history of these spaces, what they represent to those involved in them, and their typical (and atypical) forms of use. These observations produced lengthy descriptions of an artwork’s biography, consisting of detailed fieldnotes not just on the ideas that had motivated its production, but also the various sites that it had moved through, and the reasons why it had been moved between them.

The concept of following the artwork also draws attentions to the way in which artworks move between these spaces. Indeed, many of the processes identified under the ‘processes’ row of the art

system model I have presented are designed, in various ways, to move artworks from one site to another. I have already mentioned the process of creation, for instance, which can be seen as ‘moving’ an artwork from some abstract realm of thought and ideas into existence. Curation processes are perhaps the clearest example of this process of movement, since it is through these processes that artworks move from a studio (or an artist’s bedroom, for instance) into public space. An artwork gaining press attention, also, may be seen as it moving between sites. These movements are important for a number of reasons. The way in which instrumentalization ‘works’, for the international community, is essentially to promote the movement of artworks between sites: whether encouraging artists to make work about a particular theme, sponsoring an exhibition with a specific topic, or merely providing a prominent public space in which the artwork may be exhibited and thereby gain a greater audience and press attention. Secondly, in all of these examples are implied value judgments. Whether an artwork is created or not, exhibited or not, reviewed or not, all depend on an assessment of its value, and (critically) whether the individual believes that an artwork will achieve his or her desired outcome. Practically, in terms of observations, this meant that my fieldnotes cover not only the sites an artwork moves through, but also the reasons (stated or implied) why it is moved between them. This has been a concern of other scholars who have used the methodological tool of ‘following the thing’, whether this be in the movement of artworks across international borders (Harris 2006), or within art systems themselves (Becker 1984). In this way, the biographies produced by tracing an artwork’s journey through the art system ‘becomes the story of the various singularizations of it’ (Kopytoff 1986: 90), a description which simultaneously maps the various contexts in which an artwork appears, reveals the way in which it is interpreted in each, and the way that each confers status and visibility upon it.

For many sites, such observations are relatively straightforward once one has access to the site and the people working within it (though I will return to this problem of access below). However, there is one site, in particular, in which it is very hard to make such observations: the public sphere. In some cases, most commonly in popular public exhibitions, there is an overlap between the art system and the public sphere, through which individuals commonly involved in the art system come into contact with people only infrequently exposed to it. However, the reasons for supporting such spaces rely on the artworks present guiding discussion and interaction not just within them, but also in the much wider realm of the public sphere. Assessing the extent to which they do so, however, is difficult. One way of doing so is to look at the press generated by the artwork: not just the quantity of this, but also the way in which the artwork is interpreted, and to use this as a proxy for the level

of discussion and the typical interpretation of the artwork within broader society. Whilst useful, such an approach has significant limitations. Regarding the press as a fair representation of society is questionable, and especially so in a country where it has frequently been shown to be politically biased (Reporters Without Borders 2017), and where, as I have shown, arts and culture are still commonly regarded as limited to traditional forms. A more practical issue with this approach, and at the risk of pre-empting my fieldwork findings, is that contemporary art is very infrequently covered in the mainstream press in BiH, which makes using the press as a proxy for the thoughts of ‘normal’ people essentially useless. In addition to reviewing the press, therefore, during my fieldwork I was concerned to build contacts with people not directly involved in the art system. This group of contacts acted as something of a ‘control group’: I knew, for instance, that if my neighbor (infamously unpretentious, and not interested in art) had heard of an artwork or exhibition (or even offered an interpretation of it) then this exhibition or artwork was being discussed more generally. This was the case, for instance, with the D-0 Ark Project, mentioned in Chapter 6, after which it appeared that everyone in Sarajevo was discussing the biennial.

In tracing the currents of thought and action that constitute artworks, one type was of particular importance: that of instrumentalization. Almost all of the artworks I followed were instrumentalized at some point, albeit sometimes quite indirectly. With regard to these processes, the organizations who provided funding or other support formed an additional site of investigation. This involved reviewing the aims of the organization, and the aims of particular programs, through reviewing policy documents. However, I also endeavored, where possible, to talk to those involved with the organization in order to further my understanding of their view of the purposes of such funding. Part of my own purpose in investigating these organizations was to assess the success of their attempts to use contemporary art to achieve their stated objectives, but this formed only one part of my investigation of instrumentalization processes: even if a program was designed with the narrow purpose of ‘empowering women’, for instance, the broader effects of it on the art system of BiH were traced.

In addition to these observations, I also made use of interviews. These were of two types. The first type were semi-structured, and conducted with individuals intimately connected to the artworks I was following. This included the artist, but also other members of the group that each artist (sometimes) formed a part of. I also deployed this type of interview in order to investigate and record details of the sites that some artworks passed through: the historical details I give regarding Kino Bosna in Chapter 8, for instance, were recorded in an interview with an individual who works

there. During some of these interviews, I used photographs of particular artworks or historical photographs of buildings in order to form talking points for my research subjects, a technique drawn from the work of Banks (2001: 6). In other cases, I was concerned to merely record conversations I had had with my contacts many times, in order that I could quote their words directly here. My description of Crvena in Chapter 7, for instance, is partially based on a number of interviews with key members of the group, which I conducted primarily in order to make sure that I did not misquote them by mediating our conversations through fieldnotes. The second type of interviews I conducted were with employees of international cultural agencies who are, or have, funded contemporary art in BiH. These were motivated by a concern, which proved to be justified, that I would not be able to gain ethnographic access to this group through other means. These interviews were far more structured: I used standard questions for each in order to reduce the reactivity of my subjects (DeWalt et al. 2011). These questions were designed to gather information on three topics. Firstly, I asked these individuals to describe the history of their organization's involvement in culture in BiH; I then asked them to respond to my own research questions; finally, I asked what they thought contemporary art could achieve in BiH. I hoped, through doing so, to investigate the way in which individuals in this group understood the value of funding contemporary art, and what they believed this could achieve. These interviews were of partial utility: whilst the majority of the material I collected through them mirrored the 'official line' of the organization they worked for, often during the latter half of the interview a more nuanced understanding of 'the power of art' emerged.

I also collected observations on a huge range of other topics. As part of my research into the D-0 Ark project (see chapter 6) I attended the biennial, and recorded many different observations, only some of which proved to be useful in the final analysis. I talked to people at the event, observed their social interactions, but also noted a vast range of other phenomena: the literature that was available at the event, the press that it generated, the clothes that people were wearing, the presence of several flags at the entrance, the deference shown to the army throughout, the participation of school groups, the nervousness of the culture minister, the slight rain that was falling, and (self-reflexively) my own feeling of success. In other words, the number and type of 'sites' that emerged from each artwork biography was extremely broad, and each required its own range of improvised research techniques.

Participation

When designing my methodology, I was aware that many of the sites that required investigation would be difficult to access without participation in them. This meant that my primary tool in researching the majority of sites was a form of participant-observation. The reason why participation was required in order to gain access to some sites is most clearly seen in relation to the ‘reception’ function of the art system diagram above. My preceding argument has been that spaces in which artworks are exhibited (in various ways) form the most important sites through which contemporary art can effect societal change. This means that attending exhibitions, and collecting data on them, forms an important part of methodology. This necessitates participating in such spaces as an audience member, for a number of reasons. First, it is difficult to imagine another research technique that would produce the data required: there are typically no written records produced of the attendance at such events, nor the content of the conversations had in them. Equally, conducting interviews with attendees after these events risks distorting this data, if it is recalled at all. Secondly, an important element of the way that artworks are designed to ‘work’, in such spaces, is that they generate discussion between friends, colleagues, and others. Observing these conversations without being part of them (aside from being ethically questionable) is extremely difficult. Beyond exhibitions, there are also other sites to which access is difficult without participation. One of the important sites for the ‘production’ function, for instance, is an artist’s studio, which are not typically public, and to which long-term access is difficult to arrange without being an artist, and also working in the space oneself. Being an artist, or at least a cultural producer, in such spaces allows one to ‘disappear’, as Davies puts it, by participating as fully as possible (2012a): as a participant in them, one’s role as an ethnographer is typically forgotten, and this allows a greater level of detail to be observed. The same point may be made about the sites involved in the ‘distribution’ function, which are often galleries. Observing a curator choosing works for an exhibition may provide data on the works chosen, but participating in this process may reveal why they were chosen.

Accordingly, the methodology I deployed incorporated three forms of participation in the art system of BiH. These can be understood in reference to the model outlined above. In order to ensure that I captured as broad a range of the processes taking place within the art sphere of BiH as possible, I endeavored to participate in this sphere in three major ways: as part of the production, distribution, and reception of artworks.

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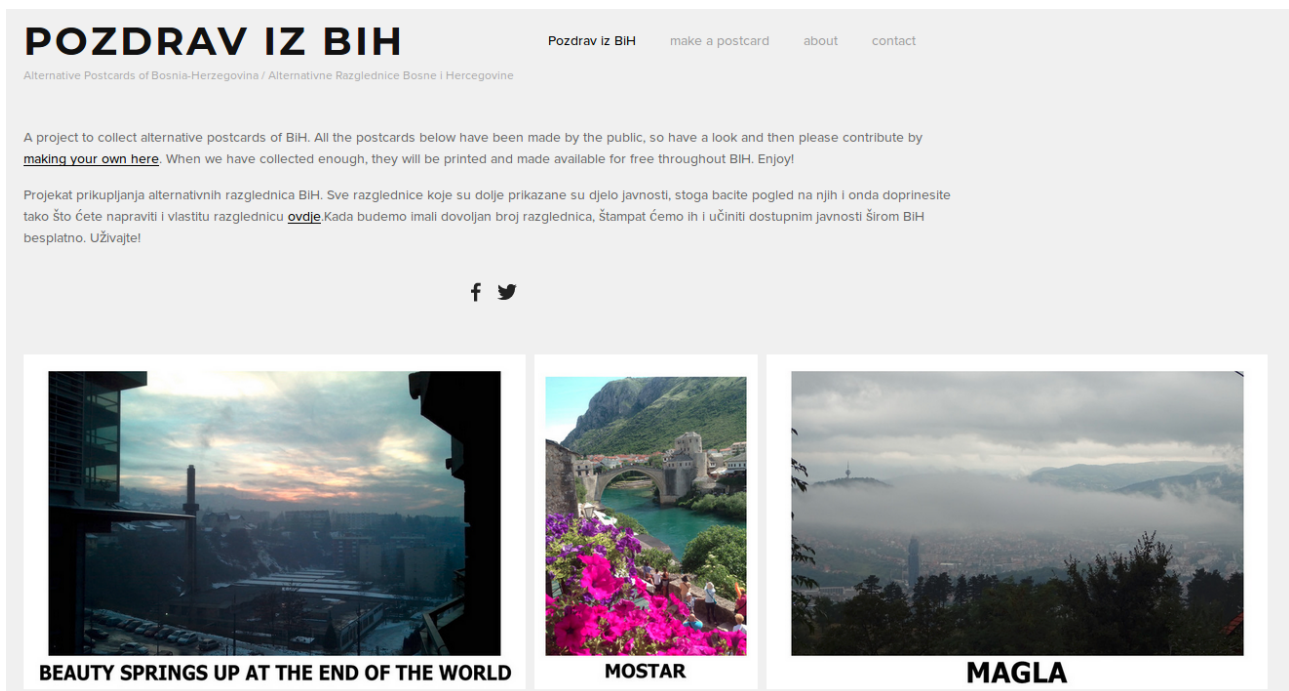


Fig. 8: Screenshot of Pozdrav iz BiH, a contemporary art project I undertook during my fieldwork. The postcards toward the bottom of the image have been created by participants in the project

My participation as an artist involved me producing my own work, but also working alongside artists. I often worked within the 'Crvena house' described in Chapter 7, for instance, alongside other members of the group. More generally, during my fieldwork period I build close friendships with artists and other cultural producers who became an invaluable source of information and support, not just in my artistic practice but also in my research work. I was also active in producing my own artwork during my fieldwork period. I produced many artworks, but three are notable for the way they informed my broader ethnographic practice. The first is that I developed significantly as a photographer during this period, and learned how to develop and print my own photographic films for the first time. This part of my practice ultimately led to a few of my photographs being displayed in a joint exhibition at BlackBox, a photography studio and workshop in Sarajevo. A second artistic project was much more conceptual. I conceived of and implemented a project called *Pozdrav iz BiH* ('Greetings from BiH': now archived at <http://pozdravizbih.com/>, Fig. 8), which I will discuss below. Lastly, I experimented with artistic ways of mapping my ethnographic data. My cARTography project sought to allow me to visualize the movement of artworks through the art sphere, and to identify patterns in this data which I would otherwise have missed. This project used publicly available mapping tools to geographically locate the sites and movements of artworks, and present these as 'flows' through the city of Sarajevo, BiH, and further afield. This project remained

imperfect throughout my fieldwork, due to the difficulty of incorporating the more abstract elements of my data into it. Nevertheless, it provided some important insights: notably, it helped to re-focus my attention on sites I had disregarded (such as the print shop where many artists did their printing) as sites of artistic production.

Alongside this role as a cultural producer, I also participated in distribution processes, working as a volunteer for several galleries. These roles involved, for instance, the preparations for a number of exhibitions: first for Dejan Slavuljica's exhibition *B1* at *Collegium Artisticum* and then Nela Hasanbegović's exhibition *Self-Replication* at *Duplex* gallery. Further, I was involved with the organization of the *Sarajevo Art Fair*, held in May 2015, which constituted one of the biggest arts event to have happened in Sarajevo post-war. This was a less formal role, as by the end of my fieldwork period I was essentially helping friends to set up exhibitions.

In order to investigate the third area of the art sphere, reception processes, I worked as an arts journalist during my fieldwork. I began by publishing articles for *Sarajevo Culture Bureau*, an English-language arts and culture website. I then began a long and fruitful relationship with *Balkanist* magazine. This engagement began with me writing articles on art in BiH, but rapidly expanded. By March 2015 I had become arts and culture editor for the magazine, and was dispatching myself and others to cover arts events throughout the former Yugoslavia. Through this journalistic engagement, I arranged interviews with artists, curators and gallery owners. Though the primary purpose of these interviews was to collect material for articles, they also had great value for my ethnographic research.

In addition to this planned participation in the art system of BiH, I also participated in many sites that were not directly linked to the artworks I was following. I lived in BiH as someone interested in contemporary art for a year, and made many friends with the same interests over that period. I attended countless exhibitions, and traveled widely throughout the country and the region in order to attend cultural and other events. In some senses, this engagement was an 'accidental' one, in that I did not plan it as part of my formal research design, despite the fact that it was always going to be an inevitable and important part of my fieldwork. It is possible, nevertheless, to locate this 'role' within my broader methodological framework, even to the extent that it is seen in the model discussed above, as the 'audience' role.

Extended Participation

Beyond affording access to particular sites, participation in the art system also had other benefits in terms of my fieldwork. In particular, I utilized the production of artworks in order to explore the way in which the art system of BiH functions, and to gain access to groups who I would not otherwise have met. This work draws on that of Schneider (Schneider et al. 2006; Schneider et al. 2010; Schneider 2008), in particular, I endeavored to explore ‘new strategies of visual representation’ (2008: 171), how the production of art could be used as a research technique, and how my research could inform my artistic practice. This is seen most clearly in my *Pozdrav iz BiH* project (archived at pozdravizbih.org). Drawing on the theoretical concepts of relationality, this project was a mass-participation piece. Individuals could submit pictures and text to a website, and I implemented a system that would automatically use these elements to produce postcards. I collected these on a central page, and promoted the project through various channels. Towards the end of the project in July 2015, I printed a large number of these postcards, and put them in cafes and art galleries around the city. This project was an attempt to elicit a form of commentary from my research subjects on perceptions of BiH, and specifically the way in which the country is represented internationally. Schneider (2008) notes that since *Writing Culture* (Clifford et al. 2010a) anthropologists have experimented with novel ways of writing ethnography, but that visual accounts have not received a similar level of experimentation. The new experiments that resulted from *Writing Culture*, he argues:

Remained largely confined to writing. As Rothenberg and Rothenberg write: ‘[T]he visual side (hand and eye) of ethnopoetics has generally been ignored in favor of the oral side (mouth and ear)’ (1983: 139), while Marcus observes: ‘By the mid-1990s, I had just about given up hope that the aesthetic issues that were implicated in the so-called Writing Culture critique of anthropology during the 1980s would be developed by anthropologists themselves’ (2006: 95). (Schneider, 2008, 172)

The *prozdrav iz BiH* project was therefore an attempt to open a public forum through which my research subjects could produce their own visual account of the ways in which they thought BiH *should* be represented to the outside world. By constructing the project around the concept of the ‘alternative postcard’, I hoped to elicit reflection (and perhaps subversion) on the way in which BiH is typically represented: the postcards one can buy in Sarajevo, for instance, typically show 19th Century Ottoman buildings, or sometimes the destruction caused by the War, an unusual form of kitsch that is the subject of much derision. The project can therefore be seen as an extreme form of

Schneider's 'soft focus', in which my own agency is limited to framing a mechanism for the production of images rather than dictating the content of this account (2008).

In addition, the form of participant-observation I deployed allowed a self-reflexive element to inform my fieldwork. Unlike some other authors (Davies 2012b), I do not deploy these directly in my writing. Rather, the way in which I used this self-reflexivity was to raise my reflections on my own practice with friends, and to confirm the truth (or otherwise) of my perception with them. An example of this is that in applying for funding to sustain *Balkanist* magazine, I was struck by how often this process involved 'going for a drink' with a member of the organization one was applying to, and my own discomfort at doing so. Though arising from self-reflection, this observation was later confirmed by my research subjects, who perhaps would not have volunteered this information otherwise. I am aware, however, that in such cases my own contribution to the production of knowledge implies that the ethnographic material I present here was partially (or entirely) co-produced between myself and my research subjects. Whilst a long-standing source of debate in anthropology, in the present context these processes of co-production are particularly visible, and specifically in the interpretations of artworks which I give in my ethnographic chapters. These interpretations, as would be expected, were necessarily developed in conversations with my research subjects, and it is difficult to separate my own contribution to them from those which would have arisen had I not been present. Without wishing to re-iterate the long literature on subjectivity in participant observation, I would note here that my own negotiation of this potential problem involved the forms of participation I have outlined above: though difficult to assess, I feel that during such conversations I was perceived as an artist or journalist, rather than an ethnographer. This said, during my fieldwork there were instances in which I directly affected the art system I was studying, whether this was through choosing works for exhibition in collaboration with galleries, or writing about a particular piece or exhibition for *Balkanist*: that is, I collected some artwork biographies on which I had a direct affect. My negotiation of this difficulty is based, essentially, on the omission of such biographies from the present work: whilst writing up, I excluded any artworks that I felt I had directly affected.

Limitations

The application of this methodology produced an unusual form of data: lengthy descriptions of an artworks' journey from conception to eventual reception. Occasionally, this data included notes on conversations with artists during which they were forming the ideas that would eventually be

realized in artworks. In these cases I was able to follow the artwork through all stages of its biography. However, in many cases I encountered the artwork in the process of being made, or even already in the process of being displayed. In these cases, reconstruction of prior stages of the artwork's existence was necessary, and in order to do this I supplemented embedded observation with other techniques: reviewing literature and policy documents, but also conversations, and conducting the informal and semi-structured interviews I have described. A good example of this process is the way in which I approached the *Ars Aevi* project, which began (and was instrumentalized) long before my presence in BiH. Though the UNESCO funding for the project was one of the most important instances of post-conflict funding in BiH, and would indirectly lead to the installation of *La Place Drapeaux*, I had direct ethnographic access to just one portion of the piece's biography: the way in which it was interpreted between 2013 and 2018. In describing the biography of this piece before 2013, therefore, I rely on secondary sources or people's self-reported memories. In addition, though many of my contacts in BiH discuss the piece often, and readily offer interpretations of the way (commonly) in which it represents the Bosnian state, my access to people outside the art system is somewhat limited.

Secondly, the quality and detail of the data I collected varied between artwork biographies, and indeed within particular biographies themselves. The sheer number of artworks I followed, and the number of sites an individual artwork may pass through, meant that not it was not possible to investigate every site to the same level of detail. This is also an assumption made in the texts I have mentioned above, which implicitly assume that an exhaustive understanding of each site is impossible. Kopytoff, when referring to object biographies, notes that such biographies must always be partial, and only take account of particular themes and processes (Kopytoff 1986: 68). This concern is also explored by Marcus (1998) in *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin*, where he notes that this kind of research produces descriptions of varying levels of detail from 'thin' to 'thick'. Consequently, the different sites I describe in the coming chapters are subject to different levels of observation and analysis. Specifically, my focus on the materiality of artworks meant that the sites most connected with them as physical objects, such as studios and exhibitions, came to form the 'thickest' descriptions, and the artworks for which I have the 'thickest' descriptions are, in general, those I discuss in Chapters 6 - 8.

Re-assembly

Though I have described the elements of my methodology here as they are needed to answer my research questions, in sum this methodology amounts to an ethnographic investigation into an art system that makes particular use of participant-observation. Thus, the present work is indebted to similar ethnographies in several ways. I draw on ethnographic fieldwork that has been done in BiH: Bringa (1995) for the pre-war period, Maček (2009) for Sarajevo during the Siege, and the work of Jansen (2006) in the post-conflict period. I also draw on a number of scholars, already mentioned, who have investigated art worlds, and those who have used the methodology of ‘following the thing’. Lastly, my focus on the movement of artworks across boundaries means that my work is in dialog with a series of scholars who have looked at ‘traveling objects’, right back to Levi-Strauss (1983).

The type of data that this methodology produces ‘automatically’ suggests a form and structure for presentation: a chronologically linear description of the biography of particular artworks. Accordingly, in each of the following three chapters I will present the biography of a particular artwork. Each of these descriptions is presented as a series of sites that the artwork in question moved through, but also focuses on the processes that facilitated and motivated its movement between them. In some cases, such as Chapter 6, the artwork is created near the beginning of my description, and so its biography focuses on the ways in which it circulates through the art system. In others, such as in Chapter 7, the physical existence of the artwork itself occupies a rather small part of its biography, since it is the product of many processes, and many other projects, that its creation was contingent upon. In presenting these biographies, given the concerns about my own complicity in their interpretation I have outlined, I have also endeavored to separate this interpretation, and that of others, from the bulk of the description presented. Whilst I do not regard this method of writing as a full ‘experiment’ in the vein of *Writing Culture* (Clifford et al. 2010b) it shares some similarities with the forms of creative writing reviewed there: specifically, my concern has been to remove exposition from the artwork biographies I have presented, and allow the answers to my research questions to arise from them. In practice, this means that each chapter first presents a lengthy description of an artwork’s biography, making few references to either my own interpretation or secondary literature, followed by an interpretive section in which I put the issues arising from the biography into dialogue with my broader concerns: the way in which the instrumentalization encountered by these artworks is an expression of broader paradigms; what the

biography reveals about the operation of the art system of BiH and the effects that instrumentalization have had on it; and finally an analysis of each artwork's biography in terms of the characteristics I have outlined in Chapter 4.

The number of biographies I was able to produce (17) meant that, in my later analysis of them, it was possible to produce an approximation of the relative importance of various sites in the art system of BiH. As expected, there were some sites (notably Duplex, a gallery, and BlackBox, a printer) through which many different artwork biographies passed. In re-assembling this data into the chapters presented here, I have therefore selected biographies that include as many such sites as possible. My selection of the biographies presented has also been driven by a number of other factors. Primarily, in presenting a selective portion of my data, I have endeavored to choose artwork biographies that are indicative of the themes and findings that emerged from a much larger set of data. Further, I have been concerned to present as broad a range as possible of the political discourses, types of artworks, and methods of instrumentalization as possible. Each of the artworks chosen are also of different types, from public sculpture to performative works, and though each artwork exhibits a number of the affordances of artworks I have described in Chapter 4, each is particularly useful in illustrating one of them. Each chapter also contains a broader overview of the social and political issues raised by both the objective and the artwork, and mention of other artworks. In choosing artworks that best illustrate particular themes, I am aware that none of the artworks I have chosen are 'typical' or 'average'. It is debatable whether there is such a thing, in any case. Rather, the artworks presented here are those that are best suited to 'think through' broader issues, which both move through and around the artwork, and are themselves constituted by such things as artworks.

My primary purpose in developing this methodology was to provide answers to my research questions. The first of these asks why the international community funded art in post-conflict BiH. I have suggested a working hypothesis in answer to this question, in which contemporary art has certain characteristics that mean it is perceived as being able to afford particular outcomes. The methodology I have set out can be used to interrogate this hypothesis further, in two ways. The first is that, through interviews and other interactions with employees of international organizations, their perception of what the funding of contemporary art affords may be ascertained, and compared with my theoretical model. Secondly, it may be that some of these affordances are false, in that contemporary art may not be able to produce the outcomes that it is perceived to. By investigating the instrumentalization of contemporary art 'on the ground', as it is manifest in specific exhibitions

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and through specific artworks, this may be assessed. This assessment, to a degree, also provides answers to my second research question, which inquires as to the effects of the instrumentalization of art in post-conflict BiH. I have outlined the effects that this instrumentalization is designed to produce: among them are the strengthening of civil society, and the promotion of such discourses as inclusion and reconciliation. However, as will be seen, using art as an instrument also gives rise to a number of other effects, and these will be described both in my conclusion and during the artwork biographies that form the bulk of the following three chapters.

Chapter 6: *And what else did you see? – I couldn't see everything!* (2010-2012), Radenko Milak

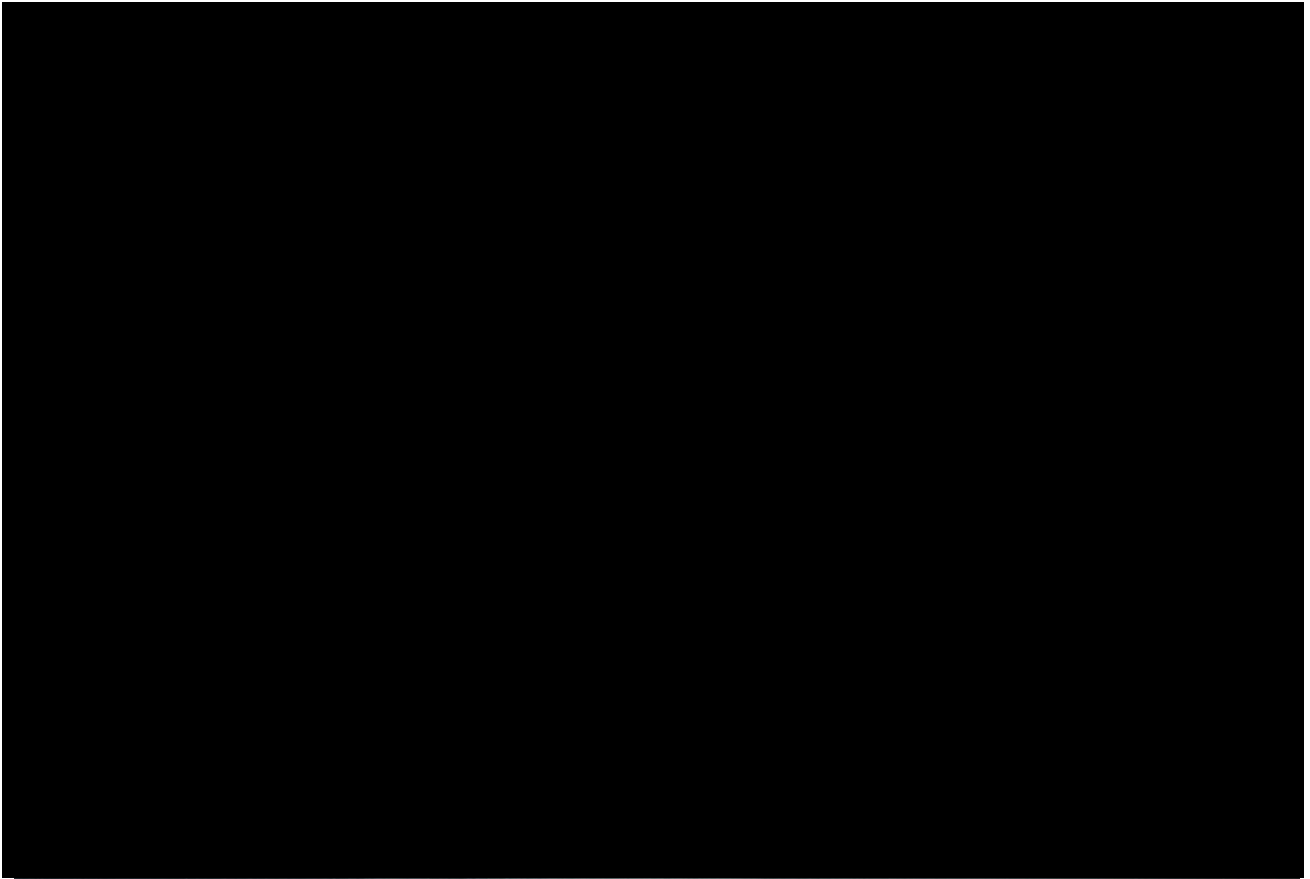


Fig. 9: And what else did you see? – I couldn't see everything! detail (2010-2012), Radenko Milak, oil painting on canvas, 40x60cm (credit: Radenko Milak)

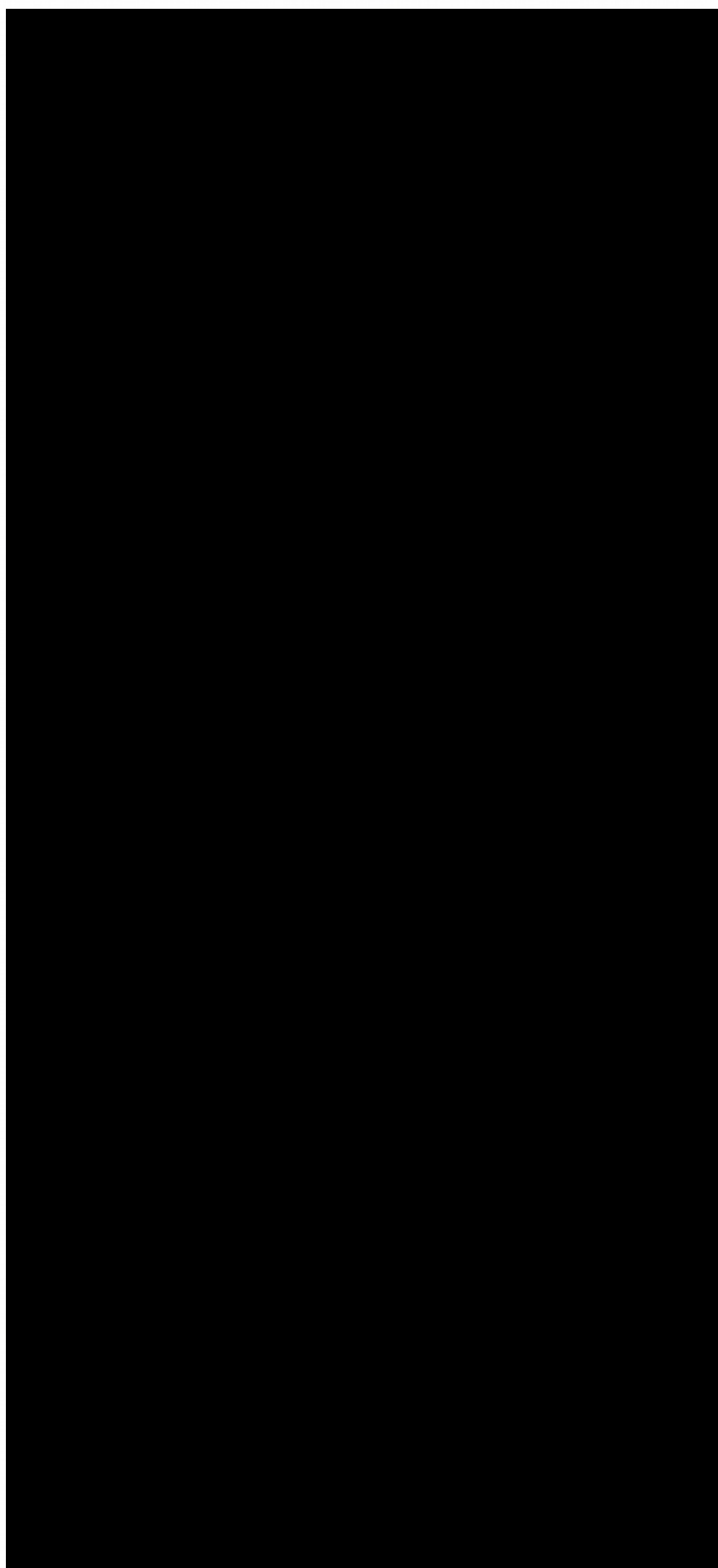


Fig. 10: And what else did you see? – I couldn't see everything! (2010-2012), Radenko Milak, 24 oil paintings on canvas, each 40x60cm (credit: Radenko Milak)

Introduction

This is the first of three chapters in which I will use the biography of a particular artwork to explore the aims, mechanisms, and effects of the instrumentalization of contemporary art in BiH. The artwork biography presented here is that of Radenko Milak's *And what else did you see? – I couldn't see everything!* (2010, hereafter *And what else did you see?*, Fig. 9, Fig. 10). The artwork consists of a series of paintings, all of which are 'copies' of a press photograph taken during the Bosnian War. I first encountered this piece as part of my engagement with Duplex 100m², a gallery run by Pierre Courtin and funded since 2008 by the Agnes B. Foundation. During 2014, the piece was exhibited by Pierre in several places: at a number of art fairs, and also as part of a group exhibition in Paris entitled *Memory Lane*. The creation of the artwork predates my fieldwork period, however, and it was displayed several times before I came into contact with it. The piece was created over a two year period between 2010 and 2012, during which Radenko's participation in the Spaport Biennial, a project funded by the international community, was key in its conception. It was then exhibited as part of the D-0 Ark Project, an art biennial situated in an abandoned nuclear bunker, in 2011, before an exhibition at the Muzej Savremene Umetnosti (Museum of Contemporary Art) in Belgrade, Serbia. These exhibitions contributed to the piece, and to Radenko himself, attaining a relatively large degree of public attention. As part of my fieldwork, I was able to achieve a significant level of engagement with the D-0 Ark project, albeit for the 2015 biennial rather than that in which *And what else did you see?* was displayed. Accordingly, the artwork biography I present below draws on ethnographic engagement with this site, albeit at a time when Radenko's artwork had already been removed from it. I had more direct access to the artwork from October 2014, and therefore the portion of the biography that deals with this period draws directly on ethnographic engagement with the sites the artwork passed through at that time.

Almost all of the exhibitions and projects associated with *And what else did you see?* received support and funding from international organizations. This funding was provided through a variety of mechanisms, and in pursuit of a variety of objectives. Similarly, the artwork itself was understood and used in subtly different ways in each location. More specifically, each curator who included the artwork in an exhibition did so according to a unique set of criteria. The artwork biography I present here is, therefore, 'the story of the various singularizations of it', in Kopytoff's (1986, 90) terms: it pays particular attention to the way in which the value of the artwork was understood in a series of different sites and contexts. This analysis suggests that the reasons why the artwork is valued are significantly different for each actor it has come into contact with. For

Radenko, the piece possesses a historical and (perhaps) a cathartic value. For Dimitrijević, who curated the D-0 Ark exhibition and that at the MSU in Belgrade, it is valuable for its ability to interrogate the recent past. For its later curators, both in BiH and elsewhere, the artwork represents an authentic voice from a post-conflict society. More problematically, for these later actors the piece also fulfills an expectation of what post-war Bosnian art 'should' deal with: the war.

Production

And what else did you see? consists of 24 oil paintings on canvas. These have sometimes been displayed as a 4x6 grid, and sometimes in a single line. Each painting is a copy of a photograph which shows a Bosnian Serb soldier in the act of kicking a Muslim woman, who lies prone on the ground (Fig. 11). The photograph was taken by photojournalist Ron Haviv in 1992, in Bijeljina. It was published in several newspapers, and subsequently re-published in the book *Blood & Honey: A Balkan War Journal* (Sudetic 2000).



Fig. 11: Haviv's photograph, from *Blood & Honey: A Balkan War Journal* (Sudetic 2000).

This photograph has become one of the most reproduced and recognizable images of the Bosnian War. It has been used not only to illustrate the brutality of the conflict, and the violence against civilians that formed part of it, but also to reflect on the role of war photography, and images of violence more generally, in contemporary Western society. Sontag, for instance, used the image in her book *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2013) in order to question whether images like Haviv's, rather than informing their audience about the brutality of war, merely fulfilled some latent and voyeuristic desire for images of violence. 'In fact', she wrote, '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' (2013: 81). The title of Radenko's piece is purportedly a quote from an interview with Haviv conducted shortly after he took the photograph. The source was a Serbian newspaper, but Radenko has indicated that he remains unconvinced of its veracity (interview with Radenko Milak, 10th October 2015). Nonetheless, the title points to an important aspect of *And what else did you see?*: neither Haviv nor Radenko are claiming that this singular image can completely represent everything that happened in the Bosnian War. The title of the work, therefore, whether in a quote by Haviv or as re-used by Radenko, indicates that although it is possible to make work about the war, such accounts must always remain partial, in both senses of the word. Thus, though *And what else did you see?* consists of 24 'copies' of Haviv's photograph, Radenko refers to each individual painting as an 'original'. This is partially because a closer inspection of the piece reveals each painting to be subtly different. In each, Radenko has used painterly techniques to obscure or foreground particular aspects of the scene, so that in some it is the soldier who becomes the focus of the painting, in others the woman lying on the ground, and in some a second soldier, looking away from the incident and out of the frame, becomes the focal point (interview with Radenko Milak, 10th October 2015). The technique used in *And what else did you see?*, in which press photographs are reproduced as paintings, has become something of a signature of Radenko's work: he has produced similar images of Ratko Mladic's trial at the ICTY (*Body Language* (2012)), and in another piece (365 (2013)) has given the same treatment to a wider variety of media images.

Radenko produced *And what else did you see?* over a two-year period between 2010 and 2012. He traces the inspiration for the work, partially, to a biennial project he was involved in at that time. Specifically, the Spaport Biennial was a project that took place between 2008 and 2010, and was funded by the Swiss Cultural Programme, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry of Civil Affairs, the City of Banja Luka, and the

Robert Bosch Stiftung. Radenko was involved in this project both as a participant and as the director of the Protok Center for Visual Communication, founded in 2005 with ‘the goal of promoting visual arts that provide an alternative and complement to the existing local institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina’ (E-flux 2009), and which organized the biennial. The conceptual themes these biennials dealt with were relatively familiar, but the way in which they were organized was not. Conceptually, the Spaport project initially sought to address broad ‘questions of complicity, collaboration, solidarity, the articulation of trauma, the politics of language, the politics of memory and the politicization of art in opposition to the culturalization of politics’ (Bago et al. 2010a). In 2010, however, a second part of the project was conceived, named *Exposures*, which ‘focused exclusively on the post-Yugoslav context, gathering a community of artists, thinkers, writers and activists around a set of difficult, post-traumatic and “transitional” (i.e. unresolved) questions’ (Bago et al. 2010b). Though *And what else did you see?* was not exhibited during the biennial project, Radenko traces many of the ideas that inspired its creation to the conversations he had as part of his involvement with it. Indeed, it seems that collaboration and discussion were more important, for those organizing the festival, than the creation or display of contemporary art, despite ‘the public's expectations raised by dubbing the project a biennial’. The idea, in the words of one curator, was that “art” as a material product is secondary to the processes of political subjectivization, and articulation of the relations between everyone who had been and yet was to become part of the process’ (Robert Bosch Stiftung n.d.). Though many artistic projects in post-conflict BiH claim that their value lies in the opportunity for discussion and exchange, the Spaport biennials took this idea to its logical extreme, and even to the extent that it sought to subvert and invert the concept of a biennial in itself. As such, the curators of the project:

decided to replace the one-time spectacular “biennial” event with a temporal subversion of the format, turning it into a slow, two-year project, gradually constructing and restructuring an unstable community gathered in various phases of its realization. (Bago & Majača 2010)

This ‘unstable community’ consciously sought to include participants from both Bosnian entities, and contributors from all the countries of the former Yugoslavia. As such, the title of the second part of the biennial, *Exposures*, pointed to the ‘necessity’, at least as the funders and participants had it, of ‘exposure, most importantly, to each other’ (Robert Bosch Stiftung n.d.).

Radenko’s personal motivations in producing the artwork are somewhat ambiguous. He has been quoted a number of times as saying that he undertook the continual re-painting of Haviv’s image as

a form of catharsis, and several curators and cultural critics have identified this element in the piece. Dunja Blažević has noted that producing *And what else did you see?* represented a 'form of catharsis' (Krempel 2013), and Dimitrijević has called the paintings a 'masochistic series' (Dimitrijević 2010) designed to perform a 'painting exorcism' (Dimitrijević 2012). In our discussions, however, Radenko has been reticent to apply this description to the piece, noting that Haviv's photograph is not his memory, at least not directly. Rather, he has talked of the artwork more as an exploration of the ideas that arose during the Spaport Biennial. He acknowledges, however, that there is a personal meaning to the artwork, but speaks of this as being more reflective of 'desensitization' than therapy: the continual re-painting of the image is an analog of the number of times that he has been exposed to Haviv's photograph and similar images, and both seeing it and painting it means that one becomes so desensitized to such images that they lose any emotional power (interview with Radenko Milak, 10th October 2015). Radenko, I would add, shares this concern with many of those I worked with in BiH, who feel that the violence they experienced during the war has left them unable to be shocked by explicit images, whether encountered in art or elsewhere, and that often their lack of response to such images is confused with a completed healing process (interview with Amir Redžić, August 2nd 2015).

D-0 Ark

The importance of art exhibitions (and specifically biennials) in creating public space was also part of the stated aims of the first exhibition in which *And what else did you see?* was exhibited: the D-0 Ark Project (Fig. 12). This project was led by Edo Hozić, who had served as culture minister for Yugoslav BiH. *And what else did you see?* formed part of the inaugural biennial in 2011. Since then, there have been two further biennials, and I was closely involved in the third and most recent edition, which took place in 2015. The biennial is an unusual one in several respects, perhaps the most striking being that it takes place in an abandoned nuclear bunker. Built to shelter the upper echelons of the Yugoslav government in the event of a nuclear war, the bunker is built into a hillside in Konjic, a small city in Herzegovina, and was codenamed 'D-0 Ark', after which the biennial project is named. The bunker was the most expensive project undertaken by the Yugoslav state, costing more than US \$4.6 billion, and could accommodate 350 members of the Yugoslav political elite and soldiers within a hermetically sealed environment. Despite the enormous cost of the project, its existence was a closely guarded secret, known to only six people until the fall of the Yugoslav state in 1991 (Project D-0 Ark 2015: 8). For many years after the Bosnian war, the bunker

was guarded and maintained by the Bosnian army, and visitors were barred from the site. The decision to convene a contemporary art biennial inside the bunker was partially motivated by a desire to preserve the building as example of cultural heritage, 'to somehow preserve the bunker, and by putting artworks inside we can create an even more interesting space' (Brownell 2011), in the words of Hozić. Organizing the biennial, and opening up the bunker as a 'composite museum of military history and contemporary art' which would be 'the most expensive museum ever built' (interview with Edo Hozić, 22nd September 2015) was a long and complicated process, Hozić explained to me, requiring more than 500 meetings with municipal, entity, and federal government, the Ministry of Defence, the European Union, and multiple international agencies. In applying for funding for the D-0 Ark Project, Hozić was conscious to explain the purposes of the project in terms of the international community's objectives in BiH. The fact that the bunker was a relic of conflict meant that one such theme suggested itself immediately: that of reconciliation. As a result, many of the artworks presented in the first edition of the project were explicitly focused on the conflicts of the 1990s in Yugoslavia (Project D-0 Ark 2015). Hozić believes that this was critical in securing international funding for the project, as were the political connections he had built up by serving as culture minister for Yugoslav BiH.



Fig. 12: And what else did you see? As displayed in the D-0 Ark Project, 2011

In addition to exhibiting artworks that dealt with conflict, through being used as the site of the biennial, the symbolic power of the bunker itself was also expected to contribute to reconciliation processes. For Hozić, the fact that the bunker had been built during the Cold War by a united Yugoslavia means that it is (or can become) both an icon of unity, and a way of informing discussions about the recent conflicts by putting them into a broader context. The value of the bunker, Hozić explained to me in 2015, is that it allows audiences to see the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s as an (unfortunate) part of the closing stages of the Cold War (interview with Edo Hozić, 22nd September 2015). Conceptually, he argued, this has two benefits. To some degree, it undermines a still-common perception of unique Balkan brutality, and allows citizens of the former Yugoslavia to see the eruption of violence in their countries as partially driven by ‘forces outside their control’. In addition, by framing discussions of these recent conflicts within global contexts, the re-purposed bunker is an attempt to acknowledge that these wars had a significant international component: they were ‘wars of foreign aggression’, in Hozić’s words; ‘new wars’ in Kaldor’s (Kaldor 2006). Accordingly, each D-0 Ark Biennial has explicitly sought to include works not only from all the

countries of the former Yugoslavia, but also works that deal with the aftermath of conflict in a variety of other countries: Germany, in particular, but also Turkey and Albania (Project D-0 Ark 2015). Related to this is Hozić's decision to seek funding for the project from a wide variety of national governments and other organizations, a huge number of which have contributed to the project: the 2015 edition of the biennial, for instance, had 28 organizations and ministries supporting it, from the NATO HQ in Sarajevo to local galleries from Split, Croatia. The fact that the bunker was constructed by Yugoslavia, and therefore partially by the now-independent states of Serbia and Croatia (among others), as well as the explicit decision to involve these countries in funding the biennial, is undoubtedly one of the reasons why the project has been successful. The bunker can be seen, in Hozić's view, as Yugoslav heritage, rather than the heritage of a particular ethnic group, and therefore has a particular value in facilitating inter-ethnic reconciliation. He means, by this, that the fact that the bunker was built by a unified Yugoslavia (and indeed, by an army that had been carefully designed to be multi-ethnic) allows it to be seen as an example of genuinely shared cultural heritage between BiH, Serbia, Croatia, and the other ex-Yugoslav republics. Further, the funding of D-0 Ark, sourced from many different organizations from many different countries, he explains, has become an 'metaphor' of both the Bosnian War and also ongoing discussions about what BiH should be in the post-War period, both of which have involved a variety of international actors (interview with Edo Hozić, 22nd September 2015). The D-0 Ark project is also a good illustration of the close link, suggested in an earlier chapter, between cultural heritage and funding for contemporary art projects. It is clear, at least for Hozić, Dimitrijević, and several of the international funders, that the value of the biennial project lies, at least partially, in the fact that the bunker represents a shared Yugoslav cultural heritage. I have argued that the process through which contemporary art came to be seen as a 'useful' form of culture for the international community stemmed from an earlier discourse on the value of monumental cultural heritage. Given this, the D-0 Ark project may be seen as representing both extremes of the definition of culture used by the international community: on the one hand, the bunker is a huge example of tangible, built, monumental cultural heritage, but inside it there is a biennial project which is the 'sign of 'heritage' being sustained and the sign of a particular culture being renewed for and into the future' (Stone et al. 2008: 291).

The more specific objectives of D-0 Ark have broadened in recent years, with Hozić explaining to me that 'one has to change descriptions of the project to fit international priorities' (interview with Edo Hozić, 22nd September 2015). Specifically, there has been an increasing focus on

'multiculturalism' in the years since the project was first convened, though (as Hozić explained to me) the project has always been informed by this discourse, and justifying it in these terms makes little difference to the way it operates. However, for the year that *And what else did you see?* was displayed, 2011, the curation of the biennial was explicitly focused on reconciliation. The curatorial statement for that year, written by Dimitrijević, casts the bunker as a 'time machine' that 'inspires us to travel into the past as much as into the future', and uses the hermetically sealed space of the bunker to reflect on the (im)possibility of communication following abrupt rupture (Project D-0 Ark 2015: 14). This communication, Dimitrijević writes, can be rejuvenated by art that uses modes of 'inter-subjective production', creating meaning and content in dialog with audiences (Project D-0 Ark 2015: 14). In this context, Dimitrijević's choice of *And what else did you see?* relies on the piece's ability to spark and facilitate discussion, which itself is expected to contribute to reconciliation processes: to guide audiences towards the kind of 'memory work' that is presumed to be able to build shared narratives.

In characterizing the reception of *And what else did you see?*, as it was presented during the 2011 D-0 Ark Biennial, I face a difficulty: I was not there. That said, from discussions with people who had attended that iteration of the biennial, it has become apparent that the social characteristics of the exhibition, and specifically the type of people in attendance, has stayed relatively static over the past three exhibitions. A description of the 2015 edition may be taken, therefore, as indicative of the 2011 version. Before describing the Biennial itself, however, it is worth noting that outside the one day (every two years) when the biennial takes place, the bunker is extremely difficult to access. Doing so requires negotiation with military authorities and a party size of at least ten people. During the Biennial itself these restrictions are relaxed, although there remain many military guards even at this time. The most striking feature of the audience for the biennial is its bivalent character: the vast majority of those in attendance are either members of various political organizations, or people loosely associated with the art system of Sarajevo. The large number of funding organizations means that it attracts employees of these organizations, and several local politicians (of some prominence) were also in attendance. Indeed, ensuring the attendance of this latter group was an important concern for Hozić in organizing the 2015 Biennial (Hozić 2014). Invitations were sent to many politicians and diplomats, and a lavish meal was organized as part of the event. The other group in attendance were artists, writers, and others who were largely known to me from other galleries and organizations in Sarajevo. It is clear, in fact, that the Biennial is an important way for these two groups to meet, with several of my contacts noting that attending the biennial was an

effective way of meeting employees of international organizations to whom they might one day be applying for funding.

Participation in the D-0 Ark project has several clear advantages for artists. One of the more surprising ones is that the bunker is one of the best places to conserve works of art in BiH. Contemporary art museums, Hozić explained to me, 'spend millions of Euros on systems for controlling their environment ... [but] the bunker already has this' (interview with Edo Hozić, 22nd September 2015), albeit one designed to keep a government alive in the event of nuclear war rather than the preservation of artworks. In addition, the biennial achieves a high degree of public prominence each time it is convened, and among younger artists it is therefore regarded as a good way of ensuring that their work reaches a broad audience. This was certainly the case for *And what else did you see?*, the relative success of which Radenko ascribes partially to his participation in the D-0 Ark project (interview with Radenko Milak, 10th October 2015). Indeed, it was one of the most covered pieces from the 2011 biennial, with the NY Times using the piece as an illustration of the project (Brownell 2011). On the other hand, participation in the project presents some difficulties for artists. Primarily, the fact that it is very difficult for members of the public to gain access to the bunker outside of the Biennial means that several of my informants were understandably hesitant to leave their work 'locked away underground', where only a few people would see it once every two years. Indeed, there is a common and somewhat poetic perception of the bunker as a 'tomb' or 'mausoleum', in which both the dead body of Yugoslav optimism and archived artworks are forever preserved. Further, the charisma of the bunker itself has a tendency to overshadow the artworks placed inside it: many people come away from the biennial feeling that they had paid more attention to the bunker than to the artworks. Many of the artists included in the biennials have attempted to work around this 'problem' by producing site-specific artworks, which has the dual advantage of allowing such works to 'work with' their environment rather than being dominated by it, but also means that the artist in question need not leave a valuable piece that could be displayed elsewhere 'entombed' in the bunker.

In terms of the specific interpretations given to *And what else did you see?* when it was displayed in the bunker in 2011, I must rely on discussions with those who saw it at that time. What is interesting about these interpretations is that they tend to be focused on the way in which the artwork interrogates the assumptions of the reconciliation process itself. That is, it is generally seen as being a comment on reconciliation, rather than part of the process. It is in this regard that the sophistication of *And what else did you see?* becomes apparent. Displaying multiple images of a

Bosnian Serb soldier kicking a defenseless Muslim woman, in another context, could be regarded as an accusation against the soldier, or against the army or state he is part of. In reality, to my knowledge nobody who has seen the piece interprets it in this way. Indeed, Sontag's interpretation of Haviv's original photograph equally holds for Radenko's piece: like the photograph that inspired it, these paintings don't tell us very much about what went on during the war, except that it was 'hell' (Sontag 2013: 81). For Sontag, this undermines the value of such images as reportage, which in her analysis come to represent a Western desire to consume images of violence. However, several people who I discussed the piece with pointed out that this very simplicity is what makes it a valuable tool in prompting memory work: that although the image only tells us that war is hell, this is, at least, something on which everyone in BiH can agree, and that can therefore form a genuinely mutual starting point for discussion. For Dimitrijević, who curated several of the exhibitions in which the piece appeared, this is one of its great strengths, because it locates the artwork 'within the entire process of mediation between natural vision and cultural vision ... the second one being the one created in a collective unconsciousness of beholders' (2010). The value of *And what else did you see?*, in this regard, is that it directly questions the seeming necessity to build collective narratives of the war. For Bojan Stojčić, a young artist, for instance, the piece represented the fact that everyone has a different memory of the conflict 'inside their head', and that the differences between Radenko's paintings represented the differences between these private memories: largely the same, but with a different focus for everyone (interview with Bojan Stojčić, 12th May 2015). Thus, in this interpretation the piece works in two directions at once. It presents a fact that everyone can agree on, whilst also acknowledging the differences between individual memories, and suggests that the very multiplicity of these memories is their value.

Leaving the Bunker

Following the exhibition of *And what else did you see?* in the D-0 Ark biennial, the piece was removed from the bunker. It has been unusual in this respect. The majority of artworks that have been displayed as part of the D-0 Ark project have remained in position since they were first installed as part of one of the three biennials. As a result, the bunker is slowly filling with artworks, and currently Hozić envisages that the biennial project will stop when the space is full. The immediate reasons for Radenko removing his piece from the bunker are clear enough: he wanted to display the piece elsewhere. However, this decision also illustrates something of the contradictory nature of the project. Whilst D-0 Ark is seen by many young artists as a powerful tool in achieving

public prominence, many are also reticent to have their work locked away, and largely hidden from public view, outside of the bi-annual opening of the bunker.

Following its removal from the bunker, *And what else did you see?* has been displayed at least five times. Each of these exhibitions took place outside BiH, all were funded by the international community to some degree, and the way in which the piece's interpretation changed in these later exhibitions is striking. When displayed in BiH, the piece has been largely interpreted as a reflection of the fragmentary nature of memory in the country, or as a reflection on the process of reconciliation itself. In exhibitions outside the country, another aspect of the piece has been foregrounded: the role of the media in reproducing, and perhaps exploiting, images of the Bosnian War. Instead of facilitating memory work, in these latter exhibitions the piece has been valued more because it is seen as 'symbolic not only as a representation of a surplus of violence, but of a surplus of enjoyment in the violent act ... [and] about a perceptual empathy, of how we are inculcated and habituated by images, and how we get addicted to them', in the words of Dimitrijević (2010). This has always been a possible interpretation of the piece, but for audiences with no direct memory of the Bosnian War it was necessarily the aspect of it that was stressed. Indeed, such a division in interpretation is visible even in the coverage the piece was given whilst in the bunker, with foreign coverage focusing on the way that it 'questions the power of the news media and asks what responsibility a journalist has when bearing witness to the horrors of war' (Brownell 2011), while the local press used the piece to reflect on Radenko's own memories of the war.



Fig. 13: *And what else did you see?* as displayed at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, 2012

The first exhibition that *And what else did you see?* appeared in after the D-0 Ark biennial took place at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade from 21st February 2012 (Fig. 13). In this context, *And what else did you see?* was partially read as a comment on the role of the media during the Bosnian War. This was because Haviv's photograph has itself been the subject of some controversy in Serbia, where many had claimed that it was staged, or depicted a Muslim soldier in the process of kicking a Bosnian Serb civilian (Dimitrijević 2012). An exhibition of Haviv's photographs in 2002 was 'violently prevented' in several Serbian cities. Though the veracity of the photograph, and the fact that the soldier depicted was a Bosnian Serb, was later verified in public testimony, the curator for the exhibition (again, Dimitrijević) noted that even in 2012 'many are still inclined to believe that the photograph is a fake or that the soldier just "awkwardly jumped onto the sidewalk"' (Dimitrijević 2012). Indeed, for Dimitrijević the value of *And what else did you see?* lay exactly in the fact that it re-visited this controversy, because it was only through such processes as Radenko's 'painting exorcism' that such disagreements could be resolved. It was thus 'an intervention that is directly provocative in the local political debates and social typecasts in Bosnia

and Serbia,' but also one that showed Milak's self-questioning and 'self-positioning ... when the chains of attributed identity are at stake [and] domineering' (Dimitrijević 2010).

Four months later, *And what else did you see?* was then included in a large exhibition in the Haus Der Kunst in Munich. The exhibition *Image Counter Image* took place between 10th June and 16th September 2012, and was supported by the Goethe Institute. It aimed to present 'artistic positions that focus on the critical analysis of violent conflicts in the media' (Haus der Kunst 2012). In this context, the value of *And what else did you see?* was seen as the way that it illustrated broader processes of the circulation of images in wartime. Connections were therefore drawn between Radenko's repainting of the photograph and the way that totalitarian states have doctored images for political purposes, and on the way that works like *And what else did you see?* revealed the way in which images of violence are circulated, such that the works in the exhibition sought to 'slow down', 'obscure', or 'interrupt ... the normal operation of image circulation' (Geimar 2012: in German, my translation). Most strikingly, the curator of the exhibition, Leon Krempel, drew attention to the complicity of the viewer in consuming such images, as denoted by Radenko's focus on the soldiers who are looking outside the frame of the photograph. 'Figures in paintings gazing at something outside the pictorial field have a long tradition', Krempel wrote, 'and imply that the viewer is also party to the events in the painting, be it as observer or accomplice' (2013). Thus, the value of the work in Munich was less about reconciliation and its contribution to memory work, and more about the way the media reproduces images such as Haviv's, and was partially valued for the way that it implicated the audience in the image depicted.

Duplex 100m²

And what else did you see? was also exhibited in a number of other exhibitions between 2012 and 2014. These were the consequence of Radenko's engagement with Duplex 100m² Gallery, and its curator Pierre Courtin, who curated several shows over this period which included the piece. The way in which, and the locations in, the artwork was exhibited by Pierre are important for the artwork's biography after 2012. Indeed, the Duplex Gallery is important for a number of pieces I discuss in the present work, will appear several times in the artwork biographies I present, and is very important for the functioning of the Sarajevan (and Bosnian) art system more generally. Therefore, before describing the way in which *And what else did you see?* was displayed as part of Duplex exhibitions, I will here give some background detail on the history and the character of the

gallery, not least because these are well illustrated by the way in which Pierre worked with Radenko's piece.

Duplex 100m² is actually the second version of Duplex Gallery. Pierre founded the first iteration of the gallery, duplex 10m², in 2002, 'as a joke', 'late at night and a bit drunk in Kino Bosna', as he puts it. The name of the gallery was partially inspired by the dimensions of the first space it inhabited: little more than a glass box in a dilapidated shopping center in central Sarajevo, of which the floor space was a little under 10m². Despite this space limitation, or perhaps because of it, the gallery quickly became an important part of the art system of Sarajevo. Many respected artists exhibited works in the space, and the limitations imposed by its small size meant that many unusual site-specific works were installed. Until 2004, the gallery was sustained by Pierre's savings, and occasional grants from the French Embassy, who after this date decided to fund the gallery on an ongoing basis. Alongside Duplex, the French Embassy also supported a French cultural center and library in the city, which had a extensive program of cultural events, workshops, and French lessons. This cultural center also received funding from the Agnes B. Foundation, set up by Agnes B., the French fashion designer. Agnes as Pierre puts it, 'had long had a personal connection to Sarajevo' (interview with Pierre Courtin, 27th September 2015). The Foundation had been critical in funding the Sarajevo Film Festival after 1995, and Agnes herself visited the city often.

In 2008, Pierre received notification that the French Embassy would cease their support for Duplex 10m². The primary aim of the Embassy has always been to promote French culture and language, and since Pierre's curation of the gallery had focused on young Bosnian artists, they felt that this was no longer justifiable. During the 2008 Sarajevo Film Festival, Pierre met the director of the Agnes B. Foundation in Sarajevo, and explained that he would soon have to shut the gallery down and move back to France. The director arranged a meeting with Agnes, first in Duplex 10m² and then in Paris, after which she agreed to fund the gallery on an ongoing basis. In a familiar turn of phrase, Pierre said to me in 2015 that the idea was to support the gallery as a 'tool' in Sarajevo. The terms of this support are relatively simple: Pierre receives an annual payment, and is free to decide how to use it, as long as it fits within the aims of the Foundation in Sarajevo, which are the 'creation of a public space devoted to arts and culture' (Agnes B. Foundation 2009). 'There is a lot of trust involved', Pierre told me in 2015, because the Foundation have no oversight of the program. Following this agreement, Pierre moved the gallery to a large apartment in central Sarajevo. The 'new' space consists of five rooms, and is almost exactly ten times the size of the previous incarnation of Duplex, and thus Pierre renamed the gallery Duplex 100m². Pierre has used the

funding from the Agnes B. Foundation, every year since 2008, largely to pay the rent for this space. 'They pay for the walls', in the words of Pierre, 'and we do the rest' (interview with Pierre Courtin, 27th September 2015), but this security is very important for the operation of the gallery. It means that, even if Pierre 'makes mistakes', in his words, the gallery will remain free from monetary problems. Pierre's own intention with the gallery is to support young Bosnian artists, and fully 80% of the program of Duplex is made up of Bosnian work, he estimates. Further, he sees his own role as forming a link between a community of Bosnian artists and the 'international art world'. 'I just do the packaging', he told me in 2015, and has never charged artists to use the space for exhibitions and other events, though the lack of such spaces in Sarajevo means that he receives, he estimates, three applications a week for exhibitions. Besides the funding from the Agnes B. Foundation, Duplex is also supported through a number of other means. The cost of hanging exhibitions is often met by sponsorship from the international community for specific exhibitions, for instance, so over the past ten years Duplex has received funding from a huge variety of funders. In addition, Pierre sells artworks to support the gallery, himself, and his family. Selling artworks in Sarajevo is difficult for a number of reasons, which I will return to below, and therefore the majority of sales come through two mechanisms. One is participation in international art fairs, which I will come back to. The other is through Pierre's connection with Agnes B., who has a large private art collection (and which is run as an entirely separate entity from the Foundation). Every six months, Pierre sends details of works, typically by Bosnian artists, as suggested additions to this collection, and over the years Agnes has bought 'many, many' Bosnian artworks, as Pierre puts it, although on the specific number he refuses to be drawn.

Analyzing Duplex 100m² as a social space exhibits some of the same ambiguities that will arise throughout the present work. Nominally, the gallery is a completely public space, and open to all. However, at most times the only indication that it exists is a small flag hung from the balcony. The door is marked neither with the name of the gallery nor even the building number, and access to the gallery requires that one use the intercom to talk to Pierre, who is almost always present during the erratic opening hours. The office, kitchen, and lounge areas occupy a large portion of two of the exhibition rooms, and as such less than half of the exhibition space is commonly set up in a traditional 'white cube' format. Seeing an exhibition, outside of opening events, is typically a social experience even for the casual visitor, invariably involving coffee and a talk with Pierre and the changing cast of two artists who are almost invariably present. For all these reasons, the gallery does not feel like a public space so much as a private club for artists. Nevertheless, Duplex is

arguably the most important gallery, and perhaps the most important space, in the art system of Sarajevo, if not BiH. Most of the important artists of the last ten years have exhibited in the gallery. Attendance at exhibition openings is generally limited by how many people can fit into the space, and these openings attract a diverse group of people: students, journalists, politicians, artists, and many other groups. Pierre himself has attained a level of local celebrity, even among those not otherwise engaged in art, and the gallery is covered in the local press far more than any other gallery in Sarajevo or BiH. Perhaps the strongest indication of the importance that Duplex has attained in recent years despite, or perhaps because of, the problems that other galleries and organizations face, is the fact that it hosted the Zvono award between 2012 and 2014. The prize is the most prestigious award for young artists in BiH, is named after an 1980s avant-garde group from Sarajevo. The Zvono prize has a complex history. It was first given in 2006 as an initiative of the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art (SCCA) in collaboration with the Foundation for Civil Society and the Trust for Mutual Understanding (both from New York, USA). The prize is the Bosnian variant of the Jindřich Chalupecký Award, which was established by Václav Havel and a group of artists in Czechoslovakia in 1990. Their goal was to create an award that would recognize artists under 35, and expose them to the international art scene. Since that date, the Chalupecký Award model has been replicated throughout the region. For the past several years, the prize has been a residency in the United States, consisting of a six-week stay in New York with a studio at the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) for each of the winning artists. The Foundation for a Civil Society administers the residencies and the Trust for Mutual Understanding has been their dedicated founder since the beginning of the Chalupecký Award. In each participating country, the Award is named after an artist or group who made 'an important contribution to the development in the field of modern or contemporary art' (Duplex Gallery 2014a), and has been 'supported (sporadically) by the Ministries for culture in BiH and the French, Spanish and German Embassies in BiH' (Duplex Gallery 2014b). Until 2011, the prize had been administered by the SCCA, with the exhibition held at the Umjetnička galerija Bosne i Hercegovine (National Gallery of BiH, itself rebuilt with funding from the SCF). However, the OSF stopped funding the SCCA in 2011, and as such the SCCA could no longer afford to put on the exhibition at the National Gallery, which at that time was charging €500 per day to rent their exhibition space. Dunja Blažević, director of the SCCA, therefore approached Pierre to propose that the prize exhibition take place in Duplex 100m². For Pierre, as he told me in 2015, 'it was a dream', and he immediately agreed to host the exhibition for free. Most variants of the prize across Eastern Europe are hosted by National

Galleries far larger than Duplex, and Pierre therefore saw this suggestion as recognition of the importance that Duplex had attained. Indeed, at the 2014 Zvono Award exhibition a long discussion arose among the artists and audience present about whether, with the hosting of the Zvono award, Duplex 100m² was now, in fact, the national gallery of BiH. The consensus, it appeared, was that it was, but the irony of a national prize for Bosnian artists being hosted by a French curator supported by French funding was not lost on those present.

Art Fairs and the Art Market

This rather lengthy description of Duplex is offered by way of describing the moment when I first came into contact with *And what else did you see?:* hanging on the wall of Pierre's 'office' (actually a corner of one of the exhibition rooms) during the Zvono prize exhibition in 2014. In a conversation with Pierre that evening, he explained that he was 'looking after' the piece, and had displayed it in several art fairs outside BiH: one in Stockholm in 2012, and one in Paris in 2013. The reasons why Pierre chose to take Radenko's piece to these fairs is indicative of a number of issues: a tension that characterizes the work of Pierre through Duplex, but also the types of Bosnian art which international audience are receptive to.

Pierre, under the auspices of Duplex gallery, regularly participates in art fairs outside BiH. Doing so is an important way of sustaining the gallery: even though the rent for the space in Sarajevo is met by the Agnes B. Foundation, the gallery requires funds for its ongoing activities. These are provided, mainly, by the sale of artworks outside BiH. The fact that the vast majority of these sales take place outside BiH is a consequence, as Pierre and others often note, of a complete lack of an art market in BiH. As a consequence, the work of Duplex is split into two streams. The program of the gallery in Sarajevo 'is more like a cultural center than a commercial gallery', as Pierre puts it. Given the total absence of an art market, Pierre sees little point in curating shows that are primarily, or even nominally, focused on selling artworks. Though the lack of an art market is a constant source of complaint from artists in Sarajevo, it is also sometimes talked about in positive terms, in that it allows artists and galleries a certain level of 'freedom' that would not be present if they were forced to focus on saleable works. 'If I had a gallery in Paris', as Pierre puts it, 'I would need to have some nice paintings', in order to be able to pay the rent (interview with Pierre Courtin, 27th September 2015). Without an art market, and with the gallery supported by the Agnes B. Foundation, Duplex is therefore free to convene unusual exhibitions which include large installations, performance work, and video work: artworks which are very hard to sell in any

gallery. The complement of the Duplex program in Sarajevo are the art fairs that Pierre takes part in. These two streams of work are not completely separate, and indeed the innovative program that Pierre curates in Sarajevo has helped him to get into art fairs. However, in direct contrast to the program he curates in Sarajevo, as he puts it, the art fairs are 'very simple: the idea is to sell art' (interview with Pierre Courtin, 27th September 2015). As a result, the collections that Pierre selects for these exhibitions are completely different from the type of work presented in the gallery in Sarajevo. Not that his approach to these exhibitions is just to take works that are likely to sell. Instead, he is concerned to present a selection of works that will achieve three objectives: present a fair representation of Bosnian art; catch the eye of the collectors attending the art fair; and some works that are likely to sell. There is often a tension between the first two categories and the last, as is well represented by *And what else did you see?*

Pierre became interested in displaying the piece at art fairs after seeing it in the D-0 Ark Project in 2011, and approached Radenko shortly after with the idea of doing so. He felt, he explained, that the artwork would be a good fit for art fairs because the piece not only represents an 'authentically Bosnian' artwork, but also that the violence depicted in the piece makes it very striking. Duplex is almost always the only Bosnian gallery represented at art fairs, Pierre has explained to me, and audiences have an expectation of what Bosnian artworks should be. In short, international audiences respond well to artworks that deal with the Bosnian War, and to a lesser extent to works that deal with the politics of transition. Thus, one of Pierre's primary reasons for taking Radenko's piece to these fairs was because it deals, albeit in a complex way, with the war. It therefore fulfilled audience expectations, and was therefore likely to generate interest. At the same time, Pierre was aware even at this time that the chances of selling the work were quite small. Audiences 'love the piece', as Pierre puts it, but they don't necessarily want such a violent image 'on their house wall' (interview with Pierre Courtin, 27th September 2015). The response to the piece, as both Radenko and Pierre have told me, confirmed these expectations: whilst it was one of the most commented upon works at the two art fairs it was displayed in between 2012 and 2014, it did not sell.

Memory Lane

Following these art fairs, *And what else did you see?* was then exhibited as part of a large group exhibition, *Memory Lane*, at the Galerie du Jour Agnes B. gallery in Paris in June 2014. This exhibition was also curated by Pierre, and in some senses represented a review of the work of the

Agnes B. Foundation, through Duplex Gallery, in Sarajevo. The purpose of the exhibition was also, in Pierre's terms, to represent the breadth of contemporary art in BiH. The exhibition represented, according to Blackwood, an art critic and teacher who was very active in Sarajevo at that time, the most significant exhibition of contemporary Bosnian work outside the country in the post-conflict period (Blackwood 2015a), and care was taken to include works that showed both the deep political engagement of art in BiH and the artistic sophistication of their work. Accordingly, one reviewer noted, perhaps slightly patronizingly, that though 'an exhibition of this sort may risk diluting its message through a didactic and activism approach. Nevertheless ... there is a shadow of worldwide contemporary art trends' (Shcherbakova 2014). That the theme of the show was 'memory' was telling, and reflected the dual concerns of the exhibition. One was to show the prominence of the theme of memory in post-conflict Bosnian art. The other was that Pierre was aware, as are many artists, that audiences in Paris 'expect a contemporary art show from BiH to be about the war' (interview with Pierre Courtin, 27th September 2015). However, there were also certain themes of the show that were somewhat hidden from those not involved in the Sarajevo art scene. One theme of the show, at least for those involved in Duplex, were memories of a different type: those of the work undertaken by Pierre, through the Duplex Gallery, in Sarajevo during the last 15 years. In this sense, it represented memories of the Sarajevo art scene of the immediate post-conflict period, and tentatively suggested that this scene was passing. In this context, Blackwood has written that the exhibition also represented something of a crossroads for Bosnian contemporary art: it stood for the end of the period where organizations like Agnes B. provided support to young artists in BiH, and the beginning of one where artists would be forced to find different sources of support (Blackwood 2015a). These were not, however, the interpretations given to the exhibition by the local audience. For them, the value of the exhibition, and of *And what else did you see?* was two-fold. One was that the piece represented a process of therapy: that by producing art, artists from BiH could express the terrible things they went through in the war. The second was that the exhibition, and Radenko's piece in particular, was a reflection on the failure of France to intervene during the Bosnian War, an accusation towards the French people. In this latter sense, the exhibition was a way for a French audience to reflect on their own actions, rather than a way for Bosnians to achieve reconciliation.

Though *And what else did you see?* has been displayed many times since 2014, I will end this biography with one further exhibition, notably in a prestigious solo exhibition in 2014 at the Priska Pasquer Gallery in Cologne. That such a prestigious show was offered to Radenko was a consequence of a number of factors: not only the relative success that the piece had achieved, but

also a professional relationship between Pierre and the curator of this second gallery. This kind of relationship, in which a commercial gallery like Duplex permits a second such as Priska Pasquer to put on an exhibition of an artist that one of them represents, is extremely rare. Pierre, however, has such agreements with a number of galleries throughout Europe, and unlike almost all other commercial galleries allows the artists he represents to exhibit elsewhere. The reasons for this are, again, to be found in the almost complete lack of an art market in BiH, and the fact that one of Pierre's primary concerns is to facilitate the development of younger artists from the country. Without detailing every further instance in which the piece was exhibited, it is clear that the contexts in which it was now being exhibited were quite different from those it had been produced in, and it was valued for a different set of reasons. As part of the Spaport Biennial, and as exhibited in the D-0 Ark Biennial, the piece could reasonably be expected to facilitate reconciliation and memory work. In Cologne, Paris, or Munich, the piece was valued for a different set of attributes: the way in which it highlighted 'the mechanisms by which our historical and cultural memory is formed in the media age,' in the words of Krempel, the curator at the Priska Pasquer Gallery (2015). That is, the value of the work in these contexts was less to contribute to processes of collective memory formation, and more to reflect on the problematic responsibility of the West in reproducing images of violence in general, and the Bosnian War in particular.

Interpretation

This review of the biography of *And What Else Did You See?* reveals a number of key features of the aims, mechanisms, and effects of the instrumentalization of art in post-conflict BiH. Firstly, it is notable that almost all of the exhibitions and other spaces through which the artwork has passed have been supported, directly or otherwise, by the international community. The project during which the piece was conceived, the Spaport biennial, was made possible by the support of numerous international organizations. The D-0 Ark project has attracted the support of a vast number of international and domestic organizations. The exhibition in the Haus Der Kunst was supported by the Goethe Institut. Duplex gallery, which played an important part in the piece's later biography, is also supported by an international charitable foundation, alongside a large number of smaller grants. Further, in the aims of all these projects may be found a manifestation of the aims of the international community in funding contemporary art in BiH. In each project, from the Spaport Biennial to Duplex gallery, the purpose of this funding has been designed to sustain social spaces in which contemporary political and social issues may be discussed. The Spaport biennial, in

particular, took this as almost the sole purpose of the project, to the extent that the artworks produced, discussed, and displayed as part of the it were viewed almost as a by-product of the primary focus of the project, which was to 'expose' participants to each other. Like the Spaport project, the D-0 Ark project was also primarily conceived of as a social and physical space that would facilitate discussion, and specifically discussion on reconciliation processes. The value of *And What Else Did You See?* in these contexts, therefore, is best understood as a guide or catalyst to produce the kind of 'memory work' deemed useful in achieving reconciliation. The aims, for the Agnes B. Foundation, of using Pierre as a 'tool' in Sarajevo are less well defined: the Foundation limits its stated mission to the production of cultural space, and the relationship between the Foundation and Pierre indicates that beyond this the Foundation are happy to leave the activities of the gallery undetermined. The flexibility that this gives Pierre, however, means that the gallery is able to convene exhibitions that deal with a huge range of themes, and has undoubtedly been one of the reasons why Duplex has attained such importance in the art system of BiH.

As such, many of the spaces which *And What Else Did You See?* passed through in the early part of its biography can be seen as examples of what the international community is trying to achieve in BiH: the production of public spaces which are valued for their ability to contribute to specific discourses, as in the case of the bunker, or merely to produce critical comment more generally, in the case of Duplex. However, the funding provided to these spaces is also designed to achieve a broader goal: the 'strengthening of civil society'. Whether the spaces that *And What Else Did You See?* has passed through contribute to this aim is a little more difficult to ascertain. In line with my methodology, however, this question can be approached through three means: characterizing the spaces through which the artwork passed, assessing the extent to which it (and the spaces it moved through) generated press, and looking at the impact of these in society as a whole. The spaces through which *And What Else Did You See?* passed have a somewhat ambiguous relationship to the public sphere. Whilst all three of those that I had direct ethnographic access to (the Bunker, Duplex, and the Memory Lane exhibition) are theoretically 'public', in the sense that they are open to all, the audiences in attendance at them suggest that this is not realized in practice. The D-0 Ark Project, as I have written, attracts a strikingly bivalent audience composed of the cultural elite and diplomats of various types. Duplex attracts a much wider audience, and the Memory Lane exhibition, as far as I was able to characterize this, also did, but in any case this lies outside my scope because it happened in France. In the case of the Bunker, this limited audience may be explained in reference to a number of factors: the way in which the event was advertised, and the physical difficulty of

getting to the site, limits attendance to those with a personal interest in the biennial (artists, for instance) and those for whom transportation is provided (as in the case of politicians). Explaining why Duplex attracts such a broad audience is more difficult. Certainly, the quality of the program that Pierre curates, as I have written above, is a big factor in this respect. Curiously, however, part of the reason this program is so varied and ambitious is because of Pierre's relative freedom from concerns that characterize the work of most commercial galleries (such as selling artworks) and even galleries sponsored by the international community (which commonly have a much narrower focus than Duplex). Nonetheless, the sponsorship provided to the gallery has, by its own measure, achieved the objective of sustaining a cultural space. Whether the appearance of *And What Else Did You See?* in such spaces achieves the broader aim of the international community in sponsoring them, the strengthening of the public sphere in BiH, is a more difficult question to answer. Certainly, Radenko's piece received a relatively high level of press coverage for a piece of contemporary art, but this, in itself, is indicative of a broader problem: that even when artworks are successful, in BiH the level of local press they generate remains relatively low. Further, these articles typically, and like those I have mentioned above, focus on the background of the artist rather than the ideas and concerns suggested by their artworks. As such, if one is to measure the extent to which *And What Else Did You See?* promoted the discourse of reconciliation in BiH by assessing the degree to which this discourse appeared in the local press in relation to the artwork, one would have to conclude that it essentially failed. This, in itself, does not suggest that spaces such as Duplex, or even the D-0 Ark biennial, do not have the ability to strengthen the public sphere, but merely that selectively sponsoring exhibitions in order to promote particular discourses may not produce this outcome. This is an observation, in fact, that runs through all three of the artwork biographies I will present here, and to which I will return in the conclusion.

Reconciliation

Thus, the biography of *And what else did you see?* reveals several spaces that might be said to contribute to the strengthening of civil society. In one sense, the value of the artwork in such spaces is merely to mark them as galleries, biennials, or other kinds of 'art spaces', and thereby facilitate exchange. However, it is also clear that *And what else did you see?* affected those who encountered it in the various sites it passed through. During the early part of its biography, it was valued for its ability to promote and problematize reconciliation processes, or to prompt discussion and thought regarding the recent past. During the second part of its biography, the piece was valued for a

different set of characteristics, such as its ability to interrogate the role of the new media in the circulation of violent imagery. Indeed, in this contrast might be seen an analogue of Barthes' (1981) distinction between studium and punctum. In the Bunker, or the MSU in Belgrade, part of the works' power comes from its ability to 'prick' or 'wound' audiences by confronting them with a memory of recent conflict, whilst also prompting discussion on the nature of such memories. In later shows, among audiences with no direct memories of the Bosnian War, the interpretation of it relies on the more intellectual process that characterizes the studium.

It was during the first part of its biography, however, that the piece came into contact with instrumentalization processes, and so an analysis of the efficacy of these can initially be limited to the first two sites with which it had contact: the Spaport Biennial and the D-0 Ark project. Primarily, as I have explored above, it is believed that the production of contemporary art can act as a therapeutic tool, and also that spaces such as the Spaport Biennial and D-0 Ark may act as fora for 'dialogic remembering'. The first assumption is visible in some of the interpretations that have been given to *And what else did you see?*, whether phrased in terms of the work's 'cathartic' value or its production as a form of 'exorcism', but Radenko (and others), when talking to me, flatly denied that this was the case. This does not mean that traumatic memories are not raised and discussed as part of projects such as the Spaport biennial, but rather reveals that working through memories, at least in the understanding of my informants, is a separate process to that of producing art. Secondly, the creation of spaces such as D-0 Ark can be understood as an attempt to promote 'dialogical remembering', in Assman's terms (2010): using culture and art to open a forum for dialogue, both between individuals, and between individuals and the state. However, an analysis of the project in these terms raises some troubling issues. The fact that the D-0 Ark project has been regarded by some as a 'tomb' mirrors a criticism that has been made of broader memorialization processes. Several scholars have pointed out that to physically memorialize a traumatic event 'is its second burial and its social death' (Šuber et al. 2012b) (Šuber 2012: 48), because it gives physical form to the emotions associated with them, drawing them out of the social consciousness like a poison (Humphrey 2002: 119) and safely quarantining them, 'encircling the trauma' (Edkins 2003: 15) in a specific locus. This means that sponsoring the production of contemporary art that deals with such events may actually remove the requirement for citizens to engage with them. Rather than embodying memory, such projects may displace it altogether, and 'under the illusion that our memorial edifices will always be there to remind us, we take leave of them and return only at our convenience' (Young 2009: 5). These criticisms, though primarily aimed at war monuments rather

than contemporary art, are particularly relevant in regard to the D-0 Ark project. The difficulty in getting to the site outside of the biennial event appears to entomb memories of the Bosnian War inside a hermetically sealed and inaccessible bunker in Konjic, removing the necessity to work through such memories in everyday life. In addition, projects like this can invest artists, and sometimes quite young artists, with a huge responsibility to work through traumatic events, a task for which they may be unqualified. Sorabji, for instance, writes about an 'active process' of memory management, in which those in possession of traumatic memories are fully aware of their dangerous political ramifications, and therefore seek to carefully manage the way in which they are represented and passed on (Sorabji 2006: 3). This process, as Sorabji describes it, is a complex one, but in instrumentalizing contemporary art it is also one that the international community appear to expect young artists to manage on behalf of their society. I do not mean to suggest that young artists are not clever enough to do this, merely that it is far from obvious that this group is best placed to do so.

This responsibility is further complicated by the fact that much of the policy literature on reconciliation in BiH defines the groups who are to be reconciled according to their ethnicity, whereas for most Bosnians ethnicity is not the primary constituent factor in defining identity or cultural difference. Rather, and as several scholars have found, the experience of the war, and specifically where one lived during it, is regarded as a more important factor in determining one's identity. 'War memories', as Helms writes, 'are less related to ethnicity as such than to place – such as, for example, the side of the frontline on which people were trapped during the war (esp. Intro Bosnian Mosaic, 24). Similarly, Stefansson has shown that the war led to the aggravation of long-standing conflicts that pre-dated it, and that are more important for many residents of Sarajevo today: these include the contrast between the urban, marked by 'culture' and 'European-ness', and the rural, associated with 'non-culture' and 'backwardness', but also between those Sarajevans who stayed to endure the siege and those who fled abroad (Stefansson 2007). These tensions can, in fact, be read into *And what else did you see?*, which seems to draw attention not so much to ethnic difference but to the positioning of the spectator when it comes to the violence of the recent conflict. Rather than seeking to 'bring the ethnicities together', as is the focus of many reconciliation programs, the piece seems to suggest a fractured audience determined by their location rather than their ethnicity.

Ultimately, such projects raise uncomfortable questions regarding who such spaces are *for*, given extra impetus in this case by the participation of so many of the international community at the D-0

Ark Biennial. Duijzings (2007), writing on the erection of a memorial to the victims of the massacre at Srebrenica, a project also funded by the international community, suggests that such memorials serve the conscience of the international community, rather than the ends and desires of the states in which they have been erected. Accordingly, such memorials can be seen as *for* the international community, rather than *for* the people of BiH. I would argue that artistic projects, at least sometimes, may be usefully regarded in a similar way.

Radenko is undoubtedly aware of these questions, however, and my descriptions of the interpretations given to *And what else did you see?* make this apparent. The piece, at least for my contacts who saw it in the D-0 Ark project, seems less an attempt to contribute to memory work, and more of one to problematize the very notion of reconciliation. That is, rather than being a part of the discourse, it is a comment on it: how are we supposed to do memory work when our memories are contingent upon media spectacles? Further, even when the piece leaves a Bosnian context, it appears to be further problematizing a number of similar issues. One of the reasons Pierre was keen to display it in Art Fairs is because he feels it forms a reflexive commentary on the nature of Bosnian art, in that international audiences approach the Duplex stand as such events expecting to see images of the war: *And what else did you see?* provides this, but also implicates this same audience in the circulation of violent images (interview with Pierre Courtin, 27th September 2015). As such, the piece is perhaps best understood as a form of 'meta-commentary' on reconciliation processes themselves, rather than a contributor to them.

Finally, the success of the piece internationally raises some uncomfortable questions regarding the complicity of the international community in sponsoring the production of violent images, and then consecrating these through sequential display. These questions, in turn, can be used to answer my third research question: whether the instrumentalization of art in BiH has had unintended consequences on the art system of the country. The biography of *And what else did you see?*, I would argue, suggests that the art system of BiH has been warped toward the production of violent images. I will, however, return to this argument in the conclusion.

Chapter 7: *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* (2015), Adela Jušić and Andreja Dugandžić

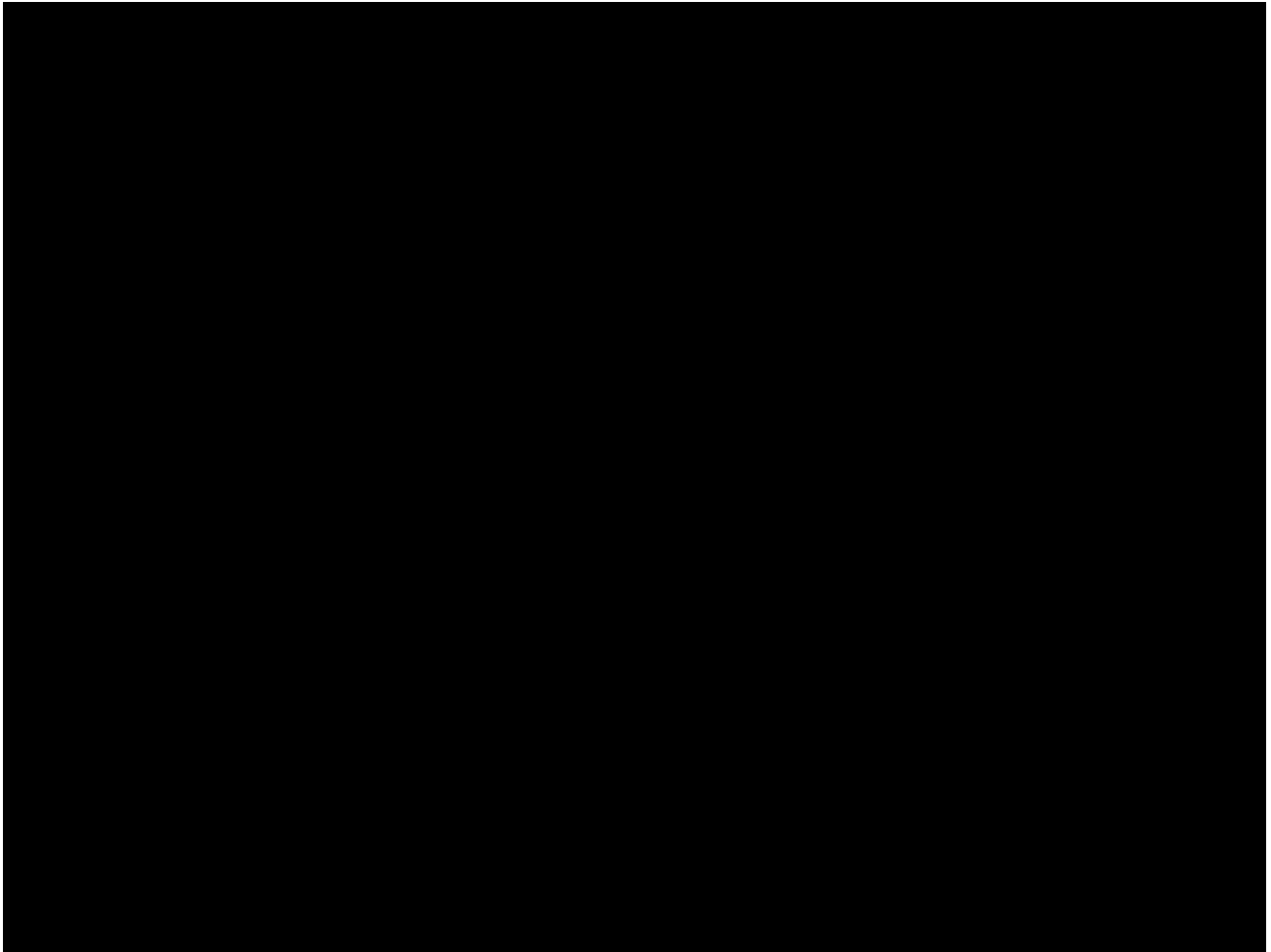


Fig. 14: Detail of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* (2015), Adela Jusic and Andreja Dugandzic, collage, approx. 8mx2m (credit: Adela Jušić and Andreja Dugandžić)



Fig. 15: Željne Smo Rada I Napora (2015), Adela Jušić and Andreja Dugandžić, collage, approx. 8mx2m (credit: Adela Jušić and Andreja Dugandžić)

Introduction

This chapter is the second of three in which I will present the biography of a particular artwork in order to explore the aims, mechanisms, and outcomes of the instrumentalization of contemporary art in post-conflict BiH. The artwork biography I will present in this chapter is that of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* (2015), a large mural designed and realized by Adela Jušić and Andreja Dugandžić as part of the 2015 Kaleidoskop Festival in Tuzla (Fig. 14, Fig. 15). The title of the piece may be translated as ‘We Long for Work and Toil’, and is drawn from historical documents relating to the activities of the Tuzla branch of The Antifašisticki Front Žena (Anti-Fascist Front of Women, AFŽ), a communist-era organization for the organization of female volunteers. These documents were collected, digitized, and made publicly available by Adela and Andreja as part of an earlier project entitled *Šta Je Nama Naša Borba Dala?* (*What Has Our Struggle Given Us?*), an archival project that aims to ‘preserve and make known’ (Afz Arhiv n.d.) materials relating to the work of the AFŽ in BiH and the former Yugoslavia. Both this earlier project and the mural itself were conceived of, designed, and realized in a collaborative process between Adela, Andreja, and a cultural association named Crvena, of which they form an important part. Further, each of these projects and organizations have received funding from a range of domestic and international organizations: the installation of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* was funded and supported by the Kaleidoskop Festival; this festival is ultimately the product of a twinning initiative between Tuzla Municipality and that of Bologna; the archival project *Šta Je Nama Naša Borba Dala?* was supported by grants from a number of international cultural organizations; and the activities of Crvena were and are sustained by frequent grants and support provided by similar organizations. Thus, though the conception and realization of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* took place over a short two week period in July 2015, its creation can be understood as the product of a large number of other projects, organizations, and processes that preceded this period.

As such, in describing the biography of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* I will begin by describing the aims and character of Crvena, and the way in which the association is funded. I will then describe the work that the association, Adela, Andreja, and others undertook for the archival project *Šta Je Nama Naša Borba Dala?*. Finally, the funding, design, construction, and reception of the artwork *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* will be described. These descriptions are, in turn, based on extensive ethnographic engagement with Adela, Andreja, and Crvena, with whom I have been in contact with since 2013, and with whom I have worked extensively. Accordingly, the material presented as part

of this chapter is drawn from innumerable conversations and collaborative work processes with many of the core members of the association.

Crvena

Željne Smo Rada I Napora was first conceived of in a conversation between Adela, Andreja, myself, and other members of the Crvena arts association in July 2015. This conversation took place in an office space rented by Crvena, the funds for which are ultimately provided by grants from a range of domestic and international NGOs. The conception of the piece must therefore be understood as the outcome of a number of processes, funding decisions, and intellectual concerns: not only the intentions of Adela and Andreja in designing the mural, but also the support provided to earlier projects by the international community, and the intellectual and social characteristics of Crvena as an organization.

Crvena was founded on International Women's Day (8th March) 2010. Adela and Andreja were part of the founding group of ten women, many of who had recently graduated from the Sarajevo Arts Academy, and who had become friends whilst studying. Initially, the aims of the group were relatively narrow: all of the founding members of the association were producing work (art, but also writing, translations, and events) that focused on the position of women in contemporary Bosnian society, and by forming Crvena they hoped to facilitate collaboration and cooperation amongst members. In the first five years of operation, however, the association grew from a 'small group of active individuals' into an organization with more than 40 members (Crvena 2015) from a wide variety of fields: in the words of Danijela, another founding member, Crvena is now 'a community of artists, curators, architects, engineers, cooks, economists, journalists, human rights and cultural workers, workers and activists, gathered around the idea that art and culture provide an open platform for social change' (Crvena 2015). Accordingly, the aims of the association have expanded since 2010, such that it has become 'a sort of laboratory for researching, thinking, learning, sharing collaborating and producing knowledge' that aims to create 'new free spaces for cultural and artistic creation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the world' (Crvena 2015). Increasingly, the organization has sought to use its links with other NGOs to co-ordinate strategic action 'under four programs: art, activism, space and society; social and cultural research and policies; learning and production; and alternative economic initiatives' (Crvena 2015). However, the core mission of Crvena has remained relatively stable since 2010. The focus of the organization, at least for the founding members, remains an attempt to 'target and explore the causes and mechanisms behind the

multifaceted social disempowerment of women and seek to promote women's equality and personal development' from (Crvena 2015) the production of contemporary art remains one of the group's core activities, because (and again the words of Danijela), they maintain a belief in 'art and activism as aesthetic, social and political tools with high potential for mobilization and social transformation' (Crvena 2015).

Crvena has no formal organizational structure: nominally, all members have an equal say in the direction and operation of the association. However, in characterizing the group a useful division may be drawn between core and peripheral members. Peripheral members are those individuals who work only infrequently on projects convened by the organization, and take little part in the day to day operations of it. The core members of the group remain the ten founding members, despite these individuals being increasingly absent from Sarajevo in recent years. This group is the most active in relation to the day to day operation of the association, and they retain close bonds as friends, colleagues, and (in some cases) relatives. These emotional bonds are often spoken of as an important part of the way in which the association operates: in a strategy meeting in October 2014, Andreja argued that Crvena should 'not only be about sharing resources ... but also knowledge and emotions'. Members of this core group, which has remained relatively stable since 2010, also share a relatively homogeneous set of concerns, and a common interpretation of the mechanism through which gender equality (and a number of subsidiary aims) can be achieved in BiH and elsewhere. They explicitly link the disenfranchisement of women in post-conflict BiH to economic exclusion, and believe that political, social, and cultural equality between genders cannot be achieved without economic equality. Gender equality, for most of the members of this group, can only be achieved through the implementation of socialism. Though this quickly becomes apparent when talking to members of the organization, it is less so in the material produced by it. Thus, even though the choice to name the group Crvena, which translates to 'red', is commonly explained in press materials as being because 'red is considered the only true color and it is the first color known to wo/men ... It is a color of blood and fire, strong emotions, love and color of alarm ... Red is the color of power and energy we experience when we work together' (Crvena 2015), for core members of the group it also represents something often unsaid: that red is also the color of communism.

This is not to say that members of the organization seek to return BiH to communism, nor even that they exhibit a naive Yugonostalgia. Their view of communist BiH, rather, is best understood as Volčič's 'aesthetic' Yugonostalgia, 'a cultural phenomenon calling for the preservation of an

authentic Yugoslav past [which] purports to revere Yugoslav culture and its socialist past as something sacred, to be cherished, but not exploited for political or commercial gain' (Volčič 2007: 28). The group share a common concern that transition processes, in BiH and elsewhere, have led to the systematic exclusion of women from economic life, and that without economic equality women can never hope to achieve social and political equality. In the former assertion, they are correct. A UNDAF report from 2010 noted that

Gender inequalities in BiH have increased since the end of the war and women face higher risks of exclusion in education, economic opportunities and healthcare. Both the Human Development Index and the Gender Development Index show significant inequalities in both political and economic participation as well as a lack of power over economic resources as measured by earned income. (UNDAF 2010: 32)

In part, this shift has been driven by a 're-traditionalization' of Bosnian society, itself linked to the simultaneous rise of ethno-nationalist politics in the post-war period (Majstorović 2011), that has re-affirmed gender roles from the pre-communist period in which women are not expected to participate in (or are barred from) work and education. This has been exacerbated by the poor state of the Bosnian economy since 1995, and specifically the high rate of unemployment in the country and the cost of university education. In the analysis of many members of Crvena, however, this was a process that both preceded transition, and will continue after it. They link this increased economic disempowerment of women in BiH to the rise of ethno-nationalist politics that preceded the Bosnian War, and believe that the neo-liberal politico-economic order that transition seeks to create inherently furthers the same disempowerment. Many members of the organization therefore look to the early post-WWII communist Yugoslav state as the most recent period in which feminist discourse was developing in BiH, when there was a political will to achieve equality, and in which the economic system would allow this to be achieved. Though they are aware that women remained under-represented in this period, , Adela draws a direct comparison between the post-Bosnian War state and the post-WWII state: in both periods, women contributed enormously to the reconstruction of the country, but did so without being paid, she argues (interview with Adela Jušić, 9th October 2015). The core members of the group are also aware, however, that though communist Yugoslavia explicitly included equal rights for women in its constitution, in reality women remained under-represented during this period. Communism, for many members of Crvena, therefore represents a

system which includes both a commitment and mechanism for realizing equal rights for women, however nominal and however imperfectly realized.

The Kuća and the Mahala

As Crvena has grown, it has increasingly expanded its operations outside Sarajevo, organizing exhibitions, workshops, talks, and other events throughout BiH, the Western Balkans, and beyond. However, the heart of the organization remains in Sarajevo: most of its members live in the city, and its activities are largely co-ordinated from a rented 'office' there. It was here that *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*, as well as many of Adela and Andreja's earlier pieces, was conceived of and initially discussed. There have been several manifestations of this office over the past eight years, but during the majority of my fieldwork the organization worked from a large house in one of the more affluent areas of Sarajevo. As the membership of Crvena has increased, and the office is used for more and more social events, a tension has arisen regarding membership of the organization and access to the office. In some ways, members of the group envisage the office as providing a cultural community center which is open to all, and is lacking in Sarajevo. However, in recent years this has led to the space becoming more of a kafana than an office. Danijela told me in 2014 that in the early years of Crvena they had let everybody who wanted to join the organization do so, but that many people 'just wanted to come to the parties'. Adela, in the same discussion, explained that there was a fear that this would dilute the primary purpose of the association, as an activist group concerned with cultural production. For this reason, few members have keys to the space, and approval is sought from the core members before copying them. From 2013, in addition, prospective members must complete a short application form with three questions in order to ensure that intend to become active members: 'why do you want to be a part of Crvena?', 'what kind of tasks or projects can you undertake?', and 'how much time can you dedicate to the association?'. Some people, Adela explained, write that they can just clean the space or make coffee, but this is enough: the important thing is that everyone is contributing in some way, no matter how small (interview with Adela Jušić, 9th October 2015).

Though officially referred to as an 'office', this characterization somewhat downplays the range of activities that take place in the space, and its social and emotional significance for members of the group. Though the space does indeed function as an 'office', in that the majority of the administrative work for Crvena (completing paperwork and holding meetings, for instance) is

conducted there, it is also used for many other functions. On a typical day, several members of the core group are present, either working or socializing, alongside a changing cast of other more peripheral members. The space is frequently used for exhibitions, and in one room there is a large table for meetings and working. Beyond this, the space is often used for socializing: either just sharing a coffee in the afternoon, or as a venue for parties. Sometimes these parties are convened in order to raise funds for the organization, sometimes to celebrate the opening of an exhibition or a birthday, and sometimes just for fun. Often, large meals are cooked communally for all those present, and the core members of Crvena sometimes sleep there. Indeed, the space feels more like a domestic house than a traditional 'office', and this is how it is most often referred to by those involved with Crvena: either as the 'Crvena kuća' (Crvena's house), or simply just the 'kuća'. Less frequently, and often with a slight smile, it is even called 'dom' (home). This usage is telling: often, the space resembles a large family home filled with the extended family, where meals, beds, and maintenance are shared. The core group of Crvena are aware of this, and indeed the similarity between the house and a family home is often talked of as a manifestation of the politics of the group. Several artists associated with the group have produced work that deals with the family home as a manifestation of gender politics, and look to the Crvena house as a manifestation of this. When discussing this topic, the book 'book for every woman' is often raised, a communist-era guide to household management. The text abounds 'with exhaustive household management instructions', but also contains indications of the way in which the early SFRY saw the family home as a site of politics: it characterizes each 'household as a *small country*', stresses that the 'household is not and should not only be a woman's concern but the concern of the whole family', and in early editions contained a chapter 'on the legal protection of mother and child and the importance of female co-operatives [and] covering the area of rights and social organization'. This last chapter was removed, tellingly, in the 14th edition of the Book in 1972 (Dragosavljević 2014). For Crvena, this book neatly encapsulates the development and subsequent disruption of feminist discourse in BiH, and indeed in October 2014 the group convened an exhibition dealing with this theme: the exhibition, *Moja Kuća je I Tvoja Kuća*, explored 'the house' as a site of the economic oppression of women, and specifically the idea that the work carried out by women in domestic spaces remains unrecognised. The exhibition text, written by Danijela, states that since 'the family is presented as the basic unit of capitalist society', behaviour within the family home is traditionally 'preset to preserve the patriarchal system and the nation'. In the time immediately before and after this exhibition, the Crvena house was often referred to as an physical manifestation of the way in which

these problems could be overcome, in that it is a house explicitly not based on familial association, and one in which labour such as housework and cooking are evenly and carefully divided between men and women (Dragosavljević 2014).

The Crvena house, for many associated with the group, is therefore the gathering space for a local community, albeit one drawing participants from a distributed network of cultural producers and critics rather than a geographical neighbourhood. This is apparent in the way in which Crvena, as an organization, is referred to by those closely associated with it. It is often referred to as a ‘mahala’. This word was adopted into Bosnian from Turkish during the Ottoman period, and can be loosely translated as ‘neighborhood’, albeit one of a particular type. The standard Ottoman city was composed of many *mahala*, neighbourhood units that were designed to provide everything that citizens required within walking distance of their family homes: food markets, stabling, places of worship, etc. Each mahala was designed to be self-sufficient, and often ethnically homogeneous. The term is in common usage in Sarajevo, and the mahala that one was born in, or in which one lives, is often read as an important part of one’s identity. The fact that members of Crvena use this word to refer to the organization is indicative of the type of relationship that they envisage themselves as having with the organization, and indeed something of the character of the organization itself. Its use emphasizes the proximity of the friendship (and sometimes familial) bonds between the members of the organization, and also the fact that membership of it constitutes an element of one’s identity. The self-sufficiency of the ‘traditional’ mahala is also used as a model for the organization of Crvena itself: it is hoped that by including members with a wide variety of skills and knowledge, Crvena may also become self-sufficient. By including artists, curators, graphic designers, printers, cultural critics, and writers, for instance, the organization has access to all the skills needed for the realization of exhibitions and other projects. Further, in creating an autonomous space that requires no external support, they aim, in their own words, to create ‘a place where we all ... support [and] understand and respect [each other]’, and where therefore ‘we can be more brave’, and the artists associated with the organization ‘are allowed to be more radical’ (Dragosavljević 2014).

Crvena and Funding

This ambition for autonomy means that the members of Crvena are often slightly uncomfortable applying for and receiving external monetary support for their work. The organization does not

receive ongoing funding from a dedicated donor. Instead, the activities of the group are supported by grants for individual projects. Sometimes, these funds are given to the organization itself, and sometimes artists and others associated with the group receive grants for work and donate some of this to the ongoing activities of the association. Since 2010, Crvena has therefore received funding from a large variety of organizations, both international and domestic. Among these projects, Danijela identifies one in particular was being something of a watershed for Crvena. In 2015, the organization ran the project Factory of Memories, a BIFC-funded ‘collaborative year long project of Tirana Ekspres and Association for Culture and Art CRVENA’, which aimed ‘to showcase/champion the use of art (video specifically) in exploring and actualizing important societal issues’ (Crvena and Tirana Ekspres n.d.). The fact that Crvena received funds from the such a large and ‘respectable’ NGO (in Danijela’s words) meant that they were ‘recognized as an important player in the arts scene’, and after this project it was easier to attract funding than it had been previously.

Those associated with Crvena acknowledge that the ongoing existence of the group is at least partially due to the funding provided by these organizations. This is true in the sense that funding for individual projects allows the collective to sustain administrative functions, buy materials, and pay the rent for the office space. However, this support also contributes to the activities of the collective in a more indirect fashion. Since Crvena receives no support dedicated to the daily upkeep of the organization, it is reliant on its members being able to sustain their own careers, and thereby being able to contribute their time to the organization. The artists associated with the group, for instance, are

Crvena has received funding from:

Balkans Arts and Culture Fund (BAC)
Embassy of Germany, Sarajevo
European Commission Culture Programme
European Cultural Foundation
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Bosna i
Hercegovina
Heinrich Boll Stiftung
Heart and Hand Fund, Marta Drury
Mediterranean Women’s Fund
Members and supporters of CRVENA
Municipality Center Sarajevo
Olof Palme International Center
Open Society Fund B&H
Schüler Helfen Leben
Swedish Institute
Swiss Cultural Programme (SCP) in the
Western Balkans
The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Sarajevo
V-Day

aware that without international funding for the arts in BiH, they would not have been able to build a career as an artist, and would have either have had to find other work or to have left BiH. Thus, though Crvena is concerned to maintain its self-sufficiency, members of the group are aware that in order to sustain the collective it must attract funding. This includes a number of processes: keeping

on top of funding opportunities and submitting applications for projects, but also maintaining good relationships with a range of political, cultural, and social organizations.

This frustration with the bureaucracy of applying for funding is, in fact, one of the reasons why the members of Crvena value the organization. The co-operative nature of the association means that members can support each other in finding funding opportunities, and draw on each other's professional networks. Further, this co-operation also permits a division of labour, in which some members of the organization are concerned with finding and applying for funding, and others can focus on producing art. The former role has been taken by Danijela, who has historically undertaken much of the work associated with finding funding opportunities and submitting applications. This involves, as she told me in 2014, 'continually going to parties at all the embassies', and 'networking' in order to build relationships between Crvena and funding bodies. Because of this, she has assumed something of a central role in the organization. Even when artists are seeking funding for their own projects, members of Crvena often ask Danijela which grants would be suitable, and indeed other organizations sometimes ask for similar advice. This role gives Danijela a great deal of status within the group, even though her own work is largely invisible for external observers. Indeed, there is an ongoing joke within the members of Crvena that although the artists get the most attention in the press and wider society, it is in fact Danijela who 'has all the power', and is 'our unofficial leader'.

'It would be possible,' Danijela told me in 2014, 'to get some money just for Crvena': that is, to support the ongoing work of the group itself, rather than smaller grants dedicated to the realization of particular cultural projects. The decision not to do this, she explained, is a conscious one. Historically, there has been little support available from domestic political organizations (the Cantonal Ministry of Culture, for instance), and in any case Danijela and others profess a deep mistrust of domestic political organizations and actors, and feel that in receiving funds from them Crvena would be supporting a political system which most members actively oppose. On the other hand, accepting ongoing funding from international NGOs, Danijela fears, would lead to Crvena being regarded as merely 'an agent of the international community'. Another concern in this regard is that many of the members of Crvena see the ultimate objectives of their work as diverging from, and sometimes directly opposing, the international community's aims in BiH. The international community, they feel, is largely concerned to impose neo-liberal capitalism on BiH, and this runs counter to Crvena's allegiance to socialism. Thus, whilst some of the professed objectives of the

international community, such as ‘democratization’ and ‘promoting inclusion’, are seen as worthwhile, for many of the core group of Crvena these aims are not achievable by anything other than a revolutionary change in the way in the political and economic basis of BiH.

Related to this is the way that BRIEFLY the organization has recently benefitted from the rise in the discourse of inclusion and LGBTQIA+ rights, though this is also an uneasy alliance. Among the largest organizations in this area have been the Swedish Embassy, and the Sarajevo Open Centre (SOC), which ‘strives to empower lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans* and intersex (LGBTI) people and women through community empowerment and activist movement building’ (Sarajevo Open Centre n.d.). Crvena maintain close ties with SOC, but also criticize the way in which the organization works, and the way in which feminism is conflated with LGBTQIA+ rights in the ideology of the organization. One of their issues with the SOC is that it is simply too big to be truly radical: Adela told me in 2014 that with a budget of half a million EUR a year, it had to think of itself as a business rather than a cultural organization (interview with Adela Jušić, 9th October 2015). Many members of Crvena point out, further, that there is a tendency to conflate feminism with LGBTQIA+ rights. The problem with doing this, for Crvena, is three-fold. First, it ignores the fact that effective mechanisms for achieving equality for women and LGBTQIA+ people are different. Secondly, there is a frustration that many LGBT activists and NGOs are actually quite traditional in their outlook: one of the primary aims of such organizations in recent years has been to attain equal marriage, for instance, something which many members of Crvena see as inherently oppressive. ‘They are not really against the status quo’, Adela told me in 2015, ‘or if they are it is only because the politicians are against them ... what they want is a normal life, but that life in Bosnia is shit’ (interview with Adela Jušić, 9th October 2015). Related to this is the third difficulty that Crvena have with the rise of inclusionary and LGBT discourse, which is that this discourse has inherited the logic of the long-standing focus on multi-culturalism, in that under cultural programs funded to ensure women’s and LGBT rights, the proposed mechanism is often identical to that of earlier multi-cultural programs: ensuring freedom of expression and access to the public sphere. Crvena, again, see this as not sufficiently radical: securing access to the public sphere is important, but only in order to bring about a radical change in society.

Because of this mis-match between the aims of Crvena and the terms under which their projects are funded, the ‘true’ aims of the work of many associated with the group must be ‘encoded’ or ‘hidden’ within the terminology used in funding applications. This is, in fact, an issue that even the Swedish

Embassy, a major funder of feminist activism in BiH, are aware of: in an interview Pia Hallonsten, First Secretary at the embassy, told me that the organization tried to avoid using the term 'feminism', because 'some people get scared' (interview with Pia Hallonsten, First Secretary, Swedish Embassy in Sarajevo, 22nd September 2015). Over the past few years, Crvena (and particularly Danijela) have found creative ways to do this: the example most commonly given is that it is possible to write about women as one of the many 'cultures' of BiH, in order to fit projects dealing with female empowerment into funding applications that require a focus on multiculturalism. Though, for many members of the group, there is a frustration at having to express the true intention of their work in such a way, it is also broadly accepted that this is an acceptable compromise in order to continue to produce artworks, events, workshops, and other cultural projects. This compromise is a frequent topic of debate in the Crvena house. Adela provided me with perhaps the most succinct expression of the position that Crvena have reached: she talks of a 'mutual exploitation', in which the international community are using her artwork to further their own ends, but that she is also exploiting them in order to receive funding for it.

Šta Je Nama Naša Borba Dala?

The conception of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* occurred, as I have said, in the Crvena house. That is, in an office space often referred to as a home, ultimately sustained by the international community, and among members of a mahala. *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* shares this with many of the artworks produced by the artists associated with Crvena. Even where these artworks are credited to individual artists, they have often been informed by discussions among members of the organization, and there is a collective pride taken in artworks that, to an external audience, appear to be the work of an individual. Further, the conversation that would lead to the production of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* was dependent on an earlier collaborative project between Adela, Andreja, and other members of Crvena. Specifically, the visual and textual elements used in the piece are drawn from an archival project that was convened a year before the mural was designed. This earlier project was entitled *Šta Je Nama Naša Borba Dala? (What Has Our Struggle Given Us?)*, and also received (after many failed attempts) international funding. The motivation for *Šta Je Nama Naša Borba Dala?* was the creation of such artworks such as *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*. Adela had previously produced several artworks that dealt with the role of women during WW2, and in the winter of 2013 had planned to continue this stream of work. However, she was frustrated by the

relative lack of historical material on this subject online. Several months later, as part of the preparations for a Crvena event at the Historical Museum, convened for International Women's Day on 8th March 2014, she was able to gain access to a number of books that detailed the work of the AFŽ. This material was first displayed as part of an exhibition at the historical museum, and during the process of preparing the exhibition Adela and Andreja conceived of *Šta Je Nama Naša Borba Dala?*, a project that aimed at finding, digitizing, collating, and presenting documents related to the AFŽ.

The AFŽ was founded in 1942 as an arm of the communist party of Yugoslavia. As Adela notes, WW2 was an important period for the emancipation of women in Yugoslavia. In much of the West, as she understands it, major female participation in the workforce began during WW1. A similar process occurred in Yugoslavia, by contrast, during WW2 (interview with Adela Jušić, 9th October 2015). Some 100,000 women served in the military during the conflict, and the AFŽ was formed to co-ordinate the activities of women on the home front: initially in service of the war effort, and then in order to contribute to the re-construction of Yugoslavia. Two million women would eventually join the AFŽ, and they undertook a vast range of activities: conducting literacy courses and serving as nurses, but also conducting hard physical labor. The material that Adela and Andreja found in the archive meticulously detailed these activities, and recorded the millions of hours of work that the members of the AFŽ conducted between 1942 and 1953. During the 1950s, with much of the reconstruction work completed, Adela told me in 2015, there was a political shift: the AFŽ, it was felt, was no longer needed to co-ordinate such activities. The organization had acted, in Adela's assessment, as a powerful tool for the emancipation of women in Yugoslavia, not only in proving their ability to contribute to the state, but also providing a platform for communication between previously isolated groups of women. The AFŽ therefore represents, to both Adela and several other members of Crvena, the beginning of the 'feminist struggle' in BiH and the other Yugoslav countries, and the dissolution of the organization in 1953 an abrupt rupture in a developing feminist discourse in Yugoslav society. Adela remains unsure of the motivation behind this dissolution. In some senses, she told me, there was a naive belief on behalf of the communist party that since the ideology of communism explicitly included equality of gender, there was no ongoing need for an organization specifically devoted to representing women and developing communication between them. Communism, it was felt, automatically included feminism. This view was also shared by many of the women in AFŽ and in other parts of the communist party, and

it was only realized later that it was mistaken. On the other hand, she noted, it may have been that the wider party, predominantly made up of men, saw in the AFŽ a threat to a gendered hierarchy that served them. Whatever the reason, between 1952 and 1953 the AFŽ was gradually dissolved in a process so slow that many women involved with the organization did not realize what was happening until it had almost ceased to exist. Adela and several other members of Crvena see this dissolution as representing the critical point in the disruption of feminist discourse in Yugoslavia. Had the organization continued to exist, they argue, the developments in feminist discourse that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s in the West would have been incorporated into the nascent feminist discourse of Yugoslavia, partially by the AFŽ. Because the AFŽ had ceased to exist by this period, however, there was an interruption in the development of this discourse in Yugoslavia which did not begin again until 1995 (at least), or perhaps even 2010, when Crvena was founded.

Thus, and although Adela and Andreja are reticent to say this too overtly (for reasons that will soon become clear), many members of Crvena see the AFŽ as an earlier manifestation of Crvena itself, and find in the ideology of the AFŽ an mirror of their own politics. For Adela and Andreja, therefore, the archive project is not merely an historical one. Bringing the archival documents to light is important because it reveals a part of Yugoslav history, and the contribution of women to the creation of the state, that has been ignored in mainstream historical discourse. They also feel that the AFŽ can act as a model for the ongoing struggle for the emancipation of women in BiH. Primarily, this is because the AFŽ provided women with a previously non-existent way to connect groups previously isolated from national discourse. As Adela points out, ‘even today, with facebook and twitter ... we find it difficult to connect feminist groups in BiH, but the AFŽ managed to do this just with letters and reports’ (interview with Adela Jušić, 9th October 2015). By using the AFŽ as a model and inspiration, she argues, feminist activists in BiH can work to connect disparate groups, and to re-start a discourse on, and struggle for, gender equality that was interrupted by the dissolution of the AFŽ, and that is currently overly reliant on ‘local activists worshiping foreign gender theoreticians’ rather than looking to the history of their own country and culture (interview with Adela Jušić, 9th October 2015).

Funding

In order to realize the archive project, Adela and Andreja immediately began to look for funding. However, in doing so they faced a huge difficulty: ‘it is very hard to get funding for projects that

can be interpreted as celebrating communism', as Adela put it. Whilst some of the aims of the AFŽ project, such as uncovering a previously hidden history of women in Yugoslavia, align with the aims and ideology of international funding organizations, others do not. In searching for funding for the project, Adela told me, she looked through a file that is kept in the Crvena office that lists all the potential donors for cultural projects, and a short description of the type of project that each would fund. At that time, she explained, the file ran to 300 pages. Of all of the organizations listed, she found '4 or 5' that were able to fund archive projects on the history of communism, and two of these were only willing to fund such projects in order to 'stop it happening again': that is, in her words, to 'preserve the memories of communism in order to prevent it' (interview with Adela Jušić, 9th October 2015). As already mentioned, difficulties such as this are not unusual for those involved with Crvena, and the members of the organization have become quite adept at writing about their projects in terms that will attract international funding. Accordingly, in making funding applications, Adela and Andreja stressed that the primary focus of the project was to 'uncover a forgotten herstory', avoided the word 'communism' wherever possible, and omitted to mention the more radical aims of the project, such as providing a model for contemporary feminist activists.

Despite this, they found it difficult to get funding from organizations for the archive project in its initial stages. Accordingly, they began a crowdfunding campaign, and called friends in BiH and elsewhere to ask for donations. The response was relatively modest, but the small amount of funding received allowed Adela and Andreja to buy a domain name for the project, to begin to photograph documents, and to travel to various locations in BiH to interview four women who had been part of the AFŽ. These interviews, Adela explains, are a critical part of the project, because they allow the material in the archive to be linked to contemporary debates. After this initial stage, the project did receive some international funding. The first such donor to contribute to the project

Funders and Partners for the AFŽ archive project:

Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe
Eve Ensler / vday
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina
National Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Museum II AVNOJ
UABNOR, Sarajevo Center
Museum of Yugoslav History
Radio Belgrade
Stan Nastic
Lucia Mravić
Šemsa Galijašević
Alija Maglajlić
Nina Karač
Boro Jurišić
Lauren Lydic
Members of Crvena
Crowdfunding

was the Mediterranean Women's Fund (MWF), a multi-national NGO that provides funding for 'groups of women working together' that demonstrate 'a clear commitment to women's equality and women's human rights'. In securing this funding, the fact that Adela and Andreja are part of Crvena was critical, because the MWF does not fund projects convened by individuals. Instead, as the application form for funding makes clear, funding can only be provided to 'Organizations that are governed and directed by women', in which 'women ... fill all or most of the leadership roles', 'are in the first five years of activity, do not have access to institutional funders, [and] are based in countries that receive limited financial support'. This grant, therefore, was provided not so much because the archival material would be useful in the creation of artworks (as per Adela's original aim), but rather because funding Crvena contributed to 'the condition of women and the promotion of equality between sexes throughout the countries around the Mediterranean by contributing to the development of the women's movement in the region, at both local and regional levels' (Mediterranean Women's Fund n.d.).

With the funding provided by the MWF, Adela and Andreja were able to hire a number of people who provided expertise. They paid an IT specialist to build a database that would allow them to catalogue the documents, and he worked in consultation with a librarian in order that the archive would be fully searchable. This was important to Adela and Andreja, because they by this point they had come to envisage the archive as becoming an important resource for researchers. This approach was also partially motivated by the funding they had received from MWF: in discussions with the artists, the organization had stressed the importance of the archive as a resource for women's groups throughout the Mediterranean, and suggested that the material be cataloged in as professional a manner as possible. This infrastructure in place, Adela and Andreja began to build the archive. This involved photographing documents, processing these photographs, and adding them to the database. They prioritized documents that had been damaged, of which there were many. Throughout this period, Adela and Andreja also continued to search for further funding. In addition to the donations and support the project had already attracted, they formed partnerships with a number of Sarajevo-based museums and archives, who permitted access to their collections. Funding was provided by two further organizations, both from Germany, but with regional offices in the Balkans: the Rosa Luxembourg Stiftung Southeast Europe, and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung BiH. Given the difficulties that Adela and Andreja had faced in getting funding for the project, the fact that both of these organizations are closely aligned with socialist politics is telling. As such, the motivation for

funding the AFŽ project on behalf of both organizations was articulated in terms of linking the work of the AFŽ to broader workers' movements in Eastern Europe. The Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe, for instance, states that its aims are to 'work within the traditions of the global workers, women, anti-fascist and anti-war movements and ... the ideas of Democratic Socialism' in order to support three key aims: to help 'workers, women, Roma and LGBT groups engaged in social rights advocacy and the building of networks for self-organization,' to support 'the elaboration of alternative policies, which are based on social justice and democratization, and counter the dominant neoliberal hegemony,' and to facilitate 'the elaboration of a differentiated and critical discourse on the history of the left in the region' (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung n.d.).

With this funding secured, Adela and Andreja continued to photograph and process the archival documents. At the time of the production of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*, the archive contained 333 such documents, although at that time Adela was conscious that much work remained to be completed: the national archives in BiH contain upward of 3000 documents, and there are similar (if smaller) repositories in most cities in BiH and the former Yugoslavia. The future of the project, as envisaged by Adela and Andreja, involves hiring further staff to continue to photograph and upload the documents, and also that this process will be expanded outside Sarajevo. They envisage that this process will be directed by Crvena, and that by using the organization to contact similar groups in other cities in BiH, other archives can be investigated and digitized. Eventually, they hope, this process will also reach the other countries of the former Yugoslavia, though both are aware of the difficulties they will face in doing so. There is an aversion to talking positively about communism in BiH, Adela told me in 2015, but this is even more pronounced in Croatia and Serbia, and so accessing material on the AFŽ in those countries will likely be even more difficult than in BiH.

Željne Smo Rada I Napora: Conception

Through the AFŽ project, Adela and Andreja had made a great deal of archival material on the AFŽ available, but had not, as yet, achieved the initial intention of the project: the production of artworks. One of the first opportunities to do so came in 2015. On that day, the curators of the Kaleidoskop festival in Tuzla contacted Danijela in order to ask for Crvena's participation. This invitation was partially due to Danijela's existing links with the organizers of the festival, with who members of Crvena had previously worked. The Kaleidoskop Festival is an annual festival of contemporary art and music that takes place in Tuzla. The festival is ultimately the outcome of a

twinning agreement between the municipality government of Tuzla and the communal government of Bologna. As part of this relationship have instigated two major cultural programs, named 'Culture' and 'Culture II'. Unlike many other cultural programs in post-conflict BiH, these projects were primarily conceived of as a way of promoting tourism in Tuzla. They aimed at 'strengthening local competencies in the development of cultural resources for the purpose of tourism promotion of the city' (Kaledoskop Festival n.d.). As such, the 'Culture' program had as its main goal the 'promotion of tourism and international cooperation in the municipality of Tuzla', and the primary outcome of this program was the production of a report entitled 'Strategic guidelines for the development and promotion of tourism in the municipality of Tuzla' (Comune di Bologna 2013). The successor project, Culture II, was a joint program between the Municipality of Tuzla, the City of Bologna and the University of Bologna Department of Educational Sciences, and was funded by a 'significant contribution' from the Cassa di Risparmio di Bologna Foundation, a philanthropic foundation. It expanded upon the earlier report and the earlier program, aspiring to a broader aim of the 'valorization of cultural resources in the city of Tuzla'. This was to be achieved through strengthening local competencies 'in the field of design and the development of didactics in museums', and the promotion of the 'cultural and tourism resources of the city of Tuzla' through a series of 'workshops, seminars, meetings, lectures, visits' and other joint endeavours (Comune di Bologna 2013).

These programs are slightly unusual, in that they do not state their primary aims in the common terminology of that has characterized the instrumentalization of culture in BiH: they are not aimed at reconciliation, inclusion, or democratization, for example. However, under the auspices of promoting tourism, both programs incorporate the familiar language of multi-culturalism. Thus, the self-stated aims of the programs focus on building dialogue between young people 'from different backgrounds' in Tuzla and between Tuzla and elsewhere. The Kaleidoskop festival, first held in 2009, is a manifestation of this broader program, as its name implies. As an 'International Festival of Contemporary Art of Youth', it hopes to 'create harmony of diversity, to reconcile contrasts and to realize the art of dialogue among people from different backgrounds' (Kaledoskop Festival n.d.). This dialogue is to be achieved through two primary mechanisms: art, and volunteering. The motto of the festival, 'dialogue of art – the art of dialogue', stresses the close connection that is presumed to exist between art and 'inter-cultural dialog', in that it 'sees art as a new form of openness and dialogue between different nations and different cultures' (Comune di Bologna 2013).

Volunteering is also an important part of the festival: each year, the festival organizes volunteers from Tuzla, Bologna, and other cities. These volunteers play an important role in the realization of the festival, as it is primarily through drawing together these young people that the ‘realization of festival activities and realization of the dialogue goals’ are envisaged to be achieved (Kaledoskop Festival n.d.). In turn, this focus on multiculturalism is explicitly linked to a characterization of Tuzla as an inherently multicultural city, a place ‘where, for centuries, harmony among diversity has been cultivated’. Whether this is true, given the violence committed in Tuzla during last century, is debatable, but it is also indicative of the way in which many cities, and particularly Sarajevo, have been characterized in the post-war period. The Bosnian War, rather than being seen as contradicting claims that Tuzla was historically multi-cultural, is used to point to the need to re-build an imputed multiculturalism through fostering ‘a dialogue among people and young artists coming from places where conflict still inhibits the natural exchange of ideas’ (Comune di Bologna 2013).

Normally, artists and others wishing to take part in the festival must go through an application process in which their work is expected to be justified against the broader aims of the festival. For Crvena’s participation, however, this process was different: there are close friendship and professional links between several members of Crvena and the curators of the Kaleidoskop festival, and hence a specific invitation was made. This invitation came with specific requirements. Though the festival would not pay any members of Crvena for their participation, they were able to contribute toward the cost of materials in the creation of a large outdoor artwork. Specifically, they wanted a mural, and had already designated a wall for the creation of this. Funding came from the festival fund, ultimately provided by funders of the festival outlined above, but administered by local curators and organizers. This local element was key in securing the (albeit minimal) funding for the final creation of the piece. The festival were keen to have Crvena participate, but at the same time were aware that some of their work was too radical to find favour with those ultimately funding the festival. Specifically, the artwork produced would have to be justified in terms multiculturalism, in order to justify funding it against the broader aims of the festival. In the initial discussion with Danijela, however, it was agreed that as long as the work dealt with ‘something about Tuzla’, this could be seen as putting local citizens in touch with the broader international contingent that would form part of the festival. This would be sufficient to justify funding the piece, as long as there was a collaborative element to the realization of the artwork, which (it was agreed) would be realized with the help of festival volunteers. In addition, a panel discussion was suggested

by the festival organizers, in order to bring these same volunteers into contact with the more theoretical elements of Crvena's work.

Design

The conversation that led to the creation of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* took place a few days after this invitation, and took place in the lounge area of the Crvena house. The discussion initially centred on who would take charge of Crvena's contribution to the festival. Adela and Andreja took charge, largely due to the work commitments of other members. At that time, Adela and Andreja were working on the AFŽ project, and so using the material they had collected immediately suggested itself. This material had already been used once before in the creation of an artwork: Adela had produced a piece for the D-0 Ark Project (see Chapter 6) which used the archival materials to reflect on the way in which the Yugoslav state sought to control marriage. The design of the piece also drew on several large murals that Crvena had produced in the previous year, including one for the Moj Kuća exhibition (Fig. 16). In addition, in designing *Željne Smo Rada I*

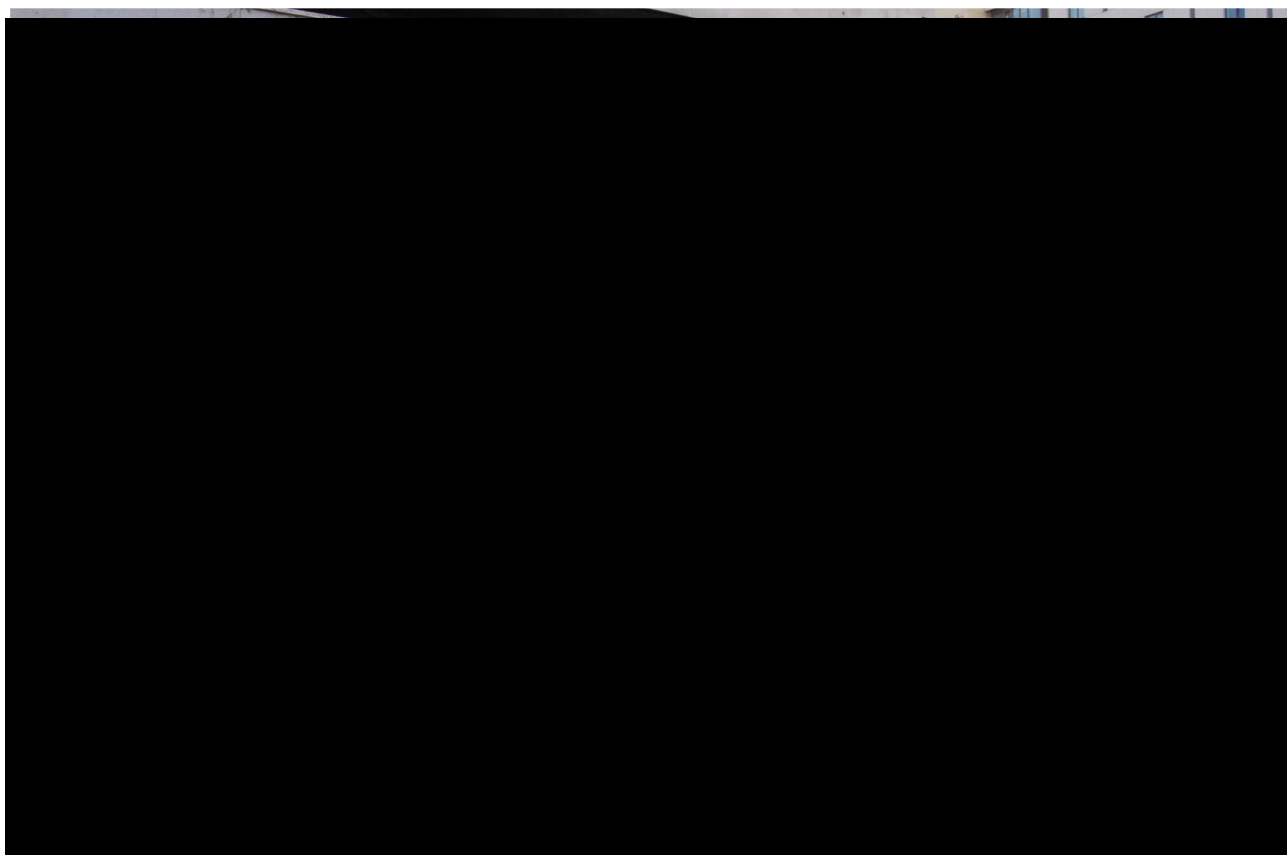


Fig. 16: Labour of Love (2015), another large mural created by Crvena in central Sarajevo (credit: Adela Jušić and Andreja Dugandžić)

Napora Adela and Andreja had two further concerns derived from the terms of their participation in the festival: that it be site-specific, and that the realization of it should be participatory. This participatory element, however, was not only important because it fitted the themes of the festival. It also allowed a conceptual link between the creation of the artwork and the work of the AFŽ. In line with the aims of the AFŽ project, Adela and Andreja aimed to use the creation of the artwork to connect the festival volunteers and local citizens into a broader network of activists, and to highlight the contribution that women had made to the creation of the Yugoslav state. In order to fulfill the idea of it being site-specific, they decided to focus on the archive material they had uncovered that dealt specifically with the Tuzla canton. The archive in Sarajevo contained reports sent by the AFŽ branch in Tuzla, and so Adela and Andreja decided to use this material.

They were conscious, however, and especially given the difficulties they had had finding funding for the AFŽ project, that using this material to celebrate the work of a communist organization would make the ultimate funders of the piece uncomfortable. In order to give the piece a more palatable reading, they were therefore careful to avoid mentions of communism. The panel discussion, and the writing that accompanied *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*, were cast in terms of anti-fascism, rather than communism. The panel they proposed was therefore entitled ‘Experiences of cultural-educational work of women and youth: Antifascism today’, and used the work of the AFŽ to explore ways in which the organization could serve as a model to countering contemporary nationalism in both BiH and elsewhere. Secondly, for the mural itself, rather than focusing on the ideology that underpinned the AFŽ, as Adela had done in the mural for the Bunker, they focused on the work undertaken by the AFŽ in Tuzla county between 1945 and 1950. The reports from the archive contained very detailed information on the hours devoted to various activities by the women of the AFŽ, and it was on this material that Adela and Andreja decided to base their mural. A tight focus on the number of hours ‘donated’ by the women of the AFŽ also allowed a number of subsidiary, more theoretical aims, to be addressed. Primarily, it meant that the piece could draw attention to a theme that has characterized much of the recent work of Adela, and of the members of Crvena more generally: that of the unpaid labour that women undertake. It also allowed the mural to highlight and question a process that Adela sees as problematic: the fact that the Yugoslav women who were publicly recognized during WW2 had generally been acclaimed for acts of martial heroism, and that the more mundane but equally important work they had done was overlooked. This led, in the words of Adela, to these women becoming something like ‘mythological creatures’:

idealized heroines that everyday women cannot identify with. The design of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*, therefore, aimed to provide a way of identifying with the ordinary women that took part in the building of the state, but whose equally heroic endeavors had not been recognized. This last concern is evident in the title chosen for the artwork, *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* (*We Long for Work and Toil*) which is taken from one of the reports sent to Sarajevo by the women of the AFŽ Tuzla county. The quote indicates the willingness of the women to give their labour to the rebuilding of the country, but is also designed to draw parallels between the work of the AFŽ and that of contemporary women's groups in BiH. These groups also 'long for work and toil', is the suggestion, but have been increasingly excluded from mainstream discourse. Further, since the work of the AFŽ was devoted to rebuilding the Yugoslav state after the destruction of WW2, drawing attention to this material was also intended to suggest a parallel with the contribution that contemporary women's groups could potentially provide to rebuilding BiH after the Bosnian war.

Adela and Andreja were also concerned to design a piece that was collaborative, but in this they faced a problem: the time limitation imposed by constructing the piece during the Kaleidoskop



Fig. 17: The construction of Željne Smo Rada I Napora (credit: Adela Jušić and Andreja Dugandžić)

festival. Whilst both artists were keen for the mural to be constructed in a collaborative process with friends in Tuzla and volunteers for the festival, they were also aware that entirely designing the piece with these people would take too long. Accordingly, Adela and Andreja designed the piece themselves a week before the festival. In line with their broader aims, this design was intended to let the women of the AFŽ Tuzla canton to ‘speak for themselves’, and to avoid giving the piece an explicitly ‘political’ message. Instead, they hoped, by ‘merely’ reproducing the archive material as a mural, the people of Tuzla, and especially ‘women and young people’, would read into these words a call to action (interview with Adela Jušić, 9th October 2015). Accordingly, a mural was designed (again in the Crvena house) that focused on the hours the women of the Tuzla County AFŽ had contributed to various activities. At this point, they sent a draft of the piece to Kaleidoskop for approval, and their design was accepted.

Realization

The images and text of the mural were produced in the week before the installation. They were printed by BlackBox print, a print workshop and occasionally a gallery, itself something of a central space in the art system of Sarajevo. As the only ‘fine art grade’ printer in the city, almost every active artist in Sarajevo uses this shop for printing, and the owner, Julijan, maintains close relationships with many galleries and artists in the city. The mural itself was constructed over the course of one day on 15th July 2015. With the help of volunteers from the festival and a group of friends from Tuzla. The group of volunteers was international, with many young people from Italy in attendance, but also the help of a local group called the Urban Beatz Crew: a group of musicians and artists from Tuzla. The first step in the creation of the mural was to paint over the graffiti that initially covered the wall. One of the local volunteers admitted that it had been a friend of his that had done the graffiti that was thus destroyed, but he didn’t mind because ‘that’s what the walls are for’. Then, Adela and Andreja set up something of a production line, with volunteers first cutting out the printed portions of the material, and applying glue, with Adela and Andreja then completing the final step of arranging the pieces on the wall (Fig. 17). During the creation of the piece, many people approached the artists and volunteers. Tuzla was very busy that day, the festival having attracted many people to look around the nearby art fair. The conversations that the volunteers and artists had with the public generally followed a particular pattern: the person who had approached asking about the piece, and one of the artists explaining the history of the AFŽ. In line with Adela’s

assumptions in undertaking the archive project, most people were not aware that the AFŽ had existed. There was music, and later beer, and the process resembled a music festival rather than the production of an artwork. The mural was finished by 9pm, after which the group moved to a local bar.

The next day was the panel discussion, at Atelier Ismet Mujezinović, entitled ‘Experiences of cultural-educational work of women and youth: Antifascism today’, and led by Andreja, Adela, and two friends also loosely associated with Crvena, Damir Arsenijević and Jasmina Husanović. The panel attracted a group of 14 participants, mainly young people, many of whom were known to Adela and Andreja. The discussion was dominated by Adela, who had prepared a speech detailing the history of the AFŽ, and stressing the way in which the organization had built communication networks between women in all parts of the former Yugoslavia. During the seminar, Adela and Andreja were free to make the link between the AFŽ and contemporary feminist networks in BiH and the wider region, something they had downplayed in the design of the mural. Several times, comments were prefaced with the idea that since we were ‘amongst friends’, we could admit that communism was not ‘entirely bad’, but had led to women coming together under a common aim. There were comments to the affect that transition processes had allowed a form of fascism to arise in BiH, in the guise of ethno-nationalism, and that the AFŽ provided a model for fighting contemporary fascism through free associations.

The interpretation of the mural by its audience, as far as I was able to access it, appeared to be strikingly different between those who took part in the panel discussion and those who did not. The majority of people who approached the group constructing the piece were not aware that the AFŽ had ever existed, and tended to view the piece as a monument to the heritage of Tuzla: that is, they saw it as a monument to the forgotten women who had donated their time to the city. For those involved in the panel discussion, however, and for many who were involved in the construction of the piece, its meaning was more subtle than this. It stood, in words of one, as an ‘anti-capitalist’ piece which used the example of the AFŽ to provide a model for the type of free association that BiH desperately needed. Though many were enthusiastic about the piece during its constructions, it did not attract much press attention, something that Adela and Andreja were annoyed about, and something that they blamed on the festival organizers. Indeed, the piece as it stood in 2015 (and still stands now) is something of an ill fit for the festival that produced it. Kaleidoskop, as stated, is designed to boost the tourist potential of Tuzla, and to encourage ‘intercultural exchange’ between

young people. Outside of the day the piece was constructed, it is far from clear that it achieves these aims: outside of this context, and without any background information on the AFŽ, it looks like a particularly strange piece of graffiti. The contrast between the aesthetic of the piece, and the material it deals with, stands in quite stark contrast to the material used to promote Kaleidoskop, in that the mural itself is quite confrontational. Indeed, though the mural was one of the most visible pieces ever supported by Kaleidoskop, and is to my knowledge the only permanent installation they have made, it is notably absent from the press material published by the festival. That said, during a visit in 2017 I was able to observe that the mural had not been painted over, and this perhaps suggests that it is valued by some in Tuzla. In re-visiting some of those who had been involved in the construction of the mural, they explained that it had been afforded no special protection by the Canton, and that they were therefore worried that it would quickly be defaced by ‘fascists’, or merely painted over by graffiti artists. Yet, almost two years after its installation, the only graffiti on the piece was a single line, ‘LGBT’, commonly used by LGBTQIA+ activists in Sarajevo, and presumably used in this case by a similar group in Tuzla.

Though the biography of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* ends here, the material collected as part of the WHS project has been continually re-used. Adela, in particular, had used material to produce several further artworks, initially following the same ‘documentary’ approach as that in *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*, but more recently incorporating images from the archive into collages that use them more as visual, rather than historic, artifacts. The majority of these works, like almost all of the art produced by Adela, have received further funding and support from a variety of organizations. Indeed, the archive is today perhaps the most visible outcome of the process that led to the construction of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*. Adela and Andreja have received feedback from many researchers who have found the material useful, and they are keen to include this academic research as a part of the archive. Though funding for the archive project has stopped, Adela maintains a belief that in future years they will be able to expand upon it, and also incorporate pieces of contemporary art, such as *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*, based on it.

Interpretation

The biography of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*, thus described, can be used to reflect on some of the aims, mechanisms, and limitations of the instrumentalization of contemporary art in BiH since 1995. Firstly, and at the risk of laboring the point, the production of the piece was supported, albeit

in a less direct way than *And What Else Did You See?* in the last chapter, by the international community. The realization of the piece was supported directly by the Kaliedoskop festival, and more indirectly by international funding given to the AFŽ project. Further, the conception of the piece can be seen as a direct product of the ongoing funding provided to Crvena. This funding convenes and ultimately sustains social spaces, and three such spaces are evident in the biography of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*, each with their own characteristics: Crvena, the AFŽ project, and the creation of the mural itself. Crvena, as an intensely social space composed of a vast range of different people (artists, but also cooks and cleaners), and which is devoted to the production and development of both contemporary art and critical discourse, can be seen, in many ways, as the epitome of the type of space which the international community are trying to create through the sponsorship of contemporary art in BiH. The AFŽ project also produces something that might be called a public space, although in the case of this project the space is not physical, but rather an online resource and meeting point for a variety of cultural producers, artists, and researchers. The group that was convened by the production of the mural is also a public space, and the fact that the mural is a large piece of outdoor art also gives it value in turning an otherwise artless public square into an art exhibition, and possibly giving rise to reflection on the role of women's groups like the AFŽ in contemporary BiH.

In addition, the funding given to Crvena, which in most instances is designed to be used for the realization of particular artworks, exhibitions, or other cultural events, ends up sustaining what might be termed an 'extended art system'. Crvena incorporates many different people into its activities, and artworks are generally collaborative. The group also maintains a (sometimes uneasy) alliance with the international community, a large number of other NGOs, and maintains close links with projects such as the Kaliedoskop Festival and the SOC. This means that it can be seen as a locus through which disparate groups can engage with each other, and that funding given to groups like Crvena produces a far broader outcome than the stated aims of individual grants: whilst funding has been given to the group in order to realize particular projects, it ends up sustaining a 'cultural department' within the broader system of NGOs. The way in which this system works is typically informal. When the SOC wants to organize an exhibition to accompany the launch of a social engagement program, for instance, it is Crvena who they call. This extended NGO system, in turn, is embedded within the public sphere, and acts both as a connection between more properly 'political' organizations and the public, and also serves to connect NGOs working on otherwise

disparate themes. Crvena are aware of this, and of their place in a broader system of civil society organizations and NGOs. This is evident in Danijela's quote above that she feels like Crvena are the 'art department' for a much broader system of NGOs. It is also apparent in *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* itself, one of the intentions of which was to use the example of the AFŽ to inspire precisely this kind of co-operation amongst groups. However, and similarly to the biography of *And What Else Did You See?* in the previous chapter, the spaces produced by this funding are not entirely public. The characterization of Crvena as a 'mahala', whilst indicative of the close links between the members of group, also implies an exclusion. Implicit within the term is the idea that the members of the organization share, broadly, a set of political and social ideologies. This is seen in a number of facets of the organization I have outlined above. The questions one is required to answer to join Crvena seem designed to exclude those who are not willing to give time to the organization, but they are also used to assess whether potential members are sufficiently radical, engaged, and committed to the aims of the group. Mechanisms of exclusion are also evident in the uneasy relationship that members of Crvena have with LGBTQIA+ activists, with whom some (and not least the international community) assume they share a common interest. Further, the fact that the group is not willing to apply for funding in order to sustain their ongoing activities, lest they be seen as an 'agent' of the international community, can also be seen in this way: one of the characteristics of the mahala that Crvena have built up is that it excludes those who base their politics on neo-liberalism, and this (they feel) includes the international community.

This rejection of politics, as represented by both domestic political parties and the international community, has been shown by several scholars to be a widespread characteristic of BiH today. Nevertheless, it is particularly apposite when it comes to Crvena because they are a particularly clear example of the conflict between 'being grateful to certain international organizations and individuals for their support', while simultaneously 'feeling subordinate and constrained by their governmentality' (Hromadžić 2015: 21). They fear entering into 'politics' for many of the same reasons that the women who Helms worked with in 2013 (Helms 2013), seeing the term as metonymic for a corrupt (and corrupting) system. At the same time, Crvena are arguably one of the best-placed groups to take advantage of the funding that accompanies the process of 'politics' in post-conflict BiH: not only as artists, but also as women. As Helms argued in 2007, in the post-conflict period women (and women's groups) were often regarded as the most 'natural' drivers of reconciliation processes, because they were seen as passive victims who could therefore become

symbols of the victimization of their respective ethnonational groups. However, since ‘politics’ is perceived as a typically male activity, ‘women who are active in the public sphere must constantly justify their social commitment and simultaneously avoid any question of their own moral and sexual reputations’, and as such ‘the discursive strategies they adopt are based on a denial of the political nature of their activities and/or insistence on their status as civilian victims of the war’ (Helms 2007). This meant, in turn, that the work of Crvena has many parallels across the country, because in the post-war period many women’s groups, which had previously upheld party policies but avoided political issues, refashioned themselves into NGOs to compete for donor support (Helms 2013).

Relationality and Multiculturalism

In analysing how *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*, as an artwork, contributes to the aims of those who funded its creation, one immediately encounters a difficulty: the piece was not designed to achieve the aims of any of these organizations. Indeed, the biography of the piece can be read as a series of processes in which Adela, Andreja, and other members of Crvena justified the artwork they wanted to make against the contradictory aims of those (eventually) willing to sponsor it. This is seen clearly in the immediate process that led to the creation of the piece. Part of the reason why *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* was funded by the Kaleidoskop festival was undoubtedly that Adela and Andreja were able to claim that the production of the piece was a ‘relational’ activity, and that part of its value was the way that this collaborative process would bring together festival volunteers, artists, and perhaps the public. Forms of collaboration, in fact, can be seen at almost every stage of the biography of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*. The archive project relied on the collaboration, once funding was secured, of a number of individuals beyond just Adela and Andreja. Those working for the Kaleidoskop festival, through their prior engagement with members of Crvena, were then able to invite their colleagues and friends at Crvena to take part in the festival. At the broadest level, the artwork also emerged from the deeply collaborative environment of Crvena, in which it was initially discussed and planned. However, seen in this way, the actual construction of the mural, despite being attractive to those funding the festival for its ‘relational’ aspects, was actually the least collaborative part of the biography I have described, because this was largely merely a realization of a piece that Adela and Andreja had planned. Further, it is deeply questionable whether the artwork itself achieved the aims of those who directly supported its creation, which were to boost the tourist

potential of Tuzla, and to promote ‘inter-cultural dialog’. Certainly, Adela, Andreja, myself, and local volunteers came into contact with a group of international volunteers, but whether this constitutes ‘inter-cultural dialog’ is questionable. This is especially problematic given that implicit within this description is the idea that those of ‘different backgrounds’, in the words of the Comune di Bologna, presumably means those of different ethnicities, and this was explicitly not the aim of the piece. Indeed, and as I will return to, the members of Crvena (like almost all of my research subjects) explicitly reject such ethnic categorizations as a ‘backward’, ‘fascist’ tool, and when pushed will define themselves as either ‘Bosnian’, ‘Secular’, or sometimes even ‘Yugoslav’. Given this, funding Adela and Andreja to promote multiculturalism, understood here as multi-confessional, seems a naive decision. Further, the way in which the members of Crvena used this terminology to justify the creation of an artwork that had been planned years before is one example of the way in which the group continually draws on a terminology that, at an ideological level, they entirely reject. This is seen in a number of aspects of the biography of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*: the fact that the panel in Tuzla was focused on anti-fascism rather than communism; the archive project being explained in terms of ‘herstory’ rather than a celebration of communism; and indeed the ongoing activities of Crvena, which are indirectly funded through the sponsorship of similar projects.

Given this, perhaps the most striking feature of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* is that it was ever created at all, and that the group that realized it are able to continue to work successfully within a system to which they are ideologically opposed. The artwork, as it stands today, therefore, is therefore best understood as representing what it was intended to by Adela and Andreja, rather than the justifications that they gave to those who sponsored it: as an ‘inspirational’ piece that raises questions about the nature of women’s rights in BiH today, and whether the imposition of transition and capitalism on the country will improve these. As such, and like Radenko’s piece in the last chapter, the piece is less a ‘inclusive’ piece than an artwork that seeks to problematize the very nature of ‘inclusion’ within capitalism, and (again like Radenko’s piece) can therefore be seen as a kind of ‘meta-commentary’ on a discourse rather than a direct engagement with it. Finally, the difficulties that Adela and Andreja encountered in receiving funding for the piece raises questions about the (passive) suppression of particular forms of criticality by the international community, which in turn suggest that the instrumentalization of contemporary art in BiH has distorted the art system of the country. I will return to this point, however, in the conclusion.

Chapter 8: Untitled / Viva La Transicion! (2015), Bojan Stojčić

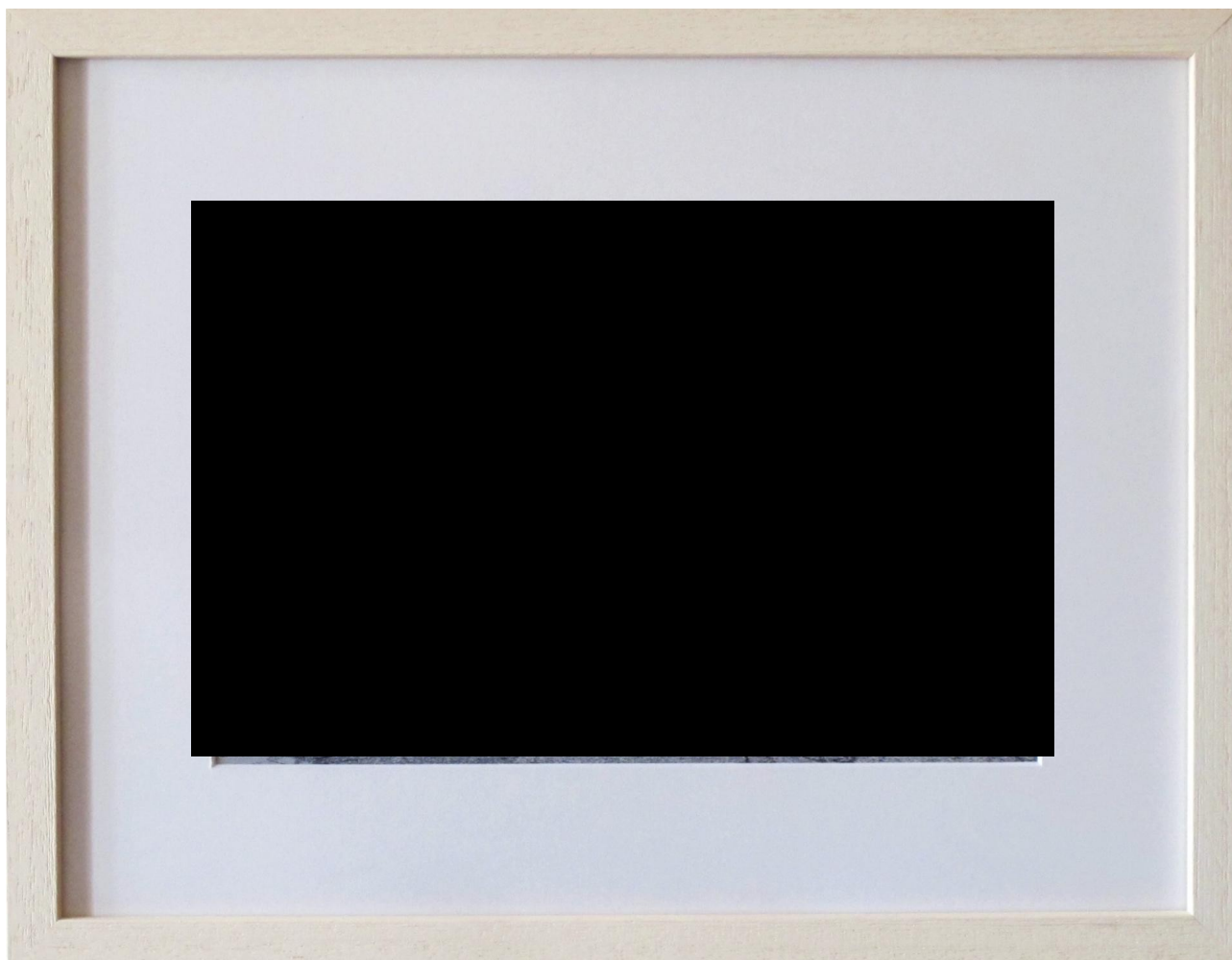


Fig. 18: Untitled / Viva La Transicion! (2015), Bojan Stojčić, inkjet print on paper, 30x50cm (credit: Duplex Gallery)

Introduction

This is the last of three chapters in which I will look at the biography of a particular artwork in order to illustrate the aims, mechanisms, and outcomes of the instrumentalization of contemporary art in post-conflict BiH. The artwork biography that I will present in this chapter is that of *Untitled (Viva La Transicion!)* (2015, henceforth *Viva La Transicion!*, as agreed with the artist, Fig. 18) by Bojan Stojčić. This piece initially consisted of the phrase *Viva La Transicion!* stencilled on the side of a tram in Sarajevo, but was later distributed as a photograph. It is the piece with which I started this thesis, and the exhibition described in the introduction, *The Sarajevo Storage*, is the ‘end’ (to date) of the biography of *Viva La Transicion!*. At first, the piece was installed as part of *Izložba na Šinama (Exhibition on the Rails)*, an exhibition convened by a group of young artists, and during which the work of several artists was displayed inside a tram carriage in Sarajevo. The tram was transformed into an exhibition space, and contained the work of a number of artists, but continued to operate its normal route. The exhibition, which occupied most of one carriage, was only installed for one day, but Bojan’s piece, as painted on the side of the tram, remained in place for at least a year. The exhibition was planned and executed by a group of young artists who are loosely aligned with a cultural organization, Kreaktiva. This ‘kolektiv’ has no formal membership requirements, and virtually no structure: instead, it is best understood as denoting a group of young artists who use a common space to display, and sometimes make, artworks. This space is Kino Bosna, an ex-cinema in Sarajevo which has been run (semi-legally) as a bar and cultural space since the years of the siege. Kino Bosna is the spiritual ancestor of a number of similar semi-legal cultural spaces that have existed in Sarajevo since the end of the war, and has itself inspired attempts to set up similar, ‘autonomous’, ‘anarchist’, spaces. The *Izložba na Šinama* exhibition was conceived of and developed in this space, and the tram itself was understood to be an extension of the sociality of Kino Bosna into the everyday life in Sarajevo.

The only official support given to the realization of the exhibition was the agreement of the Minister for Civil Affairs for the Sarajevo Canton to lend the artists a tram. Thus, unlike the previous three chapters, the early part of this biography contains no instance of instrumentalization: instead of *Viva La Transicion!* and the exhibition being conceived of in response to, or within, a space funded by the international community, it is best understood as an attempt to escape such spaces. Thus, my decision to include this biography here has been driven by the observation that the members of Kreaktiva actually have an intimate and deeply felt relationship to international funding, and to the instrumentalization that it represents, in the fact that they reject it entirely. Indeed, one of their

primary concerns, in continuing to run Kino Bosna and to convene exhibitions like Izložba na Šinama, is to counter what they perceive as the colonization of art by the international community. They reject not only the way in which this involvement has warped the art scene of BiH toward international priorities, but also seek to oppose what they see as the creeping influence of neo-liberalism into BiH and its art system.

These beliefs were challenged by what happened to *Viva La Transicion!* after the Izložba na Šinama exhibition. A photograph of the piece was printed by Bojan, at the suggestion of Pierre Courtin of the Duplex Gallery, and then displayed at the Parallel art fair in Vienna. Then, in the months following the Izložba na Šinama exhibition, Pierre was one of the key actors in organizing the Sarajevo Art Fair, an attempt to convene in Sarajevo the type of international art fair that takes place in Berlin, Paris, etc., and at which he planned to display the photograph, which by this time had become an artwork in itself. In order to realize the art fair, Pierre sought funding from a wide variety of organizations: initially cultural NGOs, including the French Embassy; then commercial sponsors. These efforts made Bojan, and several other artists from Kreaktiva, uncomfortable, because this type of funding is precisely what they were against. As it happened, no funding was forthcoming, and the art fair was largely abandoned as a project. However, then the members of Kreaktiva took on the organization of the Art Fair, in collaboration with a number of artists who had previously been involved in the creation of autonomous art spaces. The national gallery agreed to reduce the fee required to hire the space, and so propelled by what many referred to as the ‘Spirit of Sarajevo’, *Viva La Transicion!* was displayed as part of Duplex’s contribution to the project.

Finally, *Viva La Transicion!* was displayed one last time, and the (to date) final part of the biography of the piece constitutes the first part of the introduction of this thesis. It now forms part of Pierre’s private collection, and as part of the collection it was displayed in the Sarajevo Storage exhibition in 2018. This exhibition, as I have mentioned, was funded by the Agnes B. Foundation and the Institut Français. The exhibition repeated many of the characteristics of the Art Fair, but was far more successful, primarily for one reason: it was not commercial. As a result, Pierre was able to secure a significant level of international support for the exhibition. This put Bojan in an uncomfortable position. Though he, and the group he is loosely part of, reject such support, and although *Viva La Transicion!* had originally been conceived of as a protest against this, it was finally displayed in arguably the most high-profile exhibition to have been funded by the international community since the end of the Bosnian War.

Kreaktiva

Like *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* in the last chapter, the conception and realization of *Viva La Transicion!* occurred over a relatively short period in early 2015. My own access to this process came when I met with Bojan and several other artists (and friends) at two exhibitions during the period when *Viva La Transicion!*, and the *Izložba na Šinama* exhibition, were being developed. These exhibitions both took place in Kino Bosna, a large communist-era cinema in central Sarajevo that has been re-purposed as a bar, music venue, and (more recently) an art space. This venue is an important space for a group of young artists with whom Bojan is loosely aligned, Kreaktiva. Thus, and again similarly to the biography of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* in the preceding chapter, in order to understand the conception and eventual production of *Viva La Transicion!* it is necessary to understand the group of artists that Bojan forms a part of, and the space in which they work.

To describe Kreaktiva as an ‘organization’ may overstate the formality of the group. There is no membership structure for the group, it is not officially registered, and even artists who have worked on projects that bear its name are hesitant to describe themselves as ‘members’. It is perhaps best understood more as a movement or brand, sometimes used by a shifting group of young artists when they convene projects together. About the only definite existence the group can be said to have is that a series of exhibitions, named 100% BiH, 200% BiH, etc., have typically been attributed to it, and that there is a facebook account which is used to promote these. During 2014 / 15 this was run by Nardina Zubanović, an artist, who has been one of the most static members of the group. She explained to me in 2015 that the name Kreaktiva was first used in 2009, to describe a loose group of friends who wanted to organize an exhibition, 100% BiH. This exhibition, as indicated by its name, was conceived of as a reaction to the perceived dominance of foreign artists exhibiting in Sarajevo at that time, caused by ‘a lack of funding opportunities for local artists, and the high cost to hire a gallery for domestic (*domaći*) artists’, in Nardina’s words (interview with Nardina Zubanovic, 26th March 2015). This first exhibition took place in the garden of Fis, a nightclub in Sarajevo, and featured the work of 25 artists: mostly students, but with several more established artists. The exhibition was such a success, it seems, that it turned into a series of exhibitions, initially happening every two months.

The frequency of exhibitions organized by Kreaktiva gradually decreased from 2010 onward, though no-one I talked to offers an explanation as to why. However, from 2013 Nardina, along with a small group of students from ALU, began to organize more exhibitions. Among this group were

Bojan, Zlatan Hadžifejzović, and Mak Hubjer, all artists, who would be instrumental in setting up the Tram exhibition. Among the first exhibitions organized by this rejuvenated Kreaktiva was *ZID (Wall)*, which took place at the historical museum in 2014, and for which Nardina wrote a description of the groups aims, which had previously gone unstated. Its purpose, ran the text, is to use:

Artistic engagement [to] react to, reflect upon, and comment on current social reality. The existential anxiety of the average citizen will be seen in galleries and public areas to ... question the collective position of the individual, the artist, art institutions and art in Bosnian society. The collective aims to discuss the possibilities of art to transform, change and influence social injustice by developing its own humanistic ideology and actively organizing art events in places that are not exclusively galleries or museums. (ZID 2014 (my translation))

This use of spaces which ‘are not exclusively galleries or museums’ is, arguably, the most important concern behind the work of Kreaktiva. One of the reasons why the group seeks to convene exhibitions in unusual spaces is, in itself, quite unusual. Several members of the group have told me that their teachers at the art academy will not allow them to exhibit their work until they have finished their studies. This was a ‘traditional’ proscription, they claim, but one that now seemed anachronistic. Therefore, by organizing group exhibitions in unusual spaces, they hoped to ‘hide’ their work in exhibitions that would not be seen by their teachers, and by doing this as a group hoped to also diffuse their professors’ ire across the whole class, and therefore avoid personal censure. Another reason for Kreaktiva’s focus on unusual spaces is perhaps more familiar: the high cost of renting gallery space in Sarajevo means that this is beyond the reach of members of Kreaktiva, and by exhibiting their works outside these spaces they hope to avoid this cost.

The Rejection of Instrumentalization

The cost of renting gallery space could arguably be met by grants from the international community. However, Nardina, Bojan, Zlatan, and (to a lesser extent) Mak, refuse to apply for this. Nardina explained to me in 2015 that the group ‘have never taken money from those international organizations, and don’t plan to’ (interview with Nardina Zubanovic, 26th March 2015). The reasons for this are somewhat similar to those of Crvena. The members of Kreaktiva feel that in accepting money from the international community they would undermine their legitimacy as a cultural and political alternative. Ultimately, Nardina said, it would reduce the ‘revolutionary’ nature of their

work, and ‘limit the freedom of artists to do what they want’ (interview with Nardina Zubanovic, 26th March 2015). The word most often used in this regard is the ‘condescension’ of the international community. In the broadest terms, at least as articulated by several members of the group in 2015, they want to ‘operate outside the art system of BiH in order to retain [their] freedom from politics’. In addition, however, the group is proud of its punk philosophy, and retains a suspicion (again like Crvena) that the ultimate aim of international funding is to commercialize art, and turn it into a commodity. The most commonly mentioned example in this regard is turbo-folk, which the members of Kreaktiva often express a deep aversion to, as the ‘crass commercialization’ of culture. In this, further, may be seen another reason for the group seeking to exhibit outside gallery spaces: such is their aversion to commercialization that they see *any* gallery space as representative of the capitalism they reject. That is, like Buren’s *La Place des Drapeaux* piece, they seek to use the organization to undermine a gallery system that they see as compromised by capitalism.

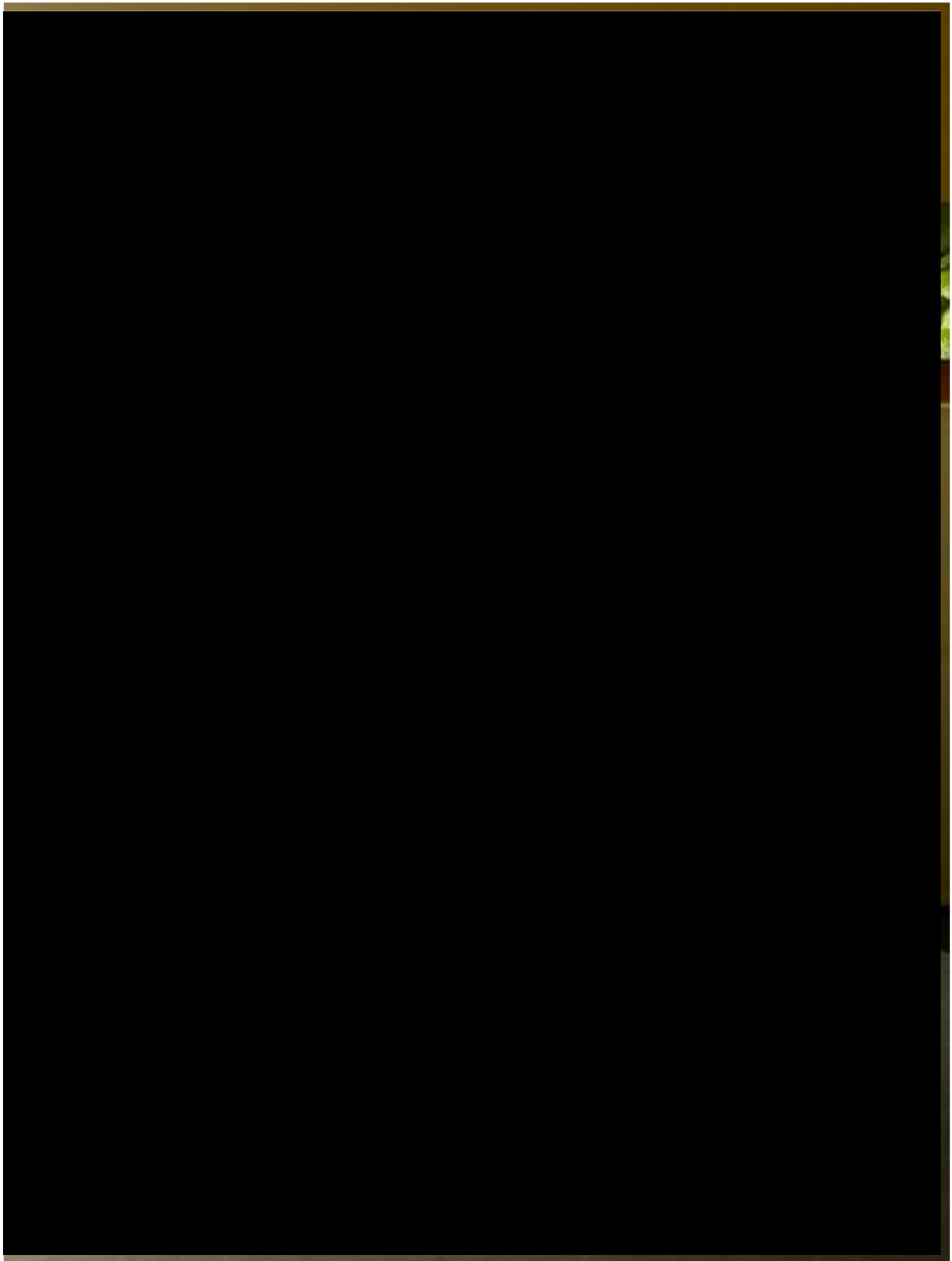


Fig. 19: Memory Tends to Idealize (2014), Bojan Stojčić, various editions (credit: Bojan Stojčić)

In talking about the reasons why they reject external funding, the members of the group make extensive use of two terms, 'political' and 'freedom'. Their way in which they use these terms would be unusual outside the Bosnian context, but is familiar from other ethnographies conducted in the country. Indeed, Kreaktiva are the clearest example in my own fieldwork of a phenomenon that many scholars have noted: that for many people in BiH today, 'politics' is a term associated with corruption and elitism. Members of the group, Bojan included, flatly deny that their work is 'political', even though many of the artworks produced by artists associated with the group, and statements of their intent as reproduced above, appear to be eminently political: an attempt to use 'artistic engagement [to] react to, reflect upon, and comment on current social reality', for instance. Kreaktiva use 'political', however, as a short-hand to refer to artworks that merely seek a shallow engagement with social problems, of the type (they claim) that has been sponsored and created by the international community. For the type of work, Bojan told me in 2015, in which the artists do their 'research on the demographic group and then make [their] painting ... does their research, reaches their conclusions, and then somehow makes this visual', and in which the visual, 'artistic' element of the artwork is reduced to mere 'illustration' (interview with Bojan Stojčić, 12th May 2015). 'Maybe that is art, but what is it but social engagement?', as Bojan puts it. The word 'freedom' is, similarly, also used in a very specific way by members of the group, largely to contrast their own work to that of the 'political' artwork they disparage. Thus, by far the most common reason given for the refusal to apply for international funding is that this would limit the 'freedom' of artists to produce the work that they wanted: no true artist wants to produce work about democratization, as Nardina once said to me, but they are forced to by the international community.

Kreaktiva argue that this kind of work, in which 'true' artistic freedom has been suppressed by 'political' processes, has completely colonized the art scene of Sarajevo. They therefore look to the avant-garde work of the 1980s as their model, though they also claim that many of the artists of that time have been compromised, or merely become 'lazy'. A particular focus of this criticism is Collegium Artisticum, a gallery located in the Skenderija shopping center, and closely aligned to the ULUBiH, the communist-era group of artists. Though the gallery 'was first set up to help younger artists', as Mak told me in 2015, it is now run by an older 'artist mafia' of professors and older artists. They characterize the atmosphere at exhibitions in this space, and indeed the work of the artists associated with it, as 'dead', and too traditional to have any critical value. The gallery focuses on 'nice landscapes', in the words of Bojan (interview with Bojan Stojčić, 12th May 2015). Though several of the other people mentioned here: Pierre, Radenko, Adela, etc., attend exhibition

openings in this space, the members of Kreaktiva never do (at least in my experience). Concurrently, many members of Kreaktiva profess admiration for the work of Jusuf, both as an artist and as the curator and collector behind Čarlama: a gallery that sits opposite Collegium, and contains a vast archive of work from the last 30 years of Bosnian contemporary art (Blackwood 2015b). Jusuf himself was one of the founders of the Zvono Group, mentioned in Chapter 2. To run Čarlama, he seems to have recruited a changing cast of students to help, and during my fieldwork this role was filled by Zlatan and Mak, among others.

The Neo-Neo-Avant-Garde

The artwork produced by Kreaktiva is influenced by the 1980s avant-garde in several key ways. The Dada-inspired approach of Zvono, in particular, is often used as a frame of reference: the irrationality, humour, and site-specificity of the group's art has been a big influence, as has the idea of incorporating artistic practice into everyday life. In an interview in 2015, Bojan and I talked about this at length, and his own approach to creating work is indicative of the ideas that motivate Kreaktiva as a whole. The majority of his recent work has consisted of words written onto, or with, the environment, whether this be a cafe or a snowdrift (Fig. 19). Though these 'intimate poems' are regarded, by Bojan, as artworks in themselves, they are then photographed, and these photographs are then displayed as artworks in themselves. He has integrated the production of these works, Bojan explains, into his everyday life, and has a strict rule that he makes one every day. The words he writes, Bojan explained, are entirely dependent on the location of the piece, because 'you cannot write the same sentence on asphalt and on a flower' (interview with Bojan Stojčić, 12th May 2015). The words, in themselves, often incorporate jokes, and the work of Mladen Stilinović is often raised in this regard, as is a theme, very common in Sarajevo, that the Bosnians (and Sarajevans) like to joke about themselves. These 'poems' are also often nonsensical, in order to 'open a space for people to re-think that space', and indeed this rejection of logic is a frequent topic for Bojan, and one that is manifest in the way in which his artworks are produced and displayed. When invited to take part in the Zvono prize exhibition, for instance, he planned to display a large number of these pieces that had been produced, one a day, over a number of months. Instead of displaying them 'in the logical way', as he puts it, he instead organized them by color, in order to disrupt the linear progress they represented. This process was even more pronounced in another project which, in the end, never came to fruition, but which Bojan is very fond of talking about. He was invited to make a video for a local hip-hop artist, in which every word of the song would be written on a coffee cup or

in condensation on a window, for example, in a similar way to Bojan's other work. He made hundreds of such images, and saved each on his computer under the word written in the image. When looking at the files on his computer, however, they were displayed in alphabetical order rather than the order they appeared in the song. He was so enthused by the 'nonsense' song that they now represented that he made a second cut of the hip-hop video, in which the words appeared in alphabetical order. 'The whole poem is there', as he put it, 'but has been changed and subverted' (interview with Bojan Stojčić, 12th May 2015).

Another aspect of the avant-gardist tropes that Kreaktiva have inherited from the pre-conflict art scene has already been mentioned: the fact that they seek to exhibit art in non-traditional spaces. *Viva La Transicion!* is an example of this, and Kreaktiva have also convened exhibitions in several other spaces. Of particular importance to the group, however, is Kino Bosna, an ex-cinema that has been re-purposed by the group as an unofficial headquarters and exhibition space. Kino Bosna is very well-known in Sarajevo. It was built in 1928, as Prvi Maj Cinema (First of May Cinema), and during communist Yugoslavia was run by the state. During the siege of Sarajevo, it continued to function as an informal cultural center, despite a shell destroying a portion of the building on one memorable night in 1994. Since the end of the war, the building has operated as a bar and live music venue, though its semi-legal status means that it has been under frequent threat of closure, and has sometimes stopped operating for months at a time. The most regular and well-attended event to take place in the space takes place every Monday evening, and though this is advertised as a 'sevdah soiree', it is neither: the event is far too busy and loud to be accurately categorized as a 'soiree', and the music being performed is not 'sevdah', a traditional form of acoustic music, but rather consists of Yugoslav pop songs from the 1970s and 1980s. This event regularly draws a crowd of several hundred: many students, but also artists, visiting scholars, musicians, etc. A band, almost always composed of the same musicians, plays Yugoslav pop songs whilst filtering through the crowd. Sena, an elderly lady who started working at the cinema in the 1970s, is nominally in charge. There are three reserved tables: one for Sena and friends, one for the musicians, and one for any visiting police. Over the years, the space has built up quite a large collection of art and graffiti. Characterizing Kino Bosna as a social space is somewhat difficult, because it exhibits elements of both contemporary cultural center and Yugoslav-era kafana. Jelena (a friend, and my Bosnian teacher at SSEES), on a visit from Belgrade, expressed shock that such a space still existed: the songs, décor, prices, and feeling were identical to pre-war clubs she grew up going to in Yugoslav Belgrade. That 1970s pop classics are being played in a space that otherwise aspires to be at the

cutting edge of culture is, indeed, somewhat incongruous, and this is something that Nardina and the other members of Kreaktiva are aware of. They have organized concerts of more contemporary bands, with mixed success.

Kreaktiva and Kino Bosna

When Kreaktiva talk and write about convening exhibitions ‘in unusual spaces’, what they mean, more often than not, is in Kino Bosna. The space is very important for the activities of the group: it is where they socialize and plan the activities of the group. It is also, increasingly, where they exhibit their work. The first exhibition that Kreaktiva organized in the space was the third edition of the 100% BiH series of shows. The previous two iterations of this had taken place, as I have explained above, in Fis, a nightclub. Though the owner of the nightclub was keen to continue to host these shows in the club, at that time Kino Bosna was under threat of closure, as it is frequently. Kreaktiva’s decision to move these exhibitions to Kino Bosna was, therefore, initially a form of protest against this closure. They hoped that by making the space ‘alive’, in Nardina’s words, they would save it. They view their ongoing activities in the space as a form of continual protest against the threat of closure.

Since that date, however, the importance of Kino Bosna to the work of Kreaktiva, both practically and conceptually, has grown. Their decision to use the space to exhibit their work is partially driven by practical concerns, in that there is still a lack of affordable exhibition space in Sarajevo. However, as of 2015, Kreaktiva often talk about their activities in the space as a work of art in itself. The conceptual motivations that underlie this idea, in turn, are drawn from two sources. In part, the ‘punk’ philosophy of the group means that they are proud of making art from whatever resources are available, and many see Kino as their primary resource. They are proud of the fact that they get the exhibitions together at zero notice, on zero money. Mak is critical of this, saying that they either need to focus on making money or challenging art, not a little bit of both. There is also a perception among members of the group that Sarajevo lags behind other European cities in the development of its ‘underground’, ‘alternative’ art scene (this terminology is theirs), and a desire to realize this in Sarajevo. The components of this living artwork are multiple: not just the art that they are continually adding to the space, but also the creation of a ‘utopian’ social space in which artists and others can be free to express themselves. Indeed, the fact that the space still operates primarily as a bar is important, they claim, to the realization of their ideas for the space, because whilst the audience for art in Sarajevo is small, everyone will come to a bar, and thereby be

drawn into appreciating art. The ‘Idea’, as Nardina told me in 2014, ‘is to bring the public into shows’ to create ‘a utopia, even if only for one day’ (interview with Nardina Zubanovic, 26th March 2015). Kreaktiva also see their use of Kino Bosna as the continuation of a number of related projects and trends, both in BiH and elsewhere. During the early part of my fieldwork, the ‘occupy’ movement was continually in the news, and this was much discussed as a model for the ‘occupation’ of Kino Bosna by the group, which they saw as an ongoing site of protest against corruption. Also much mentioned is Savamala, an area of Belgrade that was occupied by an amorphous group of artists and activists until, in 2015, it was demolished to make room for luxury flats. There are also several squats in Ljubljana that Kreaktiva see as analogs of their own activities. By far the most direct inspiration for Kreaktiva’s use of Kino Bosna, however, is a cultural space that was active in the early 2000s in Sarajevo, called Baraka because it occupied the site of a former army barracks. This space, like Kino, existed as a semi-legal cultural center. Unlike Kino, however, and as one of the creators of Baraka, Demis Sinančević, told me in 2015, in this earlier period the ‘police had better things to do ... and left us alone’ (interview with Demis Sinančević, 12th May 2015). Demis has, since the closure of Baraka in 2005, continually approached the municipality government to get permission to use some of the abandoned buildings in Sarajevo, but has continually been turned down. Baraka is important here for two reasons. It represents the ancestor of Kino Bosna, albeit one that existed at a time when it was more possible to maintain semi-legal cultural spaces in Sarajevo. It also represents a model for the creation of a series of autonomous, informal cultural spaces that informs not only Kreaktiva’s work in Kino Bosna, but also the creation of the *Izložba na Šinama* exhibition, and all of the exhibitions that *Viva La Transicion!* would eventually be exhibited in.

Conception

This characterization of Kreaktiva and Kino Bosna given, I will now move onto the conception and realization of *Viva La Transicion!*. The conception of the piece took place over the first three months of 2015, in a parallel process with the planning of the *Izložba na Šinama* exhibition. This exhibition was planned, primarily, by a group of three friends: Bojan, Mak, and Zlatan. My own access to the process that led to the exhibition came through frequent discussions with Mak during this period, and participation in an informal planning meeting that took place during the opening night of the *In Situ* exhibition on 1st March 2015. The immediate motivation behind the *Izložba na*

Šinama exhibition was based on similar concerns to those that animate Kreaktiva's use of Kino Bosna. Throughout the closing months of 2014 and the first few months of 2015, the group organized many exhibitions and events in the space, and increasingly sought to include a wider range of people within them. One such event, for example, was entitled 'creative Wednesdays', in which the group encouraged people to come and use Kino Bosna as an open studio for the creation of artworks. This event was envisaged as a skills exchange, and the group were keen to involve younger people and families, to which end they visited several schools in Sarajevo to invite students to come. Despite these efforts, there remained a concern, especially for Mak, that the types of event and exhibition that the group was organizing were still attracting too narrow an audience. As both Mak and Bojan said to me at that time, in almost identical phrasing, 'we need to make exhibitions that are not just for our friends'.

These concerns peaked during the *In Situ* exhibition. This exhibition was an attempt to 'hack', in the terminology used by Kreaktiva at that time, a normal Monday night event at Kino Bosna. The idea was that many people would think they were coming to a 'normal' Monday night in Kino Bosna, but that instead of the traditional music, they would be 'confronted' with a huge, site-specific exhibition of contemporary art. The exhibition was organized for the first day of Spring in order to represent the re-emergence of an 'underground' art scene in Sarajevo. Bojan, Mak, and Zlatan all contributed pieces to the exhibition. Bojan's contribution was to make paper cut-outs of a series of obscure abstract nouns ('precarity', 'awkwardness', etc.) and attach these to the lights in Kino Bosna so they would be projected onto the walls. Zlatan, as part of his MA, had been making life size papier-mache casts of friends in various poses, and he displayed these pieces. Mak presented a work that would directly inspire the planning for the Izložba na Šinama exhibition: a video work in which he and Zlatan, wearing HazMat suits, used a pressure washer to clean various statues around Sarajevo. The statues chosen were of cultural figures, most prominently Ivo Andrić, and Mak's intention, as he told me later, was to draw attention to the way that young people were disregarding their own cultural heritage in favor of 'American' cultural exports.

The *In Situ* exhibition was, in the almost unanimous opinion of those present, an enormous success. An estimated 600 people attended: some, undoubtedly, had merely come to socialize at what they thought would be a normal Monday night at Kino Bosna, but the exhibition also drew a large crowd of students from both Sarajevo and beyond. Despite this, many of the artists involved, as the night progressed, began to feel frustrated that this audience were not engaging with the artworks on display. Instead of an art exhibition, indeed, the event came to resemble a well-decorated party.

Further, though this audience was the largest that anyone could remember coming to an art exhibition, it was still composed of a very similar mix of people to a standard Kino Bosna Monday night: plenty of students, a cohort of international interns and post-graduate students, and a group of older people associated with the art system of Sarajevo in various capacities. It was this feeling that led, toward the end of the night, to a frustrated conversation between Mak, Zlatan, Bojan, myself, and several others, about how to engage with a wider audience.

It was during this conversation that the *Izložba na Šinama* exhibition was conceived. Mak took the lead in this conversation, having already sketched out an idea. He had been thinking about where the *most public* space in Sarajevo was: a space in which everyone, rich or poor, old or young, was present. The city tram, he had decided, was one such space. Accordingly, he had conceived of convening an exhibition of contemporary art within a tram carriage whilst it continued to travel its normal route. In addition, the anniversary of the tram system being installed in Sarajevo was due to fall on 6th April, and so such an exhibition could be linked to the history of BiH and Sarajevo: the fact that the tram system in Sarajevo is one of the oldest in the world is inescapable in Sarajevo, appearing on tram tickets, posters, and even short histories of the city. The idea found immediate favour, and over the next month Mak invited many artists to take part in the planned exhibition. During this month, The exhibition was excitedly talked about by those associated with Kreaktiva, who saw its value in three aspects. Primarily, there was a feeling that by confronting people with art, rather than inviting them to an exhibition, the project would reach an audience of people who had never seen contemporary art before. Secondly, the exhibition was talked about as an inspirational event: one of the most common themes that emerges when talking to members of Kreaktiva is a complaint about the ‘laziness’ of transition-era BiH, in which ‘everyone is waiting for something to happen ... but no-one does anything’, in the words of Nardina (interview with Nardina Zubanovic, 26th March 2015). The *Izložba na Šinama* exhibition, in this sense, was an attempt to provide proof that radical ideas were still possible. Lastly, the idea of the exhibition was valued because, several people told me, it was proof of the independence of Kreaktiva from the internationalized art scene. Like many of the projects convened by members of the group, a brief conversation was had regarding whether they should apply for funding to realize the exhibition, but this was swiftly decided in the negative. There was a feeling, in fact, that the exhibition would be so unusual that it would not, in any case, attract any such funding, and that it therefore represented a truly independent project.

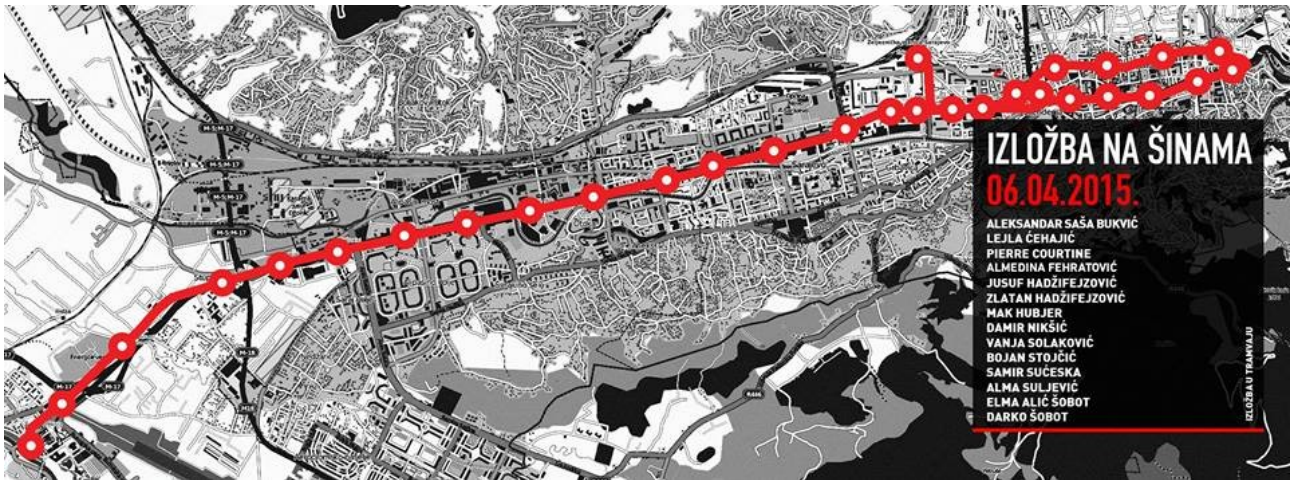
Izložba na Šinama

Fig. 20: Flyer for the *Izložba na Šinama* exhibition, April 2015 (credit: Mak Hubjer)

After Kreaktiva had decided to realize the *Izložba na Šinama* exhibition, Mak took charge of organizing it (Fig. 20). He invited many artists to take part, though there was an assumption that the work of Bojan and Zlatan would necessarily be displayed, since they had been involved in the conception of the exhibition. In order to gain permission to use a tram for the exhibition, Mak approached the newly-incepted Cantonal Minister for Civil Affairs, whom he gained access to via a family connection, and who quickly agreed to allow the group to use a tram carriage. The majority of the artists who exhibited works in the exhibition installed existing work within the tram carriage. Bojan, however, took a different approach (Fig. 21). The vast majority of his work, as I have explained, is inherently site-specific, and as such he was keen to use the highly unusual space of the tram to produce a work that used this space. Bojan and I discussed the artwork he installed, *Viva La Transicion!*, at length during an interview on 12th May 2015, and his motivations for making the piece are a good indication of the way in which the *Izložba na Šinama* exhibition was seen by members of Kreaktiva, and of the concepts that inform his own work. He intended the first reading of the piece, he explained, to be as a joke. The idea that ‘transition’, as a political and social project, could become a rallying cry as passionate as ‘Viva la Revolucion!’ is inherently absurd: it is widely seen as a technocratic project divorced from everyday life. Incorporating humour, as I have explained, is an important concern for Bojan. However, as he told me in 2015, this is only one aspect of the piece. ‘Good art for me is like an onion ... it has to have layers’, he told me, so whilst the piece is intended to be funny, it is also serious. As such, invoking the concept of transition on the side of a tram is also intended to draw parallels between the movement of the tram and the movement (or lack of it) of BiH as a whole. The tram is also continually in a ‘transitional’ state

between stations, and the peculiar geography of Sarajevo means that it visits, in Bojan's conception, a number of historical eras, or rather a short history of the empires that have administered BiH. As the tram visits Ilidža, therefore, it 'goes to turkey', then as it goes to the cathedral it goes to 'austro-hungary', and as it 'comes to Marjin Dvor it comes to Yugoslavia'. Each of these, Bojan means to suggest, are also transitions. On the other hand, the tram route in Sarajevo describes a circle around the city: a revolution, in other words. Thus, part of the deeper 'meaning' of the piece, for Bojan, is that transition is also a revolution, in two senses. One is that BiH continually returns to the same forms of 'domination and oppression', in which context Bojan raises the fact that the peacekeeping forces in BiH are now drawn entirely from Austria, and the increased investment of the Turkish state in schools, universities, and cultural heritage. Secondly, 'transition' is a 'revolution' in the sense that it is going nowhere. Like the tram, Bojan means to suggest, the process of transition in BiH is stuck in a loop, always returning to where it started. All these intentions given, it is also worth pointing out that Bojan, in the same conversation, flatly denied that the work was 'political', a fact which is very strange given the motivations he outlined, but one that may be explained in relation to what I have outlined above: 'political', for Bojan, means something similar to 'sponsored', or perhaps 'co-opted'.

The other artworks that were displayed in the *Izložba na Šinama* exhibition included those of Zlatan, the same sculptures that had appeared at the *In situ* exhibition, and several other pieces. Two of these are notable in the present context. The first is that Mak, who had taken the lead in organizing the exhibition, defined his 'artwork' as the exhibition itself. That is, in his conception, the bringing together of artists, artworks, and the people who would normally ride the tram, constituted a social artwork in itself. What he sought, he explained to me, was to create the same kind of 'utopian' space that Kreaktiva were working toward in Kino Bosna, but extended into a truly public space. The other artwork that is notable is that of Jusuf Hadžifejzović, who installed (with Pierre Courtin) an iteration of his piece *Giorgio Morandi Department Store*. This work, instead of paintings or photographs, consists of empty cartons and packages of everyday materials: cigarettes, toiletries, cans of food, alcohol, perfume, medicines. All have been consumed by Jusuf himself, and are then displayed as works of art. They can also be bought, and in fact that process is an important part of the artwork. The price of each item, for instance the empty box of cigars that I bought, was the same as a full box of the same cigars from a shop. With each purchase, the buyer also got a signed document to certify that what they had bought is indeed 'art', and not just an empty box of cigars. The inclusion of Jusuf's work in the *Izložba na Šinama* exhibition is notable

for two reasons. The first is that the way in which this piece operates mirrors that of the tram. This is because, at least according to one critic, one of the meanings of the piece is the way in which it ‘parodies the processes of consumption in late capitalism’ (Blackwood 2015b) through turning commodities into art, and then back again. This may also be repeated, with the cigar box continually shifting between commodity and art at each instance of purchase. The second reason I mention this work here is that it illustrates the proximity, as Mak and others understand it, between the avant-garde scene that Jusuf represents and their own work. Indeed, some have noted that Jusuf remains the ‘only continuity’ between the art of the 1980s and that of today (Blažević 2013). For the members of Kreaktiva, the work of Jusuf, as represented in *Giorgio Morandi Department Store*, is valued because it shares many of their own concerns, and something of their aesthetic: not just a concern to interrogate the imposition of capitalism upon the art system of BiH, but also elements of humour and absurdism that inform the work of these younger artists.



Fig. 21: Bojan's piece 'in motion' on the tram

The Izložba na Šinama exhibition was realized, with the help of the employees of the tram company, on the day before the exhibition. It occupied most of one carriage of the tram, with *Viva La Transicion!* painted on the outside. The next day, just before the tram started its normal operating route, it was parked outside the train station. The press had been invited, and many journalists were present. For those involved with the exhibition, the fact that Mak gave an interview to CNN represented a huge success that was spoken about at length in the months following the exhibition. The exhibition then began its tour around the city. Zlatan's sculptures rocked precipitously from side to side as the rickety tram followed its route. Pierre and Jusuf had set up a table at the back of the carriage to sell the artworks that were part of *Giorgio Morandi Department Store*. Damir Nikšić, an artist, was dressed as a tram conductor and gave satirical speeches, with the help of a megaphone, on the politics of BiH. The 'audience' for the exhibition, as one would expect and as the artists had hoped, was composed of everyone who normally takes the tram in Sarajevo: old and young, rich and poor. The reaction of those getting on the tram was, typically, that of surprise and bewilderment. Nevertheless, many, many people looked around the exhibition, and gathered around to hear Damir's satirical speeches, often laughing. Children, in particular, were delighted by the exhibition, asking questions of the artists and their parents, and after the exhibition this was talked about as one of its great strengths. All this said, the reaction of those who saw the exhibition, or at least those who I talked to, was typically one of mystification. Whilst almost everyone agreed that the exhibition was a nice way to liven up the daily commute, hardly anyone offered an interpretation of the artworks present, including *Viva La Transicion!*. This is not to disparage the intelligence or knowledge of the average citizen of Sarajevo. The works present, in line with many of the works produced by Kreaktiva, incorporate elements of irrationality that make them resistant to easy interpretation. Indeed, the aims of the exhibition itself, which were partly to create a utopian space and disrupt the normal operation of the city, meant that interpretation of the works, in itself, was not really the point: instead, the very fact that an art exhibition could be convened in truly public space was designed to engage and inspire 'normal' people. That said, the exhibition did gain a large degree of public exposure, not least in the fact that it was seen by thousands of people on their daily commute, but also in the press coverage that it generated. Beyond Mak's interview with CNN, the local press covered the exhibition extensively, albeit all merely quoting the same interview that Mak gave to *Oslobodjenje* (a local newspaper) in which he called the exhibition a 'gift of artists to all citizens of Sarajevo'.

Afterlife

After the Izložba na Šinama exhibition, the biography of *Viva La Transicion!* could be said to split into two streams. One ‘form’ of the piece, as a mural painted on the side of the tram, continued to tour Sarajevo for years afterward, and came to be seen as a particularly witty instance of graffiti. However, during the opening event for the exhibition, Bojan was encouraged by Pierre to take a high-quality photograph of the tram. This photograph was subsequently printed, defined as a work of art in itself, ascribed to Bojan, and in this form continued to circulate through the art system of BiH and elsewhere. This process, indeed, is not unusual in the context of Bojan’s artworks, which (as I have explained) are typically photographed in order to be displayed, with Bojan seeing such photographs as constituting artworks in themselves. One slight difference when it came to *Viva La Transicion!*, however, was the fact that Pierre had previously encouraged Bojan to take higher-quality images of his work, and so both took the opportunity of having press photographers present to request that one of them take a professional quality image, which was later sent to Bojan.

Pierre’s intention, in encouraging Bojan to print such a photograph, was to display it at art fairs. The reasons why Pierre thought *Viva La Transicion!*, as manifest in a photograph, was suitable for these events have been previously explored in Chapter 6, in relation to Radenko’s piece. Pierre’s intentions, in curating shows for such fairs, are to present a fair representation of the contemporary art of BiH, but also to take pieces that are likely to sell. Bojan’s piece, according to Pierre, was therefore valuable because in curating such shows he likes to take ‘a few [pieces] about borders, a few about transition’ (interview with Pierre Courtin, 27th September 2015). In addition, he explained, Pierre was also concerned to support ‘the youngest generation’ of Bosnian artists, of which Bojan forms a part. It is worth noting, however, that whilst Bojan appreciated help in presenting the work, he was very reticent to have it displayed for sale, either in Duplex or in art fairs. The reasons for this are clear: Bojan shares with many members of Kreaktiva an aversion to what they perceive as the ‘commodification’ of contemporary art. By offering the work for sale, therefore, Bojan was concerned that he would be entering into a system which he opposed. More specifically, he was also worried that *Viva La Transicion!*, as displayed in art fairs, would be read as merely a piece of work by a young Bosnian man obsessed with stereotypically post-conflict discourses, and that his work would thereby be reduced to merely a cipher for Bosnian art. This is something which, in his own words, he tries to struggle against in his own work: ‘it’s easy to classify my work as ‘coming from a post-war country’, but not everything in life is easily classified’, he told me in 2015. I am ‘half serb half croat, but Sarajevo is my home’, he said, ‘what

am I supposed to say about the war that is easily said and easily understandable ... without falling into received wisdom like 'war is bad'?'. This is one of the reasons, he continued, why he seeks to incorporate elements of nonsense and irrationality into his work, and why he was concerned about displaying *Viva La Transicion!* at art fairs: he had produced the work for an audience in Sarajevo who are well aware of the complexities of transition, and he feared that in displaying the work in an international context its complexity would be reduced to mere 'complaint'. Nevertheless, after much encouragement, Pierre displayed the photograph of *Viva La Transicion!* in Duplex, priced for sale at €400, and in subsequent months took the piece to several art fairs. *Viva La Transicion!* was therefore displayed at the Vienna Parallel art fair, the first in which Bojan had taken part, and which he attended. Upon returning to Sarajevo, he shyly suggested that the experience had been a good one, that he had received positive feedback on the piece, and that he was now considering making more works in English in order to make them more accessible to an international audience.

The Sarajevo Art Fair, Part I

Beyond these international art fairs, *Viva La Transicion!* was displayed twice in Sarajevo between 2015 and 2018. In between, it hung on the wall of Duplex 100m². The first of these exhibitions, the *Sarajevo Art Fair*, took place at the national gallery of BiH in Sarajevo in June 2015. This exhibition was, ostensibly, an attempt to realize in Sarajevo the kind of international art fair that takes place in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, etc. In reality, however, the complexities and frustrations that accompanied its organization meant that it was eventually realized as a group exhibition without a commercial element. In addition, it was through this process that *Viva La Transicion!*, which had been conceived of and produced in a context in which many rejected international funding for art, came into contact with instrumentalization processes.

The story of the Sarajevo Art Fair, and of *Viva La Transicion!*'s display in it, is a complex one. The exhibition, in fact, can be said to have been envisaged as two entirely separate projects, albeit sharing the same name. The first iteration of the project was led by Pierre Courtin of the Duplex gallery, and was envisaged as a way of 'kick-starting' an art market in BiH. For various reasons, this version of the art fair was never realized. However, the project was then taken up by a number of other people, notably members of Kreaktiva and also those who had been involved in the Baraka space, and re-envisaged as an entirely different form of exhibition. Instead of being organized on a commercial basis with the intention of selling artworks, as per the original concept of the

exhibition, it became a version of the kind of spaces I have discussed above: an ‘autonomous’, ‘anarchist’ space similar to Baraka, Kino Bosna, and indeed the Izložba na Šinama exhibition.

It was Pierre who first conceived of the Art Fair. His intention for the exhibition was to bring to Sarajevo a version of the art fairs that he regularly takes part in, under the auspices of Duplex gallery, outside BiH. The fact that he is able to do so, and indeed the fact that Duplex continues to exist in Sarajevo at all, is in itself a consequence of the ongoing funding for the gallery primarily provided by the Agnes B. Foundation, and which I have described at length in Chapter 6. As I noted there, Pierre and others profess a frustration that there exists no art market in BiH. The Art Fair was accordingly an attempt to start to develop such a market: not just for the sake of artists and gallerists, but also in order to benefit the local economy more generally. Indeed the original press materials produced for the Fair, which were discarded when the initial project collapsed, made much of the exhibition’s role in ‘growing and developing a local economy’. The original organizers were Pierre, the SCCA, and Collegium Artisticum. The plan for the first iteration of the Art Fair was to hire all three floors of the national gallery, and to have stands on which 24 galleries would be represented: half from the Balkans, and half ‘international’. After ‘100 hours on skype’, as Pierre put it, by January 2015 they had managed to agree the participation of 19 galleries. The majority of these galleries, as Pierre told me, had agreed to attend as a personal favour to him. They were aware that the chances of selling work in Sarajevo were slim, given the lack of an art market in BiH, but they were still ‘willing to come and lose some money’, as Pierre put it, though he joked at that time that €2000, the participation fee for the Fair, ‘is a lot of money just to eat some ćevapi [a typical Bosnian dish]’ (interview with Pierre Courtin, 20th January 2015). This level of fee, accordingly, was decided upon as the absolute minimum possible in order to hire the national gallery at a reduced rate, print a catalogue, and hang the exhibition. Even then, it represented too much for many of the Balkan galleries who wanted to participate, and for these galleries the fee was (eventually, and after much discussion) waived. The operating budget for the project was therefore estimated at €20,000, but some of this fee was to be made up of either support from international cultural organizations or corporate sponsorship. The organizers, therefore, informally approached a number of NGOs to gauge their interest in funding the project, but were universally met with the same response: these organizations are unable, as a matter of policy, of funding exhibitions that have a commercial element. As long as no artworks were offered for sale, in other words, they would support the project. This ran entirely counter to the aims of the Art Fair, and so the organizers turned to corporate sponsorship to realize it. This did not work either. Though some companies

expressed potential interest in sponsoring the show, none were willing to make the first investment: ‘once we get the first €10,000’, as Pierre put it, it would be easy to get the rest, but ‘no-one really believes it is really going to happen’ (interview with Pierre Courtin, 20th January 2015). There was great frustration, around this time, at this lack of interest, especially given that the Sarajevo Film Festival regularly attracts large numbers of corporate sponsors. These problems, by January 2015, were already threatening to undermine the project, although the organizers remained split on the possibilities of it happening. Nela felt at that time that the ‘Spirit of Sarajevo’, in her words, a pride in convening exhibitions with no time and no money, would overcome the lack of financial interest in the project. Pierre, by contrast, was conscious of the professional risk he was taking in organizing the project. Several ‘international’ galleries had, by this point, tentatively agreed to take part in the Fair, and had scheduled a trip to Sarajevo at a time when they would otherwise be participating in far more lucrative art fairs. He feared, in short, that he would damage his professional relationships if, having convinced these galleries to participate, the fair was then cancelled at short notice. Eventually, and following a further planning meeting on 16th January 2015, this risk became too great, and the original organizing committee abandoned the project. As Pierre put it to me in a FB message on 23rd January 2015, ‘I decided to not involve myself in the Sara Art Fair project, it doesn't work and I took this hard decision. We will postpone it to do it perfectly...but later ... I told to other ex-partners that they can do the fair by themselves if they want...but since I resign, SCCA resign too...I will know today if the third partner wants to do it or not, but in any case will be without me and without Duplex and SCCA ... better to stop it now, to limit collateral damage and to do it perfectly later ...’.

The Sarajevo Art Fair, Part II

The Sarajevo Art Fair therefore appeared to have been abandoned as a project. However, after a number of months, rumors began to circulate that the project had been revived by Demis Sinančević. Duplex, Collegium, SCCA and others then received an invitation to take part in the Art Fair, as did Kreaktiva, who would become an important part of its second iteration. Though sharing the same name, however, the character of this re-born Sarajevo Art Fair was entirely different to the first. This was not least because the people involved in organizing the re-born Art Fair, Demis himself and members of Kreaktiva, possess a very different view of the role of art in society than the original organizers of the exhibition. Specifically, and as I have outlined, many members of Kreaktiva reject both international funding and the idea of selling work, fearing that this will lead to

a limitation on their freedom, and ultimately the commodification of art. In this regard, it is notable that the leader of the rejuvenated Art Fair, Demis, was instrumental in setting up and running Baraka: the autonomous cultural space that Kreaktiva used as inspiration for their activities in Kino Bosna, and for the Izložba na Šinama exhibition. The re-born art fair was accordingly re-focused: for Demis, the primary purpose of the exhibition was now to show the work of local artists, rather than to sell artworks. In any case, by this point the ‘international’ galleries that Pierre had invited had already pulled out. Accordingly, Demis re-envisioned the exhibition without its commercial element, and invited local groups of artists to contribute to it. He also drew on a long-dormant collective of artists, Vizionarsko Drustvo (Visionary Society), of which he was a part, who were instrumental in setting up the Baraka space, and who had not been active since 2007. He also approached a number of corporate sponsors, but largely met with the same response that the earlier organizers of the Art Fair had faced. In order, therefore, to get around the problem that no-one wanted to be the first to fund the project, he took out a personal loan to prove his ‘commitment’ to the exhibition happening. Further, because the project was now not a commercial one, it would have been possible for international NGOs to fund the exhibition, but now this idea ran into a different problem: like the members of Kreaktiva, the new organizers of the Art Fair were opposed to this idea. They feared that if they took money from the international community they would demand that the show deal with particular themes, and that this would limit their freedom. There was, however, an exception made. Mak, following his contact with the newly-incepted Minister during the Izložba na Šinama exhibition, put Borijan (another member of Visionary society who was in charge of finance for the art fair) in touch with the minister, and the Cantonal ministry of culture, to unanimous surprise, contributed a small amount to the cost of materials. After this point, many local artists and organizations, including Duplex, SCCA, Collegium, and Kreaktiva, agreed to take part in the exhibition.



Fig. 22: Banner for the Sarajevo Art Fair, 2015 (credit: Demis Sinančević)

Demis' vision for the Art Fair, apart from now being a non-commercial space, was entirely different from that of Pierre and the previous organizers. He had become involved in the project, he told me in 2015, because he felt that the fair not happening, given the amount of work that people had put into it, would be 'another wound' for Sarajevo (interview with Demis Sinančević, 12th May 2015). He was also concerned to use the fair as a site of activism to prove that such a large exhibition could be organized in Sarajevo *without* international support: again, like Kino Bosna and the Izložba na Šinama exhibition, he was partially driven by the idea that the show could act as an inspiration for a rejuvenation of the Bosnian cultural scene. In this regard, he specifically noted that he hoped the Fair could provide an impetus for the museums to re-open, by proving that there was a large domestic audience for culture. At the same time, he was concerned that by organizing a version of an international art fair in Sarajevo he was importing a cultural model that would lead to the homogenization of Bosnian art, because it would invite the kind of commodification and politicization that, he claimed, was the purpose of the international funding of art. Accordingly, he took great care in the curation of the exhibition to display 'difficult' and 'complex' artworks by Bosnian artists, in order to make the artfair 'theirs', rather than 'just another supermarket for art' (interview with Demis Sinančević, 12th May 2015).

The Art Fair, despite the problems involved in organizing it, was a great success (Fig. 22). It drew a huge and diverse audience, despite the fact that the organization of the exhibition was very fast and (to try to be fair) highly chaotic: the flyers given out to publicize it had the wrong date, and barely half the exhibition had been hung at the time of the opening event. Indeed, members of the audience who had arrived early were asked to help with the installation of the exhibition, and this was (generally) happily entered into. This included, to return to the artwork, *Viva La Transicion!*, which was displayed at the art fair as part of Duplex's contribution to it. Accessing the audiences' interpretations of the piece in the show was very difficult, given that there were hundreds of artworks on show, but for those hanging the piece its value in the exhibition was pretty clear. Like the exhibition itself, the tram project (by now fondly remembered) was an expression of a set of concerns that motivated their work, but also the series of spaces that it had been exhibited in (or, indeed, 'on'): Kino, the Tram, and now the Sarajevo Art Fair, re-realized as the same kind of non-commercial, non-sponsored, non-'political' space. Indeed, in the months following the Fair this element of autonomy and chaos was what was most mentioned in relation to it. The fact that the project had been saved from extinction by a self-organized and autonomous group was, many felt, an articulation of the 'spirit of Sarajevo': a dedication to realizing projects with no money, no time,

and no space, that involves calling in favours from friends and relying on the good will of strangers, that had begun during the Siege but continued in projects like the art fair.

Interpretation

After the Sarajevo Art Fair, *Viva La Transicion!* continued to be displayed in several international art fairs and to hang, in between these fairs, in Duplex. During this time, a number of copies of the original photograph were made, and Pierre bought one of these. It was in this capacity, as a part of Pierre's private collection, that the piece would have its most recent exhibition: in The Sarajevo Storage show with which I started the current work. As I stated there, this show attracted significant support from a number of international cultural organizations: the Agnes B. Foundation had been critical in sustaining Pierre's work in Sarajevo, but funding was also secured from the WARM Foundation and the Institut Francais. With reference to the biography of *Viva La Transicion!*, the fact that it was included in this exhibition represents something of an irony, because the artwork had been produced by an artist, and a group, that rejects such international funding. That said, when I talked to Bojan at the 2018 show, he had softened his stance somewhat on this issue, and was reticently willing to accept international funding as long as he got to produce the artwork that he wanted to produce. After all, he explained, if this meant that more people saw his work then this was desirable.

Initially, there appears to be a problem with linking the biography of *Viva La Transicion!* with the paradigm of the international instrumentalization of art, in that the work was consciously *not* instrumentalized during the early part of its biography, or at least not by the international community. However, the work of Kreaktiva also exhibits a strange contradiction: that although they profess a deep distrust of the 'politicization' of their work, they exist within an art system that, as I hope has become clear by now, has been dominated by the international community using contemporary art as a tool. This gives rise to two observations. The first is that, although they seek to be autonomous, the fact that there is still an infrastructure and audience for contemporary art in BiH, and particularly in Sarajevo, is (at least partially) a consequence of the support given by the international community. The Art Fair, for instance, and by extension *Viva La Transicion!*'s appearance in it, could not have happened without the expertise and participation of Duplex, the SCCA, and Collegium Artisticum, all of which have been supported by the international community. The second observation is that, although they pride themselves on their autonomy from political organizations, the way in which Kreaktiva see contemporary art, and the things they

believe it can ‘do’, are very similar to the way in which the international community appear to view art in BiH. Their belief that confronting ‘ordinary’ people with art will overcome the ‘laziness’ of these same people, and encourage them to become politically and socially engaged, is a direct analog (albeit in different terms) of the paradigm through which the international community explains its support for art in the country: that art, in their terminology, opens public spaces which strengthen civil society and the public sphere, which then acts as a interstitial and communicative space between citizens and the state.

At the same time, the biography of *Viva La Transicion!* reveals a deep problem in the way in at least one aspect of the international approach to the sponsorship of art in BiH. This sponsorship is partially motivated by the idea of ‘culture for development’, and though these agencies are wary of defining ‘development’ merely in terms of economic development, it is at least partially motivated by this. The aim of the original Art Fair, as I have explained, was to start an art market in BiH, and to contribute to the development of the local economy. The fact that the organizers were barred from NGO funding for this project, however, suggests that there is something of a contradiction in this regard. I am not suggesting that international organizations should fund exhibitions that are primarily concerned to generate profit for private collectors, or even galleries, but rather that funding an art system (almost) entirely through international grants is not sustainable, and (as is becoming apparent) actually creates problems for the art system. It is therefore critical, at least for the ongoing existence of a viable art system in BiH, that another mechanism for funding the production and circulation of contemporary art is found. The inception of an art market, I would suggest, is the best option for doing so. However, the problems that Pierre encountered in trying to do so are indicative of the way in which dependence on international funds actually prevents such an innovation.

Turning to the broader effects of the exhibitions described above in terms of the public sphere, I would argue that several of the projects and exhibitions described here are indicative of something of a resurgence in this regard. The biography of *Viva La Transicion!* contains a number of unique exhibitions. The Art Fair, as the first direct attempt to promote the art market in BiH, was certainly unique. The *In Situ* exhibition is perhaps the largest exhibition of contemporary art, in terms of the audience numbers, to have taken place in post-conflict BiH. The only other candidate, in this regard, would be the D-0 Ark Project, although the narrow audience for that project contrasts starkly with the broad audience that *In Situ* attracted. Kino Bosna, in fact, is arguably exactly the kind of social space that the sponsorship of contemporary art is expected to produce in BiH, in that

it draws a huge audience from across the social spectrum and of all ages, including young people. Indeed, during one evening at Kino Bosna I talked to an employee of an international cultural organization which I will not name, who told me that ‘we should really be funding this place ... young people, protesting ... but we can’t because it is illegal ... it represents the kind of space that we all want to see ... young people organizing themselves’ (anonymous). The Izložba na Šinama exhibition was also unique, at least in the memory of my contacts, and at least in the post-conflict period. The exhibition represents a direct attempt to connect artists and the public within a truly public space that, whilst being a signature of the pre-conflict Zvono group, has not been seen since. The audience’s mystification with regard to the particular artworks on display cautions against any direct furtherance of particular political discourses arising from this exhibition, though many of Kreaktiva’s (and the international community’s) other aims were undoubtedly achieved: ‘inspiring’ citizens to take direct action, particularly children, or even just using contemporary art to prove that there still exists a viable and critical civil society. All of these exhibitions continue to be talked about in Sarajevo in 2018.

The Limits of Ambiguity

To turn, finally, to my broadest level of analysis, the biography of *Viva La Transicion!* can also be used to explore the characteristics of contemporary art that mean it is perceived, by the international community, as being able to afford particular things. Specifically, it reveals the limits to which the ‘ambiguity of meaning’ of contemporary art is prized, both by the market and by international funders. To re-iterate my argument from before, one of the reasons contemporary art is valued by the international community is because the ambiguity of meaning of many artworks means that they invite reflection on particular themes, rather than determining a particular interpretation. However, much of the work produced by the artists associated with Kreaktiva take this to a logical extreme. Their embrace of avant-gardist ideas means that they prize nonsense and irrationality, and this often results in artworks which are (and are sometimes designed to be) completely impenetrable. As I have argued, perhaps the most useful way to see the group is as a resurgence of the neo-avant-gardist movement that was last seen in Sarajevo during the 1980s. This is evident in the historical reference points for their artworks but also in the way they seek to integrate art into ‘everyday life’, and indeed in their celebration of the chaotic and anarchist ‘Spirit of Sarajevo’ which formed such a large part of the way in which the second Art Fair was understood. In this context, the fact that the audience for the tram exhibition did not ‘understand’ the artworks was actually part of their plan:

the point of the exhibition seemed less to guide reflection on the political and social aspects of post-conflict BiH, and more to confront the public with an anarchistic interruption into everyday life. Accordingly, in this context the lack of ‘meaning’ of the artworks was part of their value, in that in the very irrationality of the work may be found a protest against the ‘politicization’ caused by both international instrumentalization and market commodification.

Because of these features, it is tempting to regard Kreaktiva as a continuation (or re-birth) of the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde. Their work and concerns certainly mirror those of this earlier group, as well as those of the neo-avant-gardes that operated outside Yugoslavia. These similarities include a rejection of, or an ironic play with, the ideology of the society in which they live: as Roberts puts it in relation to earlier neo-avant-gardes, ‘one of the critical functions possessed by the artist in our culture is that he or she is able to incorporate and utilize various artistic or nonartistic practices without fully investing ideologically and socially in these activities’ (Roberts 2011 724). Kreaktiva also share with these earlier movements a preoccupation with time, and with their historical place within it. As explored above, several scholars have seen the avant-garde, and then the neo-avant-garde, as a movement with an elevated sense of ‘endism’, as Foster (1994) puts it in relation to the work of Bürger (1984). Indeed, in some senses the situation in BiH today, and Kreaktiva’s response to it, can be seen as a direct analogue of Groy’s assessment of Russian conceptualism as the constant anticipation of a communism that never occurred. Similarly, the group’s focus on the Yugoslav past would seem to parallel Roberts’ definition of the neo-avant-garde as an exploration of ‘futures past’ (Roberts 2011: 726) in which the Yugoslav project was fully realized.

This said, I would further argue that Kreaktiva’s work differs from that of other neo-avant-gardes in a number of key respects. The first is that, though their work is undoubtedly informed by these predecessors, this occurs more at an aesthetic level than a theoretical one. Without meaning to criticize the group’s grasp of the relevant theory, I would argue that their work shares many of the features of the neo-avant-garde not because they are dealing with the same conceptual frameworks, but simply because they have imitated it. In short, Kreaktiva’s work would seem to me to be a replication, rather than a development, of the earlier practices: a practice that is more ‘retro’ than ‘neo’. This, equally, is not to criticize their work, which in fact is perhaps the perfect response to the perpetual ‘meantime’ that BiH exists in today. Rather than the millenarianism of the neo-avant-garde, which required new categories of life and art in order to build and herald a new society, Bojan’s tram mirrors transition both by going around the same track continually, and also by being stuck in a past in which political change was possible. Lacking a clear vision of the post-transition

future, the group have recreated forms of activism that seek obsolete goals: namely the full realization of the defeated Yugoslav project. Finally, I would also argue that another key difference between Kreaktiva and the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde is simply that Kreaktiva face a radically different ‘machinery of instrumentalization’ than their forebears. On the one hand, Kreaktiva are opposing the dominance of the art market in a country that does not have an art market. On the other, the system in which they work is supported by political organizations that value the very criticality they are producing.

At the broadest level, therefore, what the biography of *Viva La Transicion!* reveals is a continual tension between the neo-avant-garde tendencies of Kreaktiva and forces seeking to use art to achieve particular objectives. Bojan’s reticence at having his work sold in art fairs, and then instrumentalized in the Sarajevo Storage exhibition, is indicative of this. I would argue that Pierre valued the piece, in these contexts, partially because it had a more definable ‘meaning’, albeit as a representation of Bosnian art, than the other, more ambiguous, pieces on the tram. The piece, at this point, therefore enters into a system of categorization that Bojan himself rejects: ‘true art’, he told me in 2015, ‘is something that you cannot describe ... you cannot categorize it’, and ‘the moment when you completely describe the art it is dead ... it is like a stuffed animal’ (interview with Bojan Stojčić, 12th May 2015). This tension is also present in the observation that that Kreaktiva has, to some extent, taken on the terminology of the international community. The group, whilst proud of its autonomy, cannot escape the need to ‘incorporate the normative categories of an omnipresent international community into their own modes of justification’ (Bougarel et al., 2007: 27). This tension between the autonomous, subversive aims of the avant-garde and the homogenizing force of the society it defines itself against has, indeed, been a primary concern for those who have attempted to theorize the avant-garde, and the process of institutionalization that Burger describes (1984) can be seen as an earlier analog of what has happened to Kreaktiva. What this suggests, turning back to the characteristics of contemporary art that make it prized for the international community, is that although the ambiguity of typical contemporary artworks is useful in some respects, there are limits. Specifically, though artworks that are sufficiently ambiguous to suggest certain topics for discussion without presenting a defined position on them are valued, if artworks are *too* ambiguous, they are not. This is seen directly in *Viva La Transicion!*, which in a Bosnian context, with an audience aware of the complexities and ambiguities of transition itself, possesses a far greater degree of ambiguity. In an international art fair, by contrast, Bojan feared it would be read in a much less complex manner. In the broadest analysis, what this means is that there exists a

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continual tension between the beliefs of the market, and of international cultural organizations, which are that art can promote discussion on particular discourses, and that part of the art system which sees itself as avant-gardist, and which therefore rejects the very idea that art operates in a rational fashion.

Chapter 9: Conclusions

In this chapter I will reach some conclusions in relation to my research questions, drawing on both the literature I have discussed and the ethnographic material I have presented. Accordingly, this chapter will focus on a number of themes: why contemporary art was regarded as a useful instrument in post-conflict BiH; the purposes for which it was used; an assessment of whether it achieved these aims; and whether this had any unintended consequences.

My arguments in this chapter will proceed as follows. I will begin by describing the clearest, most direct, and perhaps most obvious outcome of the instrumentalization of contemporary art in post-conflict BiH: the maintenance of the art system of the country. Though this maintenance was certainly not one of the stated objectives of intervention agencies in sponsoring art in BiH, it was always implied within them, and in addition is important for the argument I will develop in this chapter. I will argue that this art system is in a period of resurgence, despite the gradual reduction in funding from the international community, but that its dependence on international funding has also led to the destruction of some of the affordances that led to it be funded in the first place. I will then turn to the stated aims of the international community in funding contemporary art in the country, starting with the goal of ‘strengthening civil society’. Contemporary art, I propose, can contribute to this objective, albeit through a slightly different mechanism than that it is commonly believed to operate through: rather than art’s primary purpose being to produce public, critical comment on the sociopolitical issues facing BiH today, it appears that its primary value is in providing social spaces in which extant civil society groups can meet. During my fieldwork, I found little evidence that contemporary art produces publicly critical comment, and therefore little evidence that it directly contributes to the public sphere of the country, and therefore similarly little evidence that it directly contributes to the more specific aims of the intervention agencies who have funded it. This is because, in the first instance, there is almost no public coverage of contemporary art in the country. In addition, though most of the events and spaces produced by the art system are theoretically open to the public, in reality access to them is barred for a variety of reasons, primarily social class. Even where the art system directly penetrates into truly public space, as with the *Izložba na Šinama* exhibition, the difficulties of interpretation faced by those people ‘accidentally’ in attendance acts as a warning against the assumption that provocative artworks can actually provoke fruitful discussion,

let alone such aims as democratization. Given these findings, I will conclude this chapter by questioning why contemporary art continues to be believed in as a force for social change.

The Maintenance of the Art System

I will begin by describing the most direct outcome of the sponsorship of contemporary art in BiH over the past 20 years: the continued existence of an art scene in the country. This may seem like a somewhat obvious observation to make, but it may risk being lost due to the detail I have given in the preceding ethnographic chapters. Almost all of the sites I have described over the previous three chapters are the product, directly or otherwise, of the international sponsorship of contemporary art in BiH. To take these in order, the Spaport Biennial, the D-0 Ark project, Radenko's show in the Haus Der Kunst, both Duplex galleries, Crvena, the AFŽ archive project, the Kaliedoskop Festival, and the Sarajevo Storage exhibition were (and sometimes are still) all funded by the international community. In addition, though *Viva La Transicion!*, the work of Kreaktiva, and the Sarajevo Art Fair projects were not directly supported, the fact that they define themselves *against* such support means that they also have a deep relationship with it. As I noted in my methodological chapter, in selecting these three biographies for presentation here I have sought to give a fair representation of a larger number of other such biographies, and especially the level and frequency of instrumentalization that is apparent in them. As such, though in this chapter I will draw my conclusions primarily from the three biographies I have presented, they also hold for a larger set of data. From this, it is possible to conclude that the level of international support to contemporary art in post-conflict BiH is high: that a sizable majority of the galleries, biennials, exhibitions, organizations, and ultimately individual artists in BiH are dependent on international support. Therefore, in the broadest sense, it is possible to conclude that in the words of Dragievič Šešić & Suteu, this art system has been 'internationalized' (Dragievič Šešić & Suteu 2005), at least in terms of funding.

Accordingly, it is clear that the continued existence of a viable art system in BiH is dependent on funding provided by intervention agencies. In addition, many of my contacts believe that this system is, in fact, the strongest it has been for many years, and is undergoing a period of resurgence. It is certainly true that many of the exhibitions, projects, and organizations I have discussed are superlative in different ways, and suggest that the art system of BiH is stronger than it has been for many years. The In Situ exhibition, in the unanimous assessment of my contacts, drew that largest audience for a contemporary art exhibition ever seen in Sarajevo. At the time of the Memory Lane

exhibition, as I have described, it was regarded as the most significant exhibition of contemporary art from BiH to have taken place in the post-war period, an accolade that must now surely have passed to the exhibition that followed it but was also convened by Duplex, The Sarajevo Storage. The striking growth of Crvena, from a group of ten friends into an organization with more than 40 members, is also indicative of the interest and belief in such cultural collectives. The conceptual concerns of the *Izložba na Šinama* exhibition, which directly confronted the public with contemporary art, are not new, but an exhibition of this kind has not been attempted in Sarajevo since the 1980s. The D-0 Ark Biennial, by 2015, had built a collection of Bosnian and international art that has surpassed that of *Ars Aevi*. These projects also contributed to a widespread feeling, on behalf of almost all my research subjects, that the art system of BiH in 2015 was in an unparalleled period of resurgence. As Pierre put it to me in 2015, 'it's a blooming time ... the next three years will provide for the gallery for the next twenty', he said, 'or I will quit, who knows' (interview with Pierre Courtin, 27th September 2015). This, in fact, is what happened, but it also reveals that, alongside the belief that the contemporary art scene in BiH is stronger than it has ever been, there is a simultaneous and deep skepticism that this will continue. Both Bojan and Demis, in almost identical phrasings, told me in the run-up to the Sarajevo Art Fair that 'every few years someone new comes along and says they are going to do something', by which they meant start a large art project or a new gallery, but that this hardly ever comes to fruition. I would argue, however, that in the projects I have described here, 'someone' has indeed 'done something', and that whilst many of my research subjects invariably professed a skepticism that each new project would 'work', they simultaneously took an active and keen part in them.

Such exhibitions spaces also facilitate the creation of further collectives, galleries, and organizations. As such, the more 'permanent' spaces I have described, in which may be included Duplex and Crvena, also act to create further groups, which may be more temporary and more informal, such as Kreaktiva. In this context, the closure of Duplex in 2018 raises fears that the communication it facilitated, not just between artists but also in broader terms, will break down. Indeed, the closure of the gallery is illustrative of a widespread concern, also present among many of my research subjects, that the funding that has sustained the art system of BiH for the past 22 years is slowly ending. There are two ways in which this reduction in funding is understood. On one hand, there is a widespread feeling that, since the international community has not achieved its aims in BiH, pulling out now is tantamount to a betrayal. On the other hand, many see in this gradual

reduction of funding an opportunity, and perhaps a necessity, to break the dependency of artists in BiH, and the country more generally, on international support.

The Decline of Ars Aevi



Fig. 23: La Place des Drapeaux, as it appeared in 2015 (credit: Matthew Webber)

The first way that this reduction in funding is viewed is well illustrated by the way in which *La Place des Drapeaux*, which I have mentioned at several points in the preceding chapters, is now viewed by artists and others in Sarajevo. The piece still stands, albeit with its flags removed, on the site of the ‘future’ museum, although the immense difficulties that Ars Aevi have faced in realizing this museum since 2001 mean that many are sceptical that it will ever be built. In this context, the ruination of *La Place des Drapeaux* has come to be understood as a metaphor for the gradual abandonment, as many see it, of BiH by the international community. Further, the fact that Ars Aevi relied for support on the international community, but were then unable to realize their goal, has become something of a cautionary tale for artists and cultural groups in Sarajevo.

Between 2001 and 2014, the Ars Aevi project was slowly undermined by a variety of factors. The influx of international support from 2001 onward was certainly a factor in sustaining the project, but

in itself was not sufficient to overcome ‘the ruinous political framework with which Ars Aevi – like so many other cultural institutions in Sarajevo and across Bosnia – struggled during the first postwar decade’ (Hajdarpašić 2008: 122). This political framework was important to the success of the project because the realization of the museum required local political engagement. The USD \$1 million that had been donated by UNESCO was envisaged to sustain the project, and was clearly not sufficient in itself to build a large museum: a similar project, the MSU in Zagreb, has cost USD \$84 million to build. Thus, this funding ‘did not contribute anything towards resolving the ongoing institutional predicament that was keeping many war-damaged cultural establishments so incapacitated that they could barely function’ (Hajdarpašić 2008: 123). Ars Aevi was caught up in this argument, because from 1999, when the project moved to Sarajevo, the collection was held in the Historical Museum. In 2002, the Federal Ministry of Culture served an eviction note to the collection because ‘no one was paying the rent for the space’ occupied by Ars Aevi. The Ministry, who had previously been among Ars Aevi sponsors, claimed that it was forced to this move by the pressure of international organizations to streamline its operations (Carolo 2016). Accordingly, the collection moved to a space in the Skenderija shopping center, the establishment of which was provided for in the funds received from UNESCO in 2001. Even in the new space, however, the Ars project continued to face problems, and ‘harassment’ (Ramović 2013). The cantonal government occasionally cut the power to the Skenderija center, where several art galleries and collections are held, in order to persuade these collections to close (Blackwood 2012). The reasons for this may be found in some of the aforementioned difficulties: the museum represented a view of BiH as a multicultural, European state which was at odds with the ethnic exclusivity that has characterized the discourse of the political establishment that had promised to support it. Hadžiomerspahić was aware of this, and in an interview in 2014 stated that this animosity towards the project was coming from ‘individuals with quite a bit of power – who don’t want Sarajevo to be a modern, contemporary city’. This was either because, he continued, these individuals ‘just honestly do not understand the long term economic and development potential of this project,’ or for the more political reason that they felt that ‘that this kind of museum of international contemporary art just doesn’t belong in Sarajevo’ (Bloch 2014).

Alongside these domestic problems, there was also a gradual diminishing of interest from international organizations in the project. In part, this was due to the refusal of local organizations to act as partners, which had become very apparent by 2007. However, this reduction in support can be seen as (at least partially) an outcome of Ars Aevi’s own approach. Carolo argues that from 2001

onward, those running the project became increasingly focused on the building of the museum, at the expense of local outreach, and as a result failed to build dialogue with local organizations (Carolo 2016: 15). More broadly, the gradual withdrawal of support for the Ars Aevi project also reflects the shifting attitudes of international cultural organizations in the period 2002 – 2007. These organizations had come to feel that if local actors cared about culture, then they should assume responsibility for the vitality of contemporary art, and that there had been enough time in transition states to establish new structures capable of assuming the care and responsibility for social-economic development. Some, whilst accepting this argument, pointed out that it did not recognize the unique circumstances that BiH faced (Blažević 2015).

Nevertheless, Hadžiomerspahić and others continued to advocate for the museum to be built, sometimes in innovative ways. Hadžiomerspahić staged a performance in 2012, for instance, in which he cleaned the Ars Aevi bridge, in protest against the ongoing lack of support for the project (Brezar 2012). Ramović and others wrote articles calling for support, notably writing in 2012 that the museum could still be realized by 2014 if Bosnia's politicians 'stood by their promises' (Ramović 2012). She told me in 2013 that Hadžiomerspahić had recently resigned his directorship of the project in protest, but continued to run it, as a 'director in absentia' (interview with Amila Ramović, Deputy Director of Ars Aevi, 19th May 2013). In addition, those involved with the museum also continued to grant interviews to the host of international research students who visited Sarajevo inquiring after the museum, and were often laconic about their success: Hadžiomerspahić told both myself and my colleague Bloch, in almost the same words, that:

Had I spent two decades working on creating this in London or Berlin or New York or Moscow I don't think I would have achieved anything ... [because Ars Aevi is ultimately] a project of an ethical relationship of the artists of the world towards that magical word Sarajevo. (Bloch 2014)

As of 2014, Hadžiomerspahić stressed that an agreement had been concluded for Sarajevo City, the Canton, and the Federation of BiH, to pay the rent for Ars Aevi's current space and to contribute towards technical costs. Despite this, 26 years since the museum was first envisaged, there is understandable skepticism that it will ever open.

Throughout all these problems, *La Place des Drapeaux* continued to stand on the site of the planned museum (Fig. 23). As the years passed, and it became increasingly apparent that the museum itself would never be realized, the way in which it was perceived gradually changed, so that by 2014 / 15, when I completed the bulk of my fieldwork, it had come to represent something quite different than

what it did between 2001 and 2007. In short, if *La Place des Drapeaux* in that earlier period came to represent, for some, the international community's dedication to the creation of a multi-cultural Bosnian state, by 2014 it had come to represent, for many of the same people, the breaking of this promise. This interpretation of the piece is dependent on a feature of the way it is seen that I have noted above: that still, in 2014, it was read by many as the expression of the international community, and as expressing the agency (in Gell's (1998) terms) of the Ars Aevi project.

Between 2001 and 2007, this meant that *La Place des Drapeaux* could be interpreted as representing the international community's commitment to BiH. Today, this means that the piece represents the distance of these organizations, both UNESCO and Ars Aevi themselves, from the everyday concerns of the citizens of Sarajevo. Bojan told me that one of the problems in accepting international funding was that often the terms one had to use to justify one's own projects just 'didn't mean anything to most people' (interview with Bojan Stojčić, 12th May 2015). This distance between citizens' understanding of their country and that of the international community, a distance that *La Place des Drapeaux* has come to represent, is also one of the problems noted by Kappler (2012) in her review of cultural projects in post-conflict BiH. She argues that projects that are too willing to adopt the rubric and vocabulary of the international community run the risk of exacerbating the gap that many people feel between their everyday experience and international political discourse. Indeed, one of the most common responses, when I asked my contacts about Ars Aevi, was that both they and the international community were out of touch with the concerns of 'ordinary people' in Sarajevo and BiH. Further, some felt that Ars Aevi had been naive in believing the promises of the international community, who favored 'shiny and expensive' pieces of art like *La Place des Drapeaux* rather than being interested in the 'real' work of Bosnian artists. This criticism mirrors one of the issues with the Ars Aevi project noted by Carolo (2016), which is that after receiving UNESCO funding the project became too focused on working with the international community at the expense of forming local connection.

Related to this way of understanding *La Place des Drapeaux* is another: that the slow decay of the piece mirrors the slow 'abandonment' of BiH. In the words of Zlatan Hadžifejzović, another young artist, the country has been 'left to decay just like the flags' (interview with Zlatan Hadžifejzović, 10th September 2015). That this decay was presumably unintended does not make it any less important to the interpretation of the piece. Ingold has argued, for instance, that such natural processes as 'drying out' should be regarded as part of the process of becoming that constitutes artworks (Ingold 2007). In relation to *La Place des Drapeaux*, at least in the

interpretation of Zlatan, another process may be added, that of decay, which has actually become integral to the way in which *La Place des Drapeaux* is understood. In this regard, Ars Aevi's plans to restore the piece (Carolo 2016: 389) may actually end up destroying one of the primary sources of its representative power.

Independence?

The second view on the reduction of international funding for the arts is that, broadly, it represents an opportunity for those involved to break free of dependence on this funding. This is, for instance, the view of the employees of international agencies I interviewed. Pia Hallonsten, First Secretary at the Swedish Embassy in Sarajevo noted in an interview on 22nd September 2015:

We shouldn't change this society, it should be changed from within ... We've heard many times [that] the international community made a mess of this country, and now they have to come and sort it out ... I get upset about that. The international community helped this country to peace. It wasn't perfect. No peace is perfect. But Dayton wasn't the 'end product' of the development. We can't fix the rest ... we can support it, but we can't change it. (interview with Pia Hallonsten, First Secretary, Swedish Embassy in Sarajevo, 22nd September 2015)

This was also the view, albeit in a more guarded way, from Sinisa Sesum, National Programme Specialist in Culture at the UNESCO Office Sarajevo, who told me that 'our long term plan [is] to help this country make their own cultural policies ... have their own ideas' (interview with Sinisa Sesum, National Programme Specialist in Culture, UNESCO Office Sarajevo, 1st October 2015). It is also the view of many of the younger artists I was in contact with. Bojan is of the opinion that since BiH has 'always' been under foreign domination, citizens (and artists) have never developed their own methods. The feeling among older artists, by contrast, is that if it is impossible to continue their activities due to international funding ending, they will leave the country.

This section, in conclusion, has argued that during the period of my fieldwork there are signs that the art system is undergoing a period of resurgence at the same time as international sponsorship of the arts is being significantly reduced. It is tempting, given this coincidence, to argue that the two phenomena are related: that the reduction in international funding has caused the resurgence. I am, however, hesitant to argue that the two phenomena are linked, because of the lack of a counterfactual example. Kreatktiva can undoubtedly be seen as an example of a collective independent of (in fact, proudly independent of) the international community. It would be hard to

argue, however, that this is because of the lack of funding: rather, their rejection of the ‘politicization’ of their work is better explained, I would argue, by a more widespread frustration at the relative lack of success of the international community’s broader project in BiH, and by the parallel rejection of ‘politics’ among many in BiH today. Further, the biography of Bojan’s artwork, in which he was initially reticent to accept international support but then did so, cautions against seeing Kreaktiva’s resistance to international funding as eternal: it might suggest that, like the artists of an older generation whose artworks I have also described, they may eventually come to accept the necessity of this.

At What Cost?

Though the sponsorship of contemporary art in BiH arguably sustained its existence, it has had negative consequences for the art system. Whether artworks are able to produce the kind of productive comments that are expected of them relies on the production and availability of genuinely critical artworks. It is in this respect, I would argue, that the deleterious effects of widespread instrumentalization on the art system of BiH are visible. Despite the fact that contemporary art is valued for its ability to produce critical comment, in several key respects the ability of artists in BiH to do this has been curtailed. This can be illustrated in a number of ways. The first is that, throughout the preceding ethnographic chapters, there arises a continual tension between the terms in which artists and others justify and speak about their work, and their actual aims in producing it. Secondly, and as illustrated most directly by Crvena, continually changing priorities on behalf of the international community mean that artists and others must adapt their work to receive support for it. Thirdly, the problems faced by Adela and Andreja in attempting to secure funding for the AFŽ archive project suggests that certain types of criticality have been passively suppressed by decisions not to fund such works. Finally, there is a parallel process whereby certain types of artwork, and most notably those dealing with reconciliation, have been promoted. These processes are certainly a source of frustration to those involved with the art system, but their deleterious effects on the art system go beyond this: the suppression of certain forms of art, and the promotion of others, threatens to distort the art system to the point that it loses its critical power, and ultimately risks undermining the legitimacy of contemporary art as a field of free, subversive comment. A number of examples of these effects can be given.

False Justifications

Firstly, one of the major themes that emerges from the preceding chapters is that, in many cases, artists and others have decided to write and talk about their work using very different categories to those they genuinely work with. The most striking example of this can actually be drawn from a seeming omission in the ethnographic material I have presented above. In the three biographies I have presented, there is a striking absence of what might be called ‘multicultural discourse’ among the artists I have mentioned. This is neither an oversight in the current work nor one in my methodology: I continually sought to collect data on the way in which artists, audience members, and others defined themselves in terms of ethnicity, and asked artists how they were working with this theme in their work. The response was, almost unanimously, that these categories were an illegitimate way of characterizing both people and artworks. Time and time again, those I spoke to explained that they were of ‘mixed’ heritage. When pushed, people defined themselves as ‘Bosnian’ or, in some cases, ‘Yugoslav’. Several points may be drawn from this. The first is that it suggests that the ‘fourth ethnicity’ is still extant in Sarajevo, at least: the artists mentioned here, I would argue, are the children (sometimes spiritual, sometimes actual) of that group, and their primary forms of identification are not ethnic. Secondly, this lack of identification with ethnic categories among those I was in contact with is indicative of one of the limitations of my fieldwork: data shows that 57% of the citizenry identifies itself as, ‘above all, a Bosniak, Croat, or Serb’, rather than as, ‘above all, a citizen of BiH’ (UNDAF 2010: 6), and as such the group of artists and others that I have discussed in this thesis are clearly unrepresentative of the country as a whole.

This, in turn, gives rise to a contradiction. Though almost all of my research subjects reject the idea of belonging to an ethnic culture, at several points in the artwork biographies I have described they justify projects in these terms. This is seen, for instance, in the *Ars Aevi* project, which increasingly came to define itself as ‘multi-cultural’. The *D-0 Ark Project* also sought, increasingly, to incorporate this terminology into its justification. It is also seen in the way in which *Crvena* have adapted the ‘true’ intentions of their work to these categories, in which they sometimes argue that women are one of the ‘cultures’ of BiH, and should therefore be represented in exhibitions etc. that are multi-cultural. It is also notable that these professions of multiculturalism did not, in fact, change the way in which these projects operated: they are merely a way of securing funding. However, some authors have noted that this is a more widespread phenomenon:

The insistence on multiculturalism as the highest cultural ideal in Bosnia also provided the impetus for the proliferation of these same terms of

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reference among countless local institutions, which increasingly and indiscriminately began to praise their own projects and values as ‘multiethnic’ and ‘multicultural.’ (Hajdarpašić 2008: 125)

In this context, and as seen in the biographies, groups and individuals have sought to adapt or cloak their true aims. Though Hajdarpašić goes on to argue that such ‘calculated decisions to use the new terms in order to gain international sponsorship contributed only slightly to the widespread adoption of discourses of multiculturalism’, they eventually led to a situation where:

The burgeoning ‘civil society initiatives,’ cultural programs, youth forums, NGO activities, political debates, film, theatre, and music festivals, media reports, and academic conferences kept reiterating the multicultural mantra, to the point where references to multiculturalism outgrew their initial, informal fashionableness and became almost mandatory for any broader cultural institution in postwar Sarajevo. (Hajdarpašić 2008: 126)

Though this process is most visible in relation to the discourse of ‘multiculturalism’ it is also present, I would argue, in relation to a number of other discourses. It is seen, for instance, in the way that Crvena have sought to ‘exploit’ the focus on ‘inclusion’ with regard to the rights of LGBTQIA+ people and women. It is also present, albeit to a lesser extent, in projects such as D-0 Ark, which apply for funding under such terms as ‘reconciliation’. It appears, in short, that there is something of a contradiction between the categories that those in the art system use to think about themselves, and those they use to gain funding. Whilst the frustration caused by this may not, in itself, undermine the value of contemporary art, it does mean that in some cases projects that are funded in order to promote ‘multiculturalism’, for instance, are based on false premises. Such projects rest on the assumption that through encouraging the participation of various ‘cultures’ a ‘true’ expression of these cultures’ feelings, aims, and concerns may be accessed, presented, and addressed. Arguably, however, an artist cannot act as a representative of an ethnic culture they totally reject. Thus, funding a contemporary art project or exhibition that is designed to include various cultures may, in fact, not do so, but just encourage artists to profess a false allegiance to these same cultures, and curators to justify their existing practice in these terms. In practice, what this means is that, and again in the words of Hajdarpašić, “‘multicultural’ in many instances now serves as a trite, unimaginative reference that can be applied to almost anything that is not overtly characterized by extremist nationalism’ (2008: 127). This is because the alternative, convening spaces in which the participants strongly identify with their ethnicity, arguably risks the promotion of ethno-nationalist discourse. As such, and as Bortolotto notes, the promotion of multiculturalism,

rather than being based on the articulation of genuinely different views, is based on the exclusion of 'tangible and intangible incarnations of actual and more problematic differences too 'politically incorrect' and too troubling to be considered the bearers of any exotic appeal' (2007: 27).

Adaptability vs. Exploitation

Related to this problem is a second one. As Vestheim notes, in a situation such as BiH's, where many groups are competing for funding, the success of a group is contingent on its ability to adapt to changing priorities. This is because the de-centralization of cultural policy, in which various groups and communities compete for limited funding, can sometimes mean that actors within the cultural sphere actively work in opposition to one another. Indeed, in extreme cases, this de-centralization, instead of leading to:

Democracy, liberty and justice for all ... may just as well bring about difference and displacement of power to the advantage of those who are best able to take advantage of the void left when the national state relinquishes its power of decision to the local level. (Vestheim 1994: 68)

This is seen, to a degree, in the adoption of multi-cultural discourse I have outlined. It is also evident in situations where the international community suddenly (from the perspective of arts groups) add another objective to their funding of art. This is well illustrated by Crvena, and the rise of LGBTQIA+ rights in BiH. The artists associated with Crvena are arguably the most successful of their generation. Adela's work, in particular, has become some of the best known post-war Bosnian art, and has been exhibited widely both within BiH and internationally. Indeed, as Blažević argued in an interview with Erste Stiftung, a foundation funded by a bank who have provided funding for art throughout the Balkans, the 'emergence of [...] women artists and filmmakers is the most important phenomenon of postwar art' (Blažević 2013). This prominence is also evident in the large number of donor organizations that have contributed to the work of Crvena and the artists associated with the group. This success in attracting funding is at first slightly puzzling, because the primary aims of the group (the economic empowerment of women, and a critique of transitional capitalism) have never been a prominent part of the self-stated aims of the organizations that have funded culture in post-conflict BiH. As indicated by earlier chapters, international funding for contemporary art from 1995 focused on a number of different objectives: multi-culturalism, in particular, but also attempts to use art for reconciliation processes, and the more diffuse aim of

strengthening civil society. Recent years, however, have seen another priority added to this list: the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people, and women, into civil society. Members of Crvena admit that this has been beneficial to the organization. From 2010, the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ people increasingly became a focus of such programs. Though the DPA contained a commitment to equality, it was recognized that the focus on traditional culture, some of which had itself been funded by the international community, had led to a re-traditionalization of society, and this had brought with it an exclusion of women and LGBTQIA+ people from broader society. A UNDAF report in 2010 noted, in fact, that in their future activities:

Attention will be focused on gender as it is inflected in the nexus between culture and tradition. Often, what is described as ‘tradition’ contains significant disparities in power distribution between genders. Notions of ‘traditional culture’ also have the danger of proliferating gendered stereotypes through the proliferation of archaic values and beliefs. (UNDAF 2010: 32)

Accordingly, from 2010 gender and LGBTQIA+ rights became a focus. This was driven by a number of organizations, with USAID and the Swedish Embassy among the largest. This, in turn, led to a growth in the number of NGOs active in BiH devoted to dealing with these issues. For many members of Crvena, however, this alliance with other NGOs, the international organizations that fund them, and the LGBTQIA+ community, is an uncomfortable one. The problem, which mirrors that I have made above, is that such programs approach the rights of women and LGBT people in the same way, with attempts to guarantee access to the public sphere. Crvena’s goals are more radical. They feel that access to existing civil society is not sufficient to achieve equality: they seek instead to change it. Guaranteeing their right to contribute to civic discourse is far less important for them than a radical change in society itself. An example of this is that a central aim of LGBTQI+ groups in BiH has been to achieve equal marriage, but for Crvena the institution of marriage itself is part of the system they are campaigning against. At the broadest scale, Adela argues, the rights of women have been approached in the same way as democratization processes, by giving women the access to broader society, but have sought to do this in a way that affirms the oppression of women. This is another example, ultimately, of the way in which groups hide their true aims from funders, but in this example what is striking is the level of success that Crvena have achieved despite their aims being ideologically opposed to those of the international community.

The Wrong Kind of Criticality

Thirdly, and linked to this point, the widespread instrumentalization of art in BiH has led, arguably, to the suppression artworks that deal with particular themes: that whilst one of the primary reasons that contemporary art is valued is for its ability to create and promote critical comment, in reality the types of critical comment that attract funding are strictly delimited. Exploring this point, however, raises the immediate problem that it is difficult to refer to artworks that were *not* created because artists felt that they would not attract support. It can, however, be approached through reference to the AFŽ archive project, the subsequent production of *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*, and Adela and Andreja's difficulties in securing funding for each. Both projects, for those familiar with Crvena, are clear expressions of the ideology of the group, which looks to communist Yugoslavia to provide models for the contemporary development of BiH. In applying for funding for both projects, however, Adela and Andreja were compelled to cloak one of the 'true meanings' of the piece, because funding organizations were unlikely to fund a project which celebrated communism. What this suggests is that, although the criticality of contemporary art is prized by international funding bodies, work that genuinely questions the economic basis of the state is very unlikely to receive support. Whilst using artworks to challenge 'decision makers' through funding 'uncomfortable projects that force leaders to debate and take a stand, such as by spurring them to look at their prejudices about migrants', in the words of the SCP (SCP n.d.), are deemed to be useful, artworks that aim to subvert or question the assumptions of transition processes, for instance, are not. Given this, the fact that *Željne Smo Rada I Napora* was ever realized is quite surprising, and best understood as a consequence of Adela and Andreja's adeptness at hiding their true aims in creating these projects: one can read the biography of it as a series of 'exploitations', to use Adela's term. At each stage in the production of the artwork Adela and Andreja received funding for their activities, but in reality none of these sponsors were given a true explanation of the aims of this work. Crvena, a group which largely rejects the idea of capitalism, is sustained by an international community that is trying to promote this. The MWF donated money to a group in order to foster communication between women's groups in the Mediterranean, but this was used to research a historical women's group who, it was believed, can act as an inspiration for radical politics. The Kaleidoskop Festival funded a collaborative banner that, from the perspective of those in charge of funding, appeared to be designed to promote either tourism or 'inter-ethnic discourse'. What they received was a banner that celebrates the work of a communist women's group. Though the ambiguity of the piece means that it certainly *can* be read as 'uncovering herstory', as Adela and

Andreja told the funders of the Kaleidoskop Festival, it is also an expression of radical politics. In a sense, this process mirrors that I have described in the previous section, in which artists and others are compelled to justify their works in the terminology of the international community. However, for the members of Crvena, the criticism of this terminology has deeper roots than merely being a complaint about bureaucracy. They see this problem as arising from the fact that their politics, and their interpretation of the recent history of BiH, is directly opposed to the international community's view. As such, they reject even such innocuous sounding objectives as 'democratization', seeing them as merely a cover to impose neo-liberalism on BiH, even whilst justifying their work in the same terms. Ultimately, therefore, their deployment of such terms is a consequence of the fact that their ideology stands in direct opposition to that of the international community.

Over-Production

The fourth way in which instrumentalization has distorted the art system of BiH is the promotion of artworks that deal with particular themes. This is the converse of the point made in the preceding section: alongside the suppression of certain kinds of work, there is a promotion of others. This has led to artists and others feeling pressure to conform to the type of work that they perceive is expected. This point is well illustrated by the changing ways in which *And What Else Did You See?* was valued as it moved from a Bosnian context into an international one. In relation to the Spaport project, the D-0 Ark project, and the exhibition in Belgrade, the piece was valued for the way it invited reflection on memories of recent conflicts. For later curators, namely Pierre, the value of the piece lay more in the fact that it represented an example of authentic Bosnian art, and (more uncomfortably) conformed to an international audience's expectations of what Bosnian art 'should be'. In some senses, this re-reading of the piece is natural, in that it came to be exhibited in an environment where its audience did not have direct memories of the Bosnian War. The piece, in the bunker, can be interpreted as an 'invitation to remember' aimed at an audience with first-hand experience of the war. In Paris, it became a depiction of the horrors of war more generally, and a chance to reflect on the failure of the West to prevent these. However, the success of the piece also raises an uncomfortable question: to what degree was its success based on the fact that it represents an image of violence? The question is particularly ironic in relation to *And what else did you see?* because it is precisely this appetite for violent imagery that it seeks to question, and that was questioned by Sontag in relation to the photograph it is based on. Exhibitions such as *Image Counter Image* also exhibit a strange irony in this respect, because they seek to question the

circulation of violent images within society, but in themselves consist of a public display of violent images, Radenko's included. They also infer status on the violent works exhibited, and contribute to their continued circulation. In this sense, a conversation I had with Pierre some time after the Memory Lane exhibition is telling. We discussed the fact that, even though it had not been his original intention in choosing the piece, Radenko's piece was actually quietly subverting the audience's perception of what Bosnian art 'should' be about. An audience member, approaching the Duplex stand, would perhaps expect art about the Bosnian War. *And what else did you see?*, in response, confronts them with their own culpability in consuming and reproducing such images, including itself (interview with Pierre Courtin, 27th September 2015). If so many curators and viewers have enjoyed the painting, in other words, is this merely because they have a thirst for violent imagery?

I do not mean to suggest that the success of *And what else did you see?* is purely due to the fact that it contains violent imagery: it is a complex and sophisticated piece that works on many levels. However, I would argue that its success is at least *partially* because it deals with the Bosnian War. Radenko has told me that he did and does not feel 'forced' to produce work about the War, as do some younger artists, and that he did not produce this piece for that reason (interview with Radenko Milak, 10th October 2015). However, its subsequent success can be partially explained by the fact that it conforms to Western expectations or appetites for works of this type. I do not make this accusation lightly: rather, it emerges from my fieldwork. It is an assertion made by many of my contacts in BiH, as I have suggested above. It is also evident in the fact that arguably all of the most successful pieces of recent contemporary art from BiH, and indeed the most successful pieces of culture, are about the War. *Bosnian Girl* (2003), a print by Šejla Kamerić, is perhaps the most recognizable piece of contemporary art to emerge from BiH in the post-conflict period. It depicts an image of the artist herself, over which is printed a few lines of disrespectful graffiti left by UN peacekeepers in Srebrenica: 'No teeth? A Mustache? Smel like shit? Bosnian Girl! (Fig. 24). The success of this piece outside BiH, as some have noted, relies less on it being seen as piece of authentically Bosnian art, and more in the fact that contains an uncomfortable accusation aimed at Western audiences (Blackwood 2015a). That is, it is perhaps more relevant to an international audience than a local one. A similar observation may be made in relation to the film *No Man's Land*, which won the foreign language Oscar, is arguably the most successful piece of post-conflict Bosnian art of any type, and is also explicitly focused on the War. The success of these works of art is not purely due to their choice of subject matter. They are both multi-faceted and complex pieces.

However, since many of my informants in BiH noted a ‘necessity to remember’, in which the international community has ‘forced’ artists to produce artworks about the conflict before they are ready to do so, it is possible to extend this criticism beyond the production of works to their subsequent consecration and success. That if, in short, the West has sponsored the over-production of artistic images of the war, it has also conferred status on these same pieces, whether initially sponsored or not.

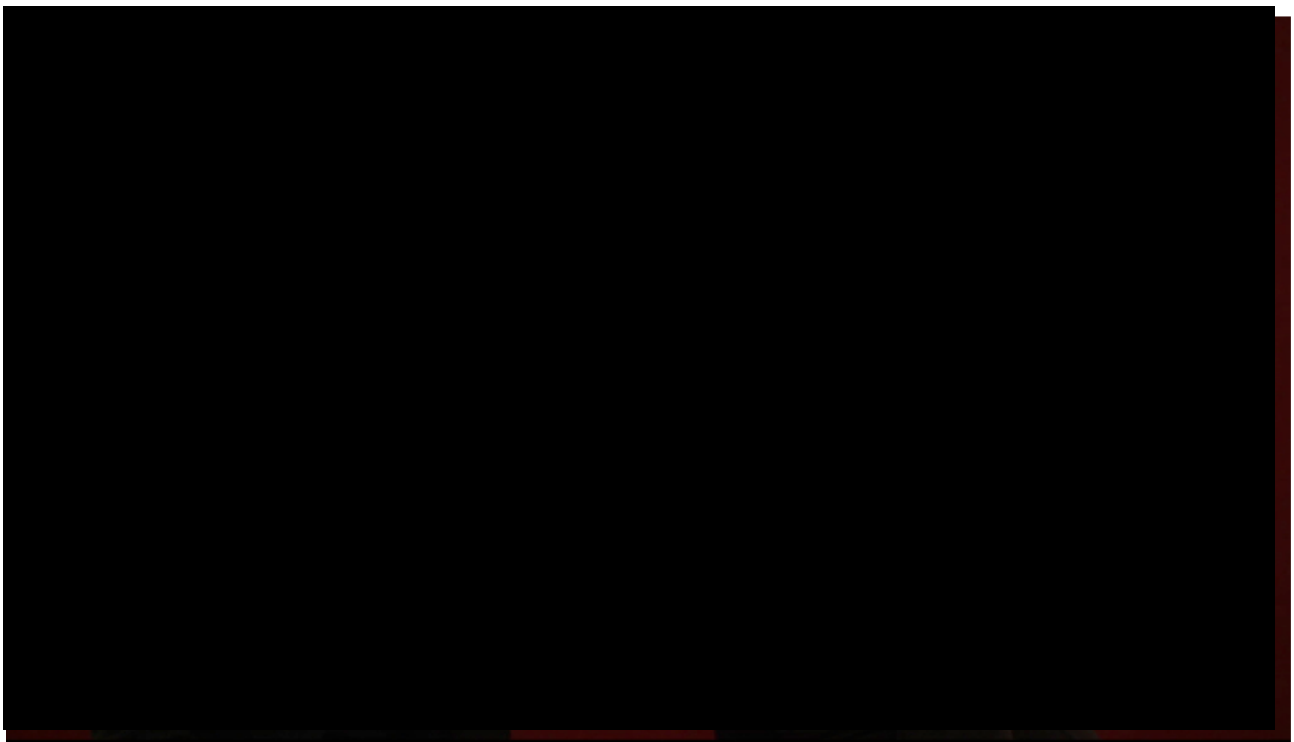


Fig. 24: Still image from I WILL NEVER TALK ABOUT THE WAR AGAIN (2011), Adela Jušić and Lana Čmajčanin (credit: Adela Jušić and Lana Čmajčanin)

This is, in fact, a point that has been explored by artists in BiH. Adela Jušić and Lana Čmajčanin’s *I WILL NEVER TALK ABOUT THE WAR AGAIN* (2011, Fig. 24) starkly addresses this problem. The work is a video piece in which the two artists continually repeat the phrase ‘I will never talk about the war again’, growing gradually more irritated at their inability to avoid the subject. This inability, Adela has explained to me, is not just the consequence of the prominence of the War in Bosnian political discourse. Rather, it also reflects the fact that as a young artist one is encouraged to produce work about the war, either through direct funding mechanisms or because one is aware that such work is more likely to be successful (interview with Adela Jušić, 9th October 2015). For younger artists, this is particularly difficult, because they have no direct memory of the War, or were very young children during the Siege. If they choose to produce work about the War, they

occasionally attract criticism from their older colleagues, and are sometimes accused of capitalizing on the suffering of Bosnia by indulging an international audience using distant, hazy, and sometimes faked memories of suffering (interview with Adela Jušić, 9th October 2015). Further, the expectation that they will automatically produce art about the war leads to a strange kind of double-bind. Mention the war, and they are accused of playing the victim. Make art about something else, and this is often seen as a positive decision to ignore the topic because it is too traumatic. Thus, there is ‘no escape’, in the words of Lana Čmajčanin: not talking about the war is, by omission, talking about the war (interview with Lana Čmajčanin, 18th October 2015). Further, many younger artists express frustration that they ‘cannot’ make work about issues that are sometimes more pressing, more abstract, or simply more fashionable. That if they were German, French, or British, they would be free to make work about ‘love or sex or ... Derrida’, in the words of Čmajčanin (interview with Lana Čmajčanin, 18th October 2015), but because they are Bosnian ‘our job is to talk about the War’, in those of Stojčić (interview with Bojan Stojčić, 12th May 2015).

In terms of my broader analysis, the relevance of this point is that it directly challenges one of the characteristics of contemporary art that make it prized for those seeking to use culture as a tool in BiH. For international organizations, funding contemporary art affords the production of critical artworks that invite critical comment on social and political themes. However, the overuse of this tool leads to this affordance becoming false: if artists feel forced to produce comment on particular themes, they are unable to be truly critical. Furthermore, this is just one example where the ‘over-sponsorship’ of art that deals with particular themes has led to a limitation in the ability of artists to produce critical work. A similar argument may be made in relation to all of the themes that have characterized the instrumentalization of contemporary art in BiH.

Systematic Distortion

Thus, the instrumentalization of contemporary art in BiH, whilst contributing to a resurgent art system, has also had deleterious effects on this system. As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, internationally funded culture is almost completely dominant in post-conflict BiH. Even in 2018, virtually every exhibition, festival, and theater production is funded, to some degree, by international cultural organizations. In short, and to use the terminology of Šešić et al (Dragievič Šešić et al. 2005), the level of cultural intervention in BiH after 1995, combined with a lack of local funding for it, means that the culture of BiH has been ‘internationalized’. The dependence of many artists, organizations, galleries, and NGOs on international funding means that many cultural actors

feel compelled to produce work on particular themes. They are forced, in short, to ‘incorporate the normative categories of an omnipresent international community into their own modes of justification’ (Bougarel et al., 2007: 27). This is because, in the words of Šešić et al:

Common discourse is imposed from outside - vocabulary such as interculturalism, multicultural society, cultural diversity, truth and reconciliation, capacity building, sustainability, re-training of cultural administrators, policy issues etc. came “from the top”, from pro-European political elites, and were imposed as key words on cultural actors in the region, while no one really introduced them as values in primary education and within general public space, with adequate policy measures in all fields of social life. Those who wanted to enter “the game” had to learn and to adopt this vocabulary, without having the time to independently discover, integrate and assimilate it internally and organically. (Dragievič Šešić et al. 2005: 87)

At the same time, whilst their ability to encourage critical reflection is valued by the international community, there are limitations on the kind of criticality that attracts funding. By putting these observations into dialog with the literature on the public sphere I have outline above, this means it is possible to talk of the art system of BiH as ‘systematically distorted’ toward the production of artworks that deal with particular themes. Crossley (2006) has explored the ways that the public sphere may be distorted and ‘colonized’ by economic or political imperative, distorting free discourse to such an extent that transgression became impossible, and indeed even Habermas argued that his bourgeois public sphere had only been truly critical for a short period before it was distorted toward the replication of extant social and political structures (Habermas 1989).

This distortion has affected the forms and themes of the contemporary art produced in post-conflict BiH. Much of this work has focused on individual memories and experiences, particularly of the war. It has also produced many works that deal with themes of discrimination and economic disempowerment, particularly by artists from these groups. Concurrently, very few of the artworks that have been produced in the post-conflict period deal explicitly with the ethnic affiliation of the the artist, or indeed with the functioning of multi-confessional discourse in itself. What unites all this observations is that they are ways of removing politics from contemporary art: instead of producing works that deal with the structural problems caused by transition, the centrality of ethno-nationalism, or even the ‘colonization’, as Knaus & Martin (2003) state it, of BiH itself, post-conflict Bosnian art has been characterized by personal testimony. This, it will be observed, was also one of the criticisms that Šuvaković levelled at the work produced by the SCCA, which he

called ‘Soros Modernism’: artworks which claimed to be ‘political’, but were in fact characterized by a rather shallow engagement with this, ‘having a go’, and therefore receiving support (2002). Whether, following the closure of the SCCA, it is now possible to talk of a *Swiss Fund Realism*, or a *Balkan Incentive Fund For Culture Realism*, or even an *Agnes B. Realism*, is something I have explored in journalistic writing during my fieldwork (Webber 2014). The extensive and vociferous response to this article among my research subjects, who had identified the same issues but who were largely not aware of the Šuvaković’s argument, suggests that, inelegant terminology aside, it is.

Indeed, the art system of BiH today bears some problematic similarities with that of two earlier periods. The first is that, as Kurtović argues, much of the culture during the Siege, and in the years immediately afterwards, was produced by a ‘de-territorialized assembly’ (Kurtović 2012). The international community formed an ‘alliance’ with this group, whose primary value in that context was the fact that the art they produced did not use ethnic categories, and in some senses was ‘a-political’, albeit calling for greater Western intervention. The similarities between this group and the artists I have mentioned in the present work is striking, and may be used to explain the relative lack of multi-cultural discourse among my own research subjects. Though they do not define themselves in this way (though they are aware of the concept), they can be understood as the children (sometimes spiritual, sometimes actual) of the fourth ethnicity. Funding this group, for the international community, is therefore an effective if paradoxical way of producing multi-cultural works of art, if ‘multi-cultural’ is defined, as Hajdarpašić has it, merely as works that are not explicitly ethno-nationalist (2008). Secondly, a common characterization of the contemporary art funded by the international community in BiH, which is almost all of the contemporary art exhibited in the country, is that it is valued for the same reasons that Yugoslavia’s avant-garde were tolerated: that it represents an ‘elusive margin’ creative culture that allows the international community to disavow its control over the country. Indeed, reading Miller’s description of the relationship of the Yugoslav avant-garde to the Yugoslav state, but thinking of that between today’s artists and the international community makes this similarity apparent. He writes that the Yugoslav state:

required the arts’ legitimating capacity as the ‘elusive margin’ of creative culture that allowed the state to disavow its repressive nature. An unhappy compact of complementary ‘incompleteness’ was struck between state and civil society: an incomplete totalitarianism tolerating an incomplete avant-

garde, forming the two torn halves of the particular form of ‘incomplete modernity’ that characterized Yugoslavia. (T. Miller 2005: 714)

In this sense, in fact, little has changed regarding the function of contemporary art in BiH: like Yugoslavia before them, funding artworks that are critical, and sometimes critical of the international community, allows this group to claim that there is a genuine political debate occurring in the country, when in fact there is not.

The Maintenance of Civil Society

Having made these observations on the effects of international intervention on the art system of BiH, I will now turn to an assessment of whether the instrumentalization of contemporary art in the country has achieved its stated aims. This will be approached in two sections: first, the broadest aim of intervention agencies in funding this art, the strengthening of the civil society of the country, will be looked at; second, the level of achievement of a number of secondary objectives will be assessed. At the broadest level, assessing whether the international community has achieved its stated aims in BiH gives rise to contradictory conclusions. If intervention was designed to bring peace to the country, then it has succeeded. If, on the other hand, one takes the creation of a ‘a peaceful and viable democracy on course for integration in[to] Euro-Atlantic institutions’ (OHR 2014) as the goal of this intervention, it has failed. This somewhat narrow rubric can also be extended to the sponsorship of contemporary art in the country. If this was designed to achieve reconciliation, inclusion, and democratization, then it has so far failed to do so. If, however, the purpose was the sustenance of civil society, then it has, perhaps, succeeded.

As I have shown, the primary purpose of the instrumentalization of contemporary art in post-conflict BiH was to strengthen and promote civil society through the creation of open, critical, public spaces in which discussion and action on contemporary political and social discourses may be had and planned. From the ethnographic material presented above, it is apparent that there is at least one direct way in which the art system contributes to the strengthening (or at least maintenance) of civil society: several of the spaces described allow civil society actors and groups to meet, and as such the spaces convened by the art system are important for the ongoing operation of these civil society groups. Perhaps the strongest illustration of this argument is Crvena. As I briefly mentioned in Chapter 7, the group forms part of a broad ‘NGO ecosystem’ which includes many civil society groups and organizations that are each devoted to a different aspect of the same

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discourse: the empowerment of women. Some of these organizations conduct research (such as SOC), others offer counseling to the victims of gender violence (CURE), and still others work through educational programs. Members of all of these groups are commonly present in the Crvena house and at the exhibitions they organize, which forms one of the primary sites in which they may interact. This means that although in some senses Crvena are merely the ‘arts and culture department for the inclusion industry’, as Danijela told me in 2014, the events they convene also act as hubs for the co-ordination of a much broader civil society.

Two further examples of this mechanism were apparent during my fieldwork period, though I have not described them at length above because they focus on museums rather than contemporary art. The first, which took place before my fieldwork period, was called ‘Culture Shutdown’. This project, in order to protest at the closure of the museums in Sarajevo, called upon museums around the world to participate in a day of concerted action, in which certain displays were cordoned off with yellow and black tape stating ‘Culture Shutdown’ (cultureshutdown.net 2014). Building on the success of this project, during 2015 a local activist group, Akcija, was instrumental in setting up the ‘Ja Sam Muzej’ (I am [the/a] museum). This project was also designed to re-open the national museums that had been closed due to funding disputes, but did so in a more direct way. Akcija called for volunteers to staff the museum for free, received hundreds of applications, and accordingly the Zemaljski Muzej (National Museum) was opened for a period of one month during July and August 2015. The purpose of the project was to prove that there existed a desire among the citizens of BiH to visit the museum, and that they were committed enough to this to contribute their time for free. The huge success of a project which, again, many people were deeply skeptical of in the preceding months, eventually led to (so far not realized) promises from the Sarajevo Cantonal government that they would re-open the museum, and an offer of support from the US Embassy to do so. From my own perspective, as a volunteer at the museum during the project, what was striking was how many of the volunteers were drawn from what might be called the ‘extended art system’ of Sarajevo. They were artists, activists, students, and others, but they all shared a interest in art and culture. Many of the volunteers were known to me from exhibitions at Duplex, Kino Bosna, and particularly from the Crvena house. Many of the volunteers, in fact, had first heard of the Ja Sam Muzej project not through its promotional material, but from rumors about it that had been spreading through the art system for a number of months.

The way in which news of the Ja Sam initiative circulated among many different groups can be used to illustrate the primary value, in my estimation, of the art system in relation to civil society.

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The value of the art system in BiH and elsewhere is, I would argue, not the way in which the production of contemporary art acts as ‘evidence of a civil society coming alive’ (Behluli et al. 2005: 33), nor even in its ability to produce critical reflection in the public sphere. Rather, the exhibitions (and other spaces) I have described act as a kind of ‘connective tissue’ between parts of civil society that may otherwise be isolated from each other. Thus, their primary value in promoting civil society development lies not so much in their ability to connect citizens and the state vertically, but in their ability to create ‘horizontal’ communication between extant civil society groups. The volunteers for the Ja Sam project, as I have noted, were drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds and organizations, but were united by the fact that they all shared an interest in art, and had largely heard of the initiative through attending exhibitions. The Crvena Kuca can be seen as operating in a similar fashion, as can (to a lesser extent) other spaces I have described above: Duplex draws large crowds partially composed of civil society actors, for instance, as does Kino Bosna.

It should also be noted, however, that horizontal communication between extant civil society actors is not the only form of social exchange that art spaces afford in BiH. In some cases, such as the D-0 Ark Bijenale opening, such spaces permit communication largely between politicians, between artists, and to a lesser degree between these two groups. I have noted above that events such as this, ostensibly focused on promoting reconciliation but in reality attended almost exclusively by the employees of intervention agencies and artists, raise problematic questions about who such projects are ‘for’: though they claim to be strengthening civil society and by extension the public sphere, in reality there is little sign that ‘ordinary people’ are even aware of them, let alone feeling that they improve democratic accountability in the country. Indeed, it is tempting to see the D-0 Ark Bijenale less as a manifestation of a strong public sphere, and more as an example of the distance between unaccountable elites and the population that many have found to be a characteristic of post-Dayton BiH. Such sites, rather than affording opportunities for ordinary people to participate in politics, are those in which the ‘alliance’ between the post-ethnic projectariat and the international community are maintained. Further, such spaces rely on the promotion of discourses (reconciliation, democratization), that are absent from the lives of most Bosnians, but nevertheless are entered into by this projectariat in order to secure the reproduction of their alliance with intervention agencies.

The Absent Public Sphere

The strengthening of the public sphere has been, however, only one of the objectives of the international community in funding contemporary art in BiH. Through this sponsorship, contemporary art has also been expected to contribute to a number of specific discourses and processes. As I have argued, in some senses the value of contemporary art in the country has merely been to provide suitably attractive spaces for civil society actors to meet. In this mode, the artworks that appear in such spaces not important: they could be about ‘love or sex or ... Derrida’, in the words of Lana (interview with Lana Čmajčanin, 18th October 2015), and this would not affect the art system’s ability to connect individuals and groups. However, I do not mean, in characterizing the art system as a ‘connective tissue’, to overlook artworks themselves. In one sense, they are the necessary props of the social spaces produced by the art system, and as such are examples of Miller’s ‘humble’ objects (D. Miller 2005). This is not the only way, however, in which artworks ‘work’ within such spaces. It is also apparent that the content of the artworks that appear in such spaces has also been determined, at least to some degree, in order that these artworks are expected to directly contribute to the development of discussions (and, presumably, progress) in terms of reconciliation, the recognition of minority rights, and democratization. My argument here is that they have not.

My assessment of this is based on the mechanisms I have outlined above. In order for artworks to contribute to these discourses, some interpretation of their content would have to pass from the art system into the broader public sphere. Ultimately, this would be manifest in an increase, or at least a maintenance, of these discourses in the popular press and in everyday discussion. My own fieldwork largely confirms the findings of other recent ethnographies in finding no evidence that this has occurred. This, perhaps, should not be surprising: as I have previously noted, all of these discourses are problematic, and are commonly seen as distant from the everyday experience of life by most Bosnians, who view their promulgation as an imposition by the international community. From this perspective, artworks dealing with inter-ethnic reconciliation, for instance, are more likely to be read as an epiphenomenon of the ‘supervision’ of BiH rather than as ‘normal’ Bosnians sharing their thoughts. Nevertheless, the almost total absence of contemporary art in the popular press (and indeed in everyday discussion) means that even if one assumes these discourses to be legitimate and relevant, they are not being promoted by the work of artists.

It might be contested, at this point, that the lack of evidence of these discourses in newspapers and everyday experience is too simplistic a measure of the way in which contemporary art might

promote them. In line with my arguments above, several other mechanisms through which the sponsorship of contemporary art might achieve this can be proposed. One is that the discussions had between individuals (including civil society actors) within the spaces convened by the art system are guided by artworks toward particular themes, and that this indirectly encourages these actors to raise these discourses in the public sphere. However, I would argue that this mechanism is similarly non-existent in BiH, or at least as seen from the perspective of the spaces that I had access to. There are a number of reasons for this. The first is that, critically, little discussion of the themes of particular artworks actually takes place in exhibitions. When it does, it focuses on the way in which artists have presented particular political opinions, and not the political opinions themselves. In turn, I would argue, this is because the audiences at such shows are essentially in agreement over the political questions that face BiH today, and this is because such audiences are exclusively drawn from the same social class, and have similar interests. As such, it would be difficult to conclude that such shows contribute to the development or ongoing operation of the public sphere, even through indirectly encouraging these audiences to make their opinions public.

A third mechanism for the way in which the art system could indirectly contribute to the public sphere would be to propose that if the spaces convened by the art system were public in themselves, the public would be directly exposed to artworks that dealt with particular discourses. I would argue that this mechanism, also, was not in evidence during my fieldwork. Though most of the exhibitions and other events I have described above are theoretically open to all, and commonly aspire to attract as wide an audience as possible, they all exhibit limitations to entry. Several specific examples of this may be given. The Crvena house, for instance, is theoretically open to all, but in practice the requirement to contribute to the group, as well as the radical political ideology that motivates many members, delimits entry to certain individuals. Kino Bosna, whilst again theoretically open to all, possesses a characteristic that makes it less than ideal in a country in which 50.11% of people identify as Muslim (Jukić 2016): it is a bar. As a result, such spaces are best seen as semi-invited spaces (Kappler 2012) rather than truly public ones. This, however, does not necessarily limit their efficacy in strengthening the public sphere. Indeed, I would argue that the exclusive nature of such spaces is precisely what allows them to connect extant civil society groups. Attendance at Duplex, for example, is delimited to those who know the gallery is there, and who are willing to enter what can be an intimidating space. Crvena, in asking potential members to answer three questions, can be seen as deploying an 'ideological exam' that ensures everyone present in the space essentially shares the same opinions. In both cases, this exclusivity acts to ensure an appreciative and

supportive audience for particular political opinions, but in both cases casts serious doubt on the claim that either are truly ‘public’.

There are exceptions to this assessment, of course. The Ja Sam Muzej initiative is arguably close to being a truly public space. Critically, however, this is a single example, and the relationship between the realization of this space and the art system is also very indirect, relying on contemporary art connecting disparate individuals in spaces only loosely connected to their everyday activities, and then facilitating the planning of an initiative in a completely different context. Another exception might be found in the Izložba na Šinama exhibition, which can be seen to operate in a ‘reverse’ fashion: instead of using contemporary art to facilitate the creation of public space, in this exhibition contemporary art was projected into an already extant public space. Again, however, the utility of this exhibition in suggesting a way in which contemporary art (and its sponsorship) can contribute to the public sphere is extremely limited. This is because, in the first instance, it is a highly atypical piece. Secondly, and critically, the exhibition also suggests a reason why contemporary art pieces do not inform the public sphere more directly: in instances where everyday people *are* exposed to contemporary art, the prevailing feeling is one of confusion rather than mutual exploration of abstract discourses.

My conclusion in this regard, therefore, is to suggest that though contemporary art, and the system it creates and exists within, facilitates discussion between extant civil society groups, it has little affect on the public sphere of BiH. As such, the funding of contemporary art in the country has had similarly little success in achieving the secondary aims of the international community. This is because few (if any) of the issues raised by contemporary art pieces ‘cross over’ into the public sphere, and even those spaces which claim to be public are, in fact, fairly exclusive.

Reproduction and Resistance

Given the conclusion that contemporary art can only help to achieve the aims of the international community in BiH only through very indirect means, one is faced with a question: why was contemporary art funded for so long? My answer to this question is that this funding was based on a naive understanding of the ‘power’ of contemporary art, as outlined in my discussion of its affordances given above, and that ultimately it had the indirect (but undoubtedly ‘useful’) effect of sustaining a particular social class of Bosnians who share the opinions of the international community.

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In order to outline this argument, it is first worth returning to the primary mechanism through which access to contemporary art events in BiH is limited: social class. Without wishing to give details of the specific financial circumstances of all of my research subjects, it is clear from my fieldwork that almost everyone I came into contact with in the art system of BiH was unusually wealthy when compared to the ‘average’ Bosnian. This is true both in terms of material wealth, but also in terms of the social connections that my subjects had access to: it is seen, for example, in Mak’s ability to talk directly to ministers, or indeed in Crvena’s ability to rent a space in a relatively wealthy part of Sarajevo. This point, in turn, raises a long-noted issue not just with contemporary art, but with the public sphere more generally: the fact that entry to it is barred by social class. The public sphere, as conceived of by Habermas (1989), is an inherently bourgeois space, but even in his analysis contemporary art was too aristocratic, and too subjective, to form part of it. This problem is compounded when considering the extended versions of the public sphere that have been outlined in the years since Habermas. Fraser’s understanding of the public sphere (1992), for instance, outlines spheres that are analogous to the public sphere but composed of those excluded from mainstream discourse. If access to the art system is, as argued by Bourdieu (1984), limited to economic elites by the cost of the education necessary to understand contemporary art, then attempting to use art to convene truly representative spaces is something of a contradiction. Rather than attracting a cross-section of society, such spaces may in fact merely gather the middle classes together. This is a concern that can be seen in the work of other scholars who have written about contemporary art in BiH. It is seen, for instance, in one of the criticisms made of the work of the SCCA, as outlined above, where the patronage of the center largely flowed to the ‘de-territorialized elite’ of Sarajevo who maintain their status through their proximity to the international community. It is also one noted by the ECF themselves, who note that:

There is a hidden paradox within society’s demands of the arts: on the one hand, art which projects a very clear political message is often not very good art; on the other hand, art which does not sacrifice its complexity to pragmatic agendas can be difficult to understand without a profound education, and so does not appeal to the masses. In this sense, it cannot properly fulfil its societal mission of raising awareness of the need for civil society development. (Behluli et al. 2005: 33)

This said, I would note that criticizing the spaces I have described on the basis that they do not attract a representative sample of the people of BiH does not necessarily undermine the case for using art to achieve social or political change. To some extent, the exclusion of economically

disadvantaged groups from contemporary art is precisely the problem that the groups I have described, and many other artists and cultural workers, are attempting to overcome. This is seen most clearly in the Izložba na Šinama exhibition, for instance, part of the motivation for which was to engage with a genuinely representative audience. It is also seen, to an extent, in Adela and Andreja's concerns that their mural be understood by the 'ordinary people' of Tuzla, and in which may be seen an example of what Foster calls the *Anti-Aesthetic* (2002): a supposed rejection of aesthetic codes through which contemporary art has been made truly populist (and perhaps even popular) by dispensing with the need for an expensive and time-consuming education in how to 'read' art. Further, even if such attempts to engage those from across the class spectrum fail, and access to contemporary art remains exclusive to cultural or economic elites, it could be argued that these groups are precisely those that have the ability to affect social and political change in BiH.

Nevertheless, if attendance at contemporary art exhibitions is delimited by social class, as my fieldwork suggests, then a slightly troubling aspect of the international funding given to the production of contemporary art emerges. This funding would appear to subsidize a social class who are already unusually wealthy and well-connected, and to reproduce an art system on which many of them rely and to which they have exclusive access. Given this, one feature of the ethnographic material presented above initially appears to be paradoxical: almost all of the people I encountered in the art system of BiH profess to be *against* the international funding of contemporary art in the country. This is typically expressed in terms of a 'resistance' to contemporary art being 'colonized' by economic or political imperative, against instrumentalization, but also against commodification. This can be seen in the way that the very ambiguity of the artworks I have discussed allows them to make veiled criticisms of the discourses that they, in some cases, appear to be contributing to. I noted in my methodology chapter that the artworks that I had chosen to present were not 'average'. In one important respect all three of the artworks I have described above are unusual, in that they are unusually complex. They were chosen, in fact, partially to illustrate the ways in which the ambiguity of contemporary artworks allows them to subtly criticize the very categories under which they are funded. As such, though Radenko's piece was valued in some contexts for its ability to contribute to reconciliation processes, at another level it can be read (and was) as a critique of the dominance of reconciliation discourse itself. Though Adela and Andreja's piece appears to conform to a desire, on the behalf of the funders of it, for artworks that promote and provide inclusion, by subtly suggesting that real inclusion last occurred during the communist period, the piece also

points to the limits of this same discourse. This ‘resistance’ to the international community’s project in BiH is more directly manifest in *Viva La Transicion!*, but whether Kreaktiva would’ve received funding for this piece must remain at the level of speculation. My point, here, is that each of these artworks, while claiming to contribute to particular discourses, can actually be seen as meta-commentaries on them, and as using their inherent ambiguity to criticize the operation of these same discourses, and thereby resist what many see as the colonization of contemporary art by political and economic imperative. It can be said, therefore, in terms of the characteristics of contemporary art I described in Chapter 4, that the criticality of contemporary art and the ambiguity of many contemporary artworks work in parallel: that this inherent ambiguity allows artists to suggest critical comment on the very themes they have been funded to promote.

This ‘resistance’ to international funding is also manifest at a social level. One of the major themes that emerges from the artwork biographies I have presented is the way in which many people and groups have sought to adapt or subvert the influence that the international community would otherwise have over their work. There are many examples of this, from the way in which Crvena have become adept at explaining their production in terms palatable to international funders, to the way that Ars Aevi was increasingly referred to as a ‘multi-cultural’ project without changing its core operation. The most striking example of this, however, appears in the biography of *Viva La Transicion!*, and is the way of working that many referred to as the ‘Spirit of Sarajevo’. This implies, at one level, a pride taken in organizing cultural events at short notice, with virtually no funding, and by relying on favors from friends and colleagues. At another level, the pride taken in realizing projects in this way also suggests a desire for independence from international funding on which such projects would otherwise have to rely.

Critically, this concern with ‘resisting’ the influence of the international community on contemporary art appears to extend to the employees of intervention agencies themselves. Though the official literature produced by these organizations generally professes a belief in the power of art to contribute to a vast range of objectives, the interviews I conducted with employees of international cultural organizations, as well as discussions with those known to me in a professional capacity, suggest that many individuals working for these organizations have a more nuanced understanding of what contemporary art actually does in BiH today. Though those working within the art system continually justify the funding or production of contemporary in terms of particular

‘buzzwords’ such as ‘democratization’, in reality almost no-one expresses a naive belief that contemporary art can actually achieve the vast aims it has been given. Sinisa Sesum, National Programme Specialist in Culture at the UNESCO Office Sarajevo, told me in 2015 that ‘we don’t want to tame culture ... it fights back, and that is the value [of it]’ (interview with Sinisa Sesum, National Programme Specialist in Culture, UNESCO Office Sarajevo, 1st October 2015). Simultaneously, however, everyone involved in the art system of BiH (almost by definition) retains a belief in some more abstract, intrinsic value of art and culture, despite skepticism that it can achieve more definite objectives. What this gives rise to is a strange situation in which everyone involved in the ‘chain’ of funding, from artists to administrators to ambassadors, are *all* cloaking their beliefs in their explanations to their ‘superiors’. Whether this hierarchical deployment of buzzwords ever ‘ends’ in someone who possesses a firm belief in the ‘power of art for development’ is debatable. Rather, the continual re-deployment of these terms, at all levels of artistic and governmental discourse, appears to constitute a self-perpetuating system which, as Jansen has noted in regard to the international intervention in BiH more generally, discourages ‘critical reflection on its own assumptions’ (Jansen 2006:178).

The Maintenance of the Abnormal

Thus, it seems that almost everyone involved with contemporary art in BiH, at all levels of cultural production and governance, professes to believe that its intrinsic worth warrants that funding it be justified in terms they themselves believe to be inaccurate. This contradiction, however, is only one amongst a number that are evident in the art system of BiH (and, indeed, in the country more generally) today, and with which I will close the current work.

The first apparent contradiction is precisely that I have just outlined: that many individuals working with and through art in BiH today claim that its power lies in its ability to resist the very discourses it is charged with furthering. Seen from within the art system, this belief can be regarded as a noble attempt to retain the critical power of art against powerful forces of institutional, purposive rationality. Seen in the context of BiH as a whole, however, this belief is more troubling. By definition, the one concern shared by those involved with the art system of the country is that this same art system continues: artists rely on it for their livelihoods, and the international community relies on it as ‘proof’ that a viable civil society still exists, and that progress is being made against their stated objectives. In this context, the claim that contemporary art is a uniquely critical space

can be seen as a way of trying to secure the reproduction of the art system. Indeed, in the final analysis this insistence on the critical power of art can be seen as a way of protecting it from being de-funded: if it were ever to be seen as completely affirmative, it would cease to be perceived as a good ‘tool’.

The second contradiction is that, though the reproduction of the art system can certainly be seen as a way of securing ‘normal lives’ in the unique and precarious context of BiH’s eternal transition, the way in which many artists conceive of their practices is to provide an example of an avant-garde, ‘abnormal’ life. As I have noted, many of the artists I have discussed here are the children (actual or spiritual) of those that formed the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde. As Jansen has pointed out (2015), for many people in BiH today the model for a ‘normal life’ is drawn from the Yugoslav era. Accordingly, ‘normal life’, for many of the artists I encountered, revolves around the creation of contemporary art, and includes an attempt to make a livelihood from this. A contradiction appears here in the sense that many of these artists, and particularly those associated with Kreaktiva, have been inspired by neo-avant-garde practices to aspire to a ‘normal life’ that unites art and life, and uses this composite to suggest revolutionary, transformative models that criticize liberal market democracy. The issue is that there is no liberal market democracy in BiH. Given this, in fact, it is tempting to see in BiH a manifestation of the utopian dream of many (neo-)avant-garde artists, in which the art market is non-existent and the state is ineffective. Conversely, and perhaps unfairly, it is possible to argue that the forces that many of these artists are ‘resisting’, such as the dominance of ethnic discourse or the power of the art market, as chimeras, and their art practices as empty imitations of those developed in contexts (the West, or the USSR) in which such forces did exist. Ultimately, therefore, many of my informants yearn for a life dominated by effective governance and colonized by the art market in the expectation that their practice will then show a way to reject these things.

A third contradiction is that, though the sponsorship of contemporary art in BiH has been designed to contribute to the transition of the country, where this has been most effective it has relied on the re-creation of Yugoslavian forms of social organization. Indeed, in the largest context the return of a strong civil society to BiH is merely a return to normality. Sampson has noted that in the pre-conflict period there existed within Yugoslavia a huge range of civil society groups (2002). Evidence of this is also present in some of the organizations I have mentioned which continued to

operate throughout the War: Collegium Artisticum and the ULUBiH group that is associated with it, and indeed the continued operation of Kino Bosna. Further, in the artwork biographies I have presented there are a number of instances in which actors and organizations see their activities as restoring a continuity between pre-conflict BiH and today. This is seen most prominently in the work of Crvena, and especially in the AFŽ archive project and *Željne Smo Rada I Napora*, part of the motivation for which was restoring a continuity between early Yugoslav and contemporary feminist discourse. It is also present in the work of Kreaktiva, who take as their model neo-avant-gardist working practices from the immediate pre-conflict period and seek to re-integrate these into the everyday life of Sarajevo. It may be, in fact, that these two groups have been relatively successful in their aims, in comparison to some of the other projects I have covered (the Sarajevo Art Fair and Ars Aevi, in particular) because they draw on models from the relatively recent past. Further, it is also evident in some of the exhibitions I have covered, and notably in both the D-0 Ark project and Radenko's exhibition in Belgrade, that at the broadest level there still exists a Yugoslav cultural space, as both Blackwood (2015a) and Mazzucheli (2012) have argued, and that contemporary art is an important driving force in sustaining (and perhaps developing) cultural and artistic links between the former republics. Thus, many of the projects I have described aim at overcoming the 'rupture' of the Yugoslav Wars, and to regain the 'normality' that was 'suspended until further notice' (Jansen 2006: 184) in 1995, but have been funded for the opposite objective: to help BiH transition *away* from Yugoslav forms of social organization.

The fourth, last, and related contradiction is that although the instrumentalization of contemporary art in BiH was designed to transform the country, it has ended up reproducing extant social and power structures. There is, of course, a long history of Bosnians instrumentalizing the terms of occupying forces in order to maintain the continuity of their society, and the post-conflict period has been no exception. Veters (2014), for instance, has explored the ways in which the structures set up for refugee return were used by local inhabitants to secure housing, and Crvena, in my own fieldwork, have re-purposed the discourse of inclusion to argue for a return to communism. Indeed, at the broadest level the willingness of artists to use the terminology of the international community, even though they are critical of it, and even though it has no relation to everyday life, can be seen as a form of counter-instrumentalization in which foreign funding designed to transform the country is used to reproduce extant lives and livelihoods. Though, of course, these artists continue to produce artworks that are critical of the international community, if this intervention were ever to stop, there

is currently no mechanism through which artists could continue to be artists. As such, there would be no mechanism for the reproduction of what Baker calls a 'a new Bosnian social class' (2014: 99) social class, and what Kurtović calls the de-terroterialized elite: without the art system, there would be no space for the alliance of this group with the international community to be sustained. Thus, ultimately, the instrumentalization of contemporary art in BiH, whatever its original aims, has been re-instrumentalized as a tool for the reproduction of normal lives, and the maintenance of existing social relations.

Conclusion

In overall conclusion to my research questions, I have argued that contemporary art was funded in BiH for a variety of reasons, both historical and immanent. Culture, and contemporary art as part of this, came to be seen as a useful tool in effecting societal transformation through a historical discourse on what constituted culture, and what it could be expected to do. In BiH from 1995 a large number of factors came together to provide justification and motivation for this: new interventionism and transition in particular. This meant that, by 1995, the international community perceived in contemporary art a number of characteristics which suggested that it might be able to afford particular outcomes. More directly, the fact that Dayton did not create a national cultural ministry provided a further motivation. The outcomes contemporary art were expected to achieve were vast, but one was particularly important. Funding contemporary art was designed, primarily, to strengthen civil society, and by extension the public sphere: both for its own sake, and because it was through the public sphere that a number of subsidiary discourses were expected to be achieved. With regard to whether this sponsorship achieved what it was supposed to, if one regards the strengthening of the public sphere as the primary aim of these programs, then arguably this was achieved, although the vague way in which such aims as 'strengthening civil society' are phrased means that collecting indisputable data on whether this has happened is difficult. However, in 2014 / 15, at least, I have argued that the instrumentalization of contemporary art did contribute to the maintenance of civil society in the country. My final question asked whether this instrumentalization has had unintended consequences, and it undoubtedly has. I have argued that the almost total dominance, within the art system, of the international community using art as an instrument has led to a variety of unintended effects. Primarily, it has distorted this system toward the production of artworks on particular themes, and has also limited artists' ability to produce critical comment. Further, it has also led to a widespread rejection of the very idea of the

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instrumentalization of art itself, and a reaction, both in art and in forms of sociality, against this. This 'resistance', however, should ultimately be seen as a way to ensure and re-iterate the value of the art system itself, to ensure ongoing support for it, and to maintain its role in the sustenance of extant modes of social exchange.

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