Contemporary Art in the Post-Yugoslav Space

Case Studies in Hauntology

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Introduction

In late September 2023, the sixth edition of the Berliner Herbstsalon—an interdisciplinary event series thematizing acute sociopolitical issues—was inaugurated at the Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin. Carrying the whimsical title "YOU-Go-Slavia,"[1] the program, designed to extend over several months, featured stellar guests addressing the importance of understanding the past, navigating the present and future by highlighting the complex legacy of Yugoslavia,[2] and considering the ongoing impact of its dissolution on contemporary society. According to the official publication accompanying the program and its other public outreach material,[3] the program suggested that the past, particularly the war in the former Yugoslavia, is not a closed chapter but continues to shape current realities and perceptions. In her publication dated September 2023, "Principle of Hope," co-curator of the program and the theater's creative director, Shermin Langhoff, expressed the aim of looking at the conflict through present-day stories to confront current challenges. Subsequently, this assertion evolved to be juxtaposed with another statement signed by the same individual in late October 2023, thereby necessitating a response from participants assembled within the program. This development serves as the point of departure for the investigation that follows.

During and after October 2023, the cultural landscape of Berlin became an arena for a hasty and frequent articulation of political allegiances with the state of Israel. Various actors in the city's cultural scene took part in this rush to express opinions through the issuing of public statements that primarily included condemnation of Hamas's attack on Israel and aligning the statement with a particular perceived political mandate. Over several months, this has also given rise to an increasingly hostile cultural environment characterized by exclusionary politics and repeated cancelation of events featuring, or actual voices critical of, the ongoing genocide in Gaza and Israel's military activity, as well as those addressing Islamophobia and antisemitism. In addition, repressive state violence has increased toward these voices and has incited resistance on the one hand and fear and silence among many on the other, encouraging public denial of the haunting fact of massive civilian deaths and an increase in the popularity of politics praising discrimination and repression.

On a late Saturday evening on October 14, 2023, within the YOU-Go-Slavia program, a statement was issued on the official Instagram page and, later, the website of the Maxim Gorki Theatre reflecting on the postponement of the director Yael Ronen's play *The Situation* a few days before. The statement,[4] which was originally published in German as an Instagram post with no author specified, has, in addition to its individual

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interpretation of an event of war that contained grave political accusations, particularly communicated that "war is a great simplifier" and that theater "can do little with great simplifiers," whereas particularly the YOU-Go-Slavia program work was renounced as addressing an "old war" and the assertion was made that "debates about the old wars do not help us with this new one, casting doubt on the purpose of our efforts."[5]

Originally anonymous, the statement, which the public perceived as the official institutional position, was later co-signed by two individual authors from the ensemble, the theater's artistic director Langhoff, whose quote about the YOU-Go-Slavia program at the beginning of this chapter seems to be at odds with the statement, and the managing dramaturge, Johannes Kirsten. The addition of names a few days after the publication of the statement indicated a personal rather than an institutional perspective, yet it was already too late for a public delinking of the statement and the Maxim Gorki Theatre. While the circumstances leading up to the disclosure of the authors' identities fall beyond the purview of this chapter's research, a significant subsequent response serves as the basis for its central inquiry.

The response in question is the public withdrawal of the exhibition and public program *Four Faces of Omarska*, which took place in protest at the issued statement and was announced as follows:

> The statement issued by the Maxim Gorki Theatre of 14/October 2023 pushed us into the reality ruled by an injunction to accept the world without Palestinians. We, gathered around the exhibition Four Faces of Omarska, state that we cannot speak about Omarska without speaking about Gaza. We therefore withdraw the exhibition and all accompanying programs from the Berliner Herbstsalon. Authors of Four Faces of Omarska and participants of the Public Sessions (Damir Arsenijević, Ivana Bago, Abdelrahman Elbashir, Jasmina Husanović, Nusreta Sivac).[6]

Yugoslavia? Lost?!

Prior to October, a variety of significant events including the exhibition *Four Faces of Omarska* was to take place within the YOU-Go-Slavia program, some of them already familiar to international audiences, studded with discussions and contributions from a broad network of professionals situated within a collaborative field stemming from a cultural milieu of intellectuals and artists within the post-Yugoslav interdisciplinary space recognized for their contribution to thinking about post-Yugoslav cultural memory not in terms of its geographical situatedness, but in terms of its antifascist traits associated with, but not reduced to, a constrained or nostalgic idolization of the Yugoslav liberation struggle.[7]

Although not exclusively, the audience and participants enjoying the curated program were largely members of the community who identify with and reflect on the messages and content of the YOU-Go-Slavia program, living and working globally. In fact, scholars like Tanja Petrović, Mitja Velikonja, Larisa Kurtović, Stef Jansen, and many others underscore the profound implications of the socialist antifascist legacy for the perceived post-Yugoslav community, elucidating its potential as a catalyst for reflection, resistance, collectivity, and unity within diverse post-Yugoslav contexts, transcending ethnic, geographical, and nostalgic demarcations.[8] This historical reservoir is thus aptly employed in envisioning, advocating for, and constructing future trajectories within and beyond the region.

Consequently, the program engendered a specific collective cohesion that transcended the conventional diasporic categorizations suggested by the term "post-Yugoslav diaspora." The program was not specifically curated for or by any particular community, nor did it belong to a contested diasporic category. Instead, it attracted a community that identified with the notion of post-Yugoslav in terms of a distinct spatiotemporal dimension rather than a specific territorial designation.[9] As Ivana Bago states,

> to write a Yugoslav—and not say a Croatian, Serbian, Macedonian, or more recently Eastern European, Balkan, global, etc.—history, has presupposed a merging of aesthetic, epistemological, and political utopianism that would irrupt into the prevailing modes of navigating both past and present.[10]

In fact, the very concept of diaspora in the context of post-Yugoslavia is multifaceted, reflecting a complex history of migration, conflict, and cultural exchange to which the term "diaspora" is difficult to apply.

As Miklavž Komelj, Gal Kirn, and others argue, initially the Yugoslav federation embodied an emancipatory and dispersive logic, integrating various national and cultural identities within a single state framework.[11] This was partly a continuation of the People's Liberation Struggle during the Second World War, which emphasized political autonomy, self-governance, and a movement toward a utopian association of producers managing social property. The Yugoslav self-management system aimed at transcending nationalistic ideologies and the state apparatus itself, embodying a "diasporic" logic of withering away all forms of oppression, meaning that, as Kirn outlines, in the long term capitalism, the state, and even the party were believed to eventually disappear and be replaced by associations of producers that would manage social life autonomously. The new self-management polity was projective and dispersive, meaning it was built on a critique of both capitalist and socialist states, with the goal of dismantling any dominant ethnic group, nationalist ideology, or political or economic monopoly of power.

Cultural production plays a crucial role in comprehending the spatiotemporal aspects of the post-Yugoslav away from associations with the party or the state, whereas it gives space to define specific logics and practices embedded within this community's affective dimensions. These dimensions, largely present in the unique model of Yugoslav self-management, become a driver in understanding the role of culture in the People's Liberation Movement or post-Yugoslavia in general.[12] This chapter will focus on a specific mechanism identified to be driving culture in this context—a "partisan symbolic production"—whereas antifascist symbolic production becomes significant when it is no longer tied to propaganda and can be situated within the realm of culture and art.[13]

This concept serves as the guiding subtext of this chapter, which seeks to address the challenges of forming communities of solidarity in the current cultural landscape, notably in the context of the YOU-Go-Slavia program and events that unfolded at the Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin. It explores how this particular moment in Berlin's cultural landscape helps us address the complexities of memory and collectivity in the post-see Yugoslav context and its contemporary relevance. It also highlights the practices that emerged within the exhibition *Four Faces of Omarska* in dealing with historical trauma and memory and explores why collectivity emerged in the particular context of a response. The chapter reflects on the productive practices emerging from post-Yugoslav symbolic culture, while also being aware of the dynamics of community formation. It does not delve into the subject matter of any diasporic group, including those identified

as Yugoslavian, but rather examines the formation and motivations behind dispossessed collectivities within a contemporary international context.

Life-times of Disposability

The post-Yugoslav community rallied around the program YOU-Go-Slavia, as well as the program itself, can be understood as engaging in an effort to reestablish cultural ties in the region while navigating the complex legacy of Yugoslav self-management and its key elements of cultural production. This community is tasked with the challenge of reconciling the diverse belongings that characterize Yugoslavia within an international context. In this chapter this is recognized as an ongoing struggle to balance the divisive nationalistic, autocolonial tendencies that led to Yugoslavia's dissolution and the potential for a more emancipated, transnational identity that draws on the region's shared history of social life and its cultural production. In fact, the chapter widely understands any diasporic communities to be "a story of people who seek to survive and thrive, who persist in 'becoming-human' against a global economic and political order that wages a 'war to be human.' "[14] The centrality of a particular cultural production to the questions navigated here becomes more apparent as specific events in the theater during the YOU-Go-Slavia program—and a collectivity in the face of adversity—emerge and unfold.

In that sense, the chapter examines the complex diasporic condition of multitemporal dispossession, the condition of being entrenched within what Tadiar addresses as "life-times of disposability."[15] According to Tadiar, life-times of disposability can be briefly summarized as expendable forces and resources vital for financialization, forming part of the capitalist valorization process, and affected by global structures of racism and heterosexism, relegating certain groups to diminished life prospects that involve hidden labor and overlooked value productivity. Thereby they enable the multiplication of value extraction beyond labor time, as populations deemed disposable become subjects of profitable punishment and control enterprises, with their abstract future brokered by states for transnational elites and ethnonational interests.[16]

Examining the convergence of individuals who are deeply entrenched in the "life-times of disposability" such as the present-day Berlin cultural scene does not necessarily mean understanding individuals directly involved in this intricate constellation nor the ways in which they organize or live. Instead, focusing on the practices of the collective that emerges from within this state of disposability, the chapter explores the challenges of forming a collectivity, such as that certain property logics are haunting social structures, making it difficult to establish new forms of collectivity.[17] To comprehend these logics, as described by Tadiar and von Redecker, we take a closer look at how the withdrawal of the *Four Faces of Omarska* unfolded.

Larval Spectrality Haunting Berlin

The withdrawal of the exhibition prompts exploration of its effects and the formation of communities around symbolic production, emphasizing context and life-making practices. Giorgio Agamben's discourse on spectrality suggests a posthumous, spectral existence, denoting a shift beyond traditional life and death. This view critiques contemporary society's superficiality, where institutions and languages exist in a larval, unconscious state. Agamben introduces "larval spectrality," a form of spectrality arising from bad conscience, feigning a future while haunted by its past. "Perfect" specters embody

completion, possessing grace and astuteness. Larval spectrality is elusive, challenged by the living invading its spaces.[18]

Therefore, in the specific context of the exhibition after the statement of October 2023, there is a need to understand the concept of dispossession not only as the forcible appropriation of resources or land but also as propertization. This framework elucidates the process by which both material and immaterial goods are transformed into modern property, not only facilitating their utilization and governance but also presenting the potential for misuse and destruction by those who perceive the property as theirs.[19] This conceptual lens is essential for comprehending the manner in which historical dominions have significantly influenced contemporary social relations and identities, particularly in the context of race and gender as the case of the statement unfolds. Importantly, it highlights the enduring legacy of entitlement and control, persisting even subsequent to the dissolution of formal ownership structures, imperial or colonial. Within the context of the statement, which illuminates the normative reality of representational multiculturalism and reveals the haunting "larval spectrality"[20] of the German state, it becomes apparent that numerous collectivities warrant scrutiny, many of them in extremely dangerous marginalized positions—not just in the context of the Berlin cultural sector.

Nevertheless, this investigation delves into the mechanisms through which a community transforms into a collective entity, particularly within the post-Yugoslav community. It explores how such collectives confront the somber reality in which their deceased and the unspoken lessons they impart are disregarded, giving rise to a "larval spectrality" emerging from "phantom possession."[21] In his essay on hauntology in the context of heritage,[22] Sterling summarizes Derrida's claim that to dabble in hauntology means engaging with what and who are no longer present in a manner that acknowledges their continued efficacy, and that, for any heritage to be active, it demands "reinterpretation, critique, displacement, that is, an active intervention, so that a transformation worthy of the name might take place: so that something might happen, an event, some history, an unforeseeable future-to-come."[23] In the context of museum studies, T.J. Demos identifies an overarching spectrality of postcolonial aesthetics that seeks to address "the haunting memories and ghostly presences that refuse to rest in peace and cannot be situated firmly with representation."[24]

The issuing of the statement haunted various parts of the YOU-Go-Slavia program, provoking a staunch reaction honoring and paying tribute to the countless lives lost and affected by the Yugoslav wars, which the statement seemingly sought to disavow. "As scholars and activists who remember the wars of the Yugoslav succession, we reject completely the argument that war is a great simplifier requiring a simple division between friend and enemy," stated one of the issued responses from scholars who withdrew their participation in the program following the statement.[25] It continued:

> We believe today, of all days, institutions such as the Gorki Theatre should focus their efforts not on silencing Palestinian viewpoints but on bringing people together to discuss history, critique policy and work towards building a world that can hold the whole of humanity equitably together. Unlike the theatre, we do not believe that "our arguments with the old wars do not help us with this new one." On the contrary, we believe the brutal collapse of Yugoslavia and the consequent bloody wars that defined much of the 1990s carry many lessons for our current wars. After all, the same international community that failed to act to prevent ethnic cleansing and genocide back then is once again standing idly by as similar atrocities unfold before our eyes in Gaza.[26]

Four Faces of Omarska

How does the collectivity around *Four Faces of Omarska*[27] relate to partisan symbolic production, considering that it does not pertain to the National Liberation Struggle and instead reflects the bloody shattering of utopian ideals of the revolution? This chapter argues that various factors led to the statement and the subsequent formation of a collective centered around it. Cultural practices of memory shape and form collectivities and artistic practices that address them emerging from the complex multitemporal dynamics of dispossession, particularly its institutionalization within the public sphere, which *Four Faces of Omarska* does address. The focus is on identifying some practices that this collectivity engages in as part of this condition, which Tadiar identifies as "life-making"[28] practices. For the team gathered around *Four Faces of Omarska* it was clear that the moment the statement was issued was an erasure and obliteration of the dead of Omarska, which, in the manner of Agamben's "perfect" specter, did not have to be said, uttered, cried, discussed—it is the very fact of renouncing the lessons of the wars past, the concentration camp of Omarska, the very fact of genocide. It was also clear that the exhibition *Four Faces of Omarska* could not continue to exist within an institution whose representational logics have failed it to the extent that its statement renounced the very relevance of Omarska.[29]

As Iva Glišić and Biljana Purić summarize, Omarska was a site that underwent violent transformations, notably operating as a detention camp during the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s.[30] Today it is the location of an iron ore mine run by ArcelorMittal, the world's largest multinational steel corporation. The complex history of Omarska, including its use as a concentration camp, is often overshadowed by its contemporary industrial use, with commemoration of the camp victims being strictly limited due to the political interests of local authorities and strict protocols imposed by the mine operators.

As part of the program YOU-Go-Slavia, *Four Faces of Omarska* was conceptualized as "an investigative memorialization praxis and a platform engaged in exploring the strategies of memorial production from experiences and knowledges that have been subjugated, rejected, and excluded from public memory and public history."[31] The exhibition was to be followed by three public sessions, a weekend-long discursive program planned to take place from Friday, October 21 to Sunday, October 22, 2023, featuring public discussions on various topics relevant to the exhibition. Invited were speakers of different profiles, including curator Ivana Bago, activist and survivor of the Omarska concentration camp Nusreta Sivac, academics Damir Arsenijević, Arjun Appadurai, and Jasmina Husanović, as well as students and contributors to the exhibition Abdelrahman Elbashir, Amel Bešlagić, and Phillip Sattler.[32] Many of the individuals taking part in the public sessions had previously collaborated with each other, most notably through Grupa Spomenik, mostly in the period between 2007 and 2012,[33] after which the group ceased to exist and some of the individuals involved had limited contact.[34] Some of the materials produced by Grupa Spomenik such as the widely written about "Mathemes of Re-Association"[35] also feature in different iterations of the *Four Faces of Omarska*. While the program and exhibition *Four Faces of Omarska* are not a project of Grupa Spomenik, they are directly correlated.

Grupa Spomenik was formed in response to an open call by the City of Belgrade for a sculptural design for a monument to commemorate the fallen fighters and victims of the wars in the territory of former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. Grupa Spomenik actively participated in this competition, engaging in panel discussions across the region and

exhibiting several art projects related to the "case of the Belgrade monument." These activities allowed the group to articulate its vision for a commemorative artistic practice, which expanded in several directions, one of which was expressed in the *Four Faces of Omarska* project as a form of social sculpture. Glišić and Purić note that this sculpture is an immaterial memorial constructed through dialogue on "the invisible, ignored, and denied historical accounts,"[36] representing a continuation of the group's efforts to explore the possibilities of creating monuments that capture and communicate contested pasts.

Once the statement was published, those invited to take part in the public sessions decided to meet in Berlin in order to discuss the newly outlined context and the ways in which the exhibition corresponded with it. What was imagined as a short meeting in order to decide the fate of the exhibition within the Maxim Gorki Theatre program spontaneously became a long working weekend in which issues pertinent to the culture of memory and the very motivation to address them collectively after the statement was published were discussed, the room "almost haunted by us all, people we knew, the exhibition, the theatre, the public, that statement."[37] Some former members of Grupa Spomenik, most authors of the exhibition, and spontaneous external participants such as the author of this chapter as well as individual members of the Maxim Gorki Theatre ensemble engaged in "a productive discussion which resembled the methodologies of Grupa Spomenik."[38]

Bago discusses Grupa Spomenik to emphasize its unique approach to addressing complex issues of memory, identity, and post-conflict consequences, particularly in the context of the Yugoslav wars and their memorialization.[39] Grupa's method, which included communal and group-oriented artistic, intellectual, and social practices, aimed to reestablish identity through discussions, lectures, and presentations. This approach is noteworthy because it broadens the group's membership beyond its original circle, incorporating new participants through these discussions and thus creating an evolving discursive field. Their work was about not only acknowledging war victims but also challenging the existing languages and practices of science and memorialization, aiming to develop a mathematical formula for genocide that can convey the truth of genocide and transfer this knowledge across generations.

This methodology reflects a shared belief in the power of rational thought, similar to Husserl's phenomenology but with a focus on shaping a future political subject and critiquing scientific positivism. Bago, a member of Grupa at various points, highlights the group's innovative approach to dealing with the past and its efforts to create a new language and framework for understanding and memorializing the victims of genocide. This is crucial for collectively bestowing meaning and naming a violent and troubling past. Grupa's methodology emphasizes solidarity as a guiding principle, aiming to create a transgenerational protocol that opens up the possibility of grouping in solidarity over time with contributions from numerous individuals, groups, and generations. The group's effort is directed toward telling the "whole story" of the Yugoslav twentieth century, pointing to its global importance and its links and analogies to world history. This approach to solidarity is about creating a collective narrative that transcends individual experiences and generations, aiming for a comprehensive understanding and memorialization of the past.

The format the discussants agreed on was a "Public withdrawal/dismantling of the exhibition"[40] and was later on reflected by different actors in the field.[41] The withdrawal was intended to be a silent dismantling open to the public, with invited guests participating in the process. However, the actual withdrawal included micro-disagreements

among the participants.[42] Reflecting on the withdrawal, one of the members of the exhibition authorship team highlighted the structural challenges the group was unable to address, citing how, despite usually resisting passivity, the group fell silent during a public event meant to explore and reject their assigned stance, saying how as a member of a group they felt that institutional practices were followed instead of having critical issues addressed, which made them reflect on the gathering as exactly the kind of performative program they intended to reject. This missed moment of vulnerability deepened the shared wound caused by the ongoing destruction of the world with Palestinians, they added.[43] According to Bojana Pejić, and reiterated by Lina Džuverović,[44] the prevailing instrumental logic in today's collaborative practices undermines artistic affinity, while individual authorship and institutional logic challenge notions of solidarity even when it is supposed to be a prerequisite.

Phantom Possession

In prefiguring the challenges of forming communities of solidarity within the Berlin and Maxim Gorki Theatre context, we can turn to Eva von Redecker's analysis that delves into the entrenched property logics within social structures, exacerbated by the rise of neoauthoritarian regimes.[45] She traces these logics back to historical institutions of domination. She introduces the concept of "phantom possession,"[46] wherein a symbolic sense of entitlement and dominion persists even in the absence of actual ownership or control. This notion sheds light on the motivations behind the rejection within the YOU-Go-Slavia program of the lessons to be learned from wars.

Phantom possession arises from historical institutions of dominion, perpetuating dispositions toward appropriation that now operate at the level of identity. It intensifies in the face of resistance and emancipation, akin to a phantom pain felt after the amputation of dominion. Phantom possession shields dominant groups from the reality that their control has diminished, while also fostering a sense of ownership of oppressed groups, even when they actually no longer hold material power over them. This phenomenon, which is rooted in historical legacies and contemporary social structures, can perpetuate systems of accumulation and division by offering only a symbolic form of protection to those who have been historically marginalized. By examining the ways in which phantom possession responds to economic pressures and provides a sense of sovereignty to oppressors, von Redecker's analysis highlights the challenges of building solidarity communities in contexts marked by entrenched property logics and neoauthoritarianism.

The notion of partisan art as a specific and simple way to understand Yugoslav temporality helps us place the intervention in the Maxim Gorki Theatre within the domain of antifascist values activated by memory culture. This is especially pertinent considering the statement in the theater about the irrelevance of past wars while an exhibition was taking place about a concentration camp where the majority Muslim population of the town of Prijedor and surrounding areas was killed, raped, and tortured for years. Komelj, Močnik, and Habjan and Kirn all speak of the so-called partisan rupture as a temporality, in which a Yugoslav non-nationalist antifascist collectivity emerges through a necessary break with the past in order to fulfill the unrealized emancipatory potential of the past, which could not have otherwise been realized.[47] Grounded in partisan values as mentioned earlier, the specific temporality the art reflects emerges characterized by the non-national character of the community that equates intellectuals and the people, sees the stimulating role of art in society, and defines collectivity not in terms of numbers but

in terms of life, all while understanding that the symbolic constitution of the proletariat is a question of subjectivization, not descent.

In this context, the contemporary nature of partisan art lies in its ability to transcend the immediate and engage with broader dimensions, opening up space for intervention in the present and challenging established narratives and norms. This transcendence is facilitated by the revolutionary conditions under which partisan art was created, fundamentally altering the relationship between art and contemporaneity, and it continues to be reflected today. This notion is supported by von Redecker's suggestion that an "Exodus notion of revolution" offers a way to create collectivities by advocating for nonsingular, less catastrophic shifts through small utopian alternatives that do not cling to obsolete frameworks. Partisan symbolic production helps form collectivities by utilizing representations that emerged from a reality attained through struggle, in the current context serving as a transformative intervention in reality, creating ideological effects and strengthening social bonds through historically established artistic techniques and aesthetic procedures, exceeding spatial and temporal boundaries, thus enabling the formation of collectivities bound by specific symbolic production rather than a shared nation-state or other national identifiers. In the context of combating historical revisionism and its counterparts such as the grim constellations outlined by von Redecker as "phantom possession," these collectivities engage in "life-making" practices, which are closely connected to the ethos of partisan symbolic production and are formed spontaneously across the world by rejecting participation in systems of dispossession and propertization.

Life-making

Von Redecker examines collectivity through "world-making," inspired by Tadiar and queer counter-publics.[48] Marginalized groups face institutional barriers but can forge alternative worlds. She discusses solidarity community challenges and proposes reworking outdated concepts. Von Redecker emphasizes "interstitial change,"[49] reshaping societal norms through innovative practices. Agamben's vignette reflects on evolving property dynamics.[50] Remaindered life, as conceptualized by Tadiar,[51] embodies the unvalorized residue of life beyond capital's grasp, which in this context can be perceived through the lens of phantom possession. It transcends mere identification, reflecting modes of attention and interpretation, stemming from life's subsumption into labor and capital. Tadiar contends that social practices crucial for survival extend beyond capital's exploitation, constituting alternative modes of life or "life-making" practices. These practices, prevalent among the marginalized, challenge fixed realities and nurture collective life despite condemnation. Remaindered life-times, sidelined by biopolitical processes, resist absorption into capital's value framework. They are not disposable but signify life's performances outside value, integral to resistance against capitalist hegemony.

Bago explores "Yugoslav aesthetics," emphasizing engagement with the region's intricate history.[52] Grupa Spomenik and the *Four Faces of Omarska* working group exemplify this by diverging from traditional monument aesthetics, creating discursive spaces critical of the past. Incorporating diverse references, they aim to transcribe the narrative of "a peoples," echoing Yugoslavia's unity attempt. *Four Faces of Omarska* continues this, redefining artistic research to legitimize survivors' claims and reshape memory. This approach fostered new collectivities at the Maxim Gorki Theatre, combating revisionism

and promoting life-making practices. Von Redecker and Agamben's theories elucidate the stakes, navigating a realm populated by phantoms where life-making shapes collective subjectivity.

Thinking about Yugoslavia as both a past and a future entails engaging in collective emancipation through new projects that break with the past. This demands recognition of the irreversibility of historical events, especially in an international context marked by disposability. The intervention at the Maxim Gorki Theatre on October 21, 2023, embodies this pursuit of collective emancipation by challenging historical narratives and fostering a sense of collective responsibility for the future.

Notes

1 Referred to as YOU-Go-Slavia in the remainder of the chapter.
2 In this chapter, Yugoslavia is understood in the terms well summarized in Miklavž Komelj's lecture on the occasion of the exhibition *Political praxes of post-Yugoslavian art: Retrospective 01* at the Museum of History of Yugoslavia in 2009. In the lecture, Komelj stated: "The Yugoslavia of the AVNOJ [Anti-Fascist Council of People's Liberation of Yugoslavia] was not just a state but a socio-transformative process that situated the groundwork for national liberation and autonomy within an anti-nationalist project and the union of the people's republics in an emancipatory process of the disintegration of the State," which, he adds, "was not even fifty years later brutally destroyed in the process of capitalist restoration and privatization of social property by national bourgeoisie."
3 Gorki Theatre, 6. Herbstsalon, LOST: YOU GOSLAVIA, September-December 2023. Available from: www.gorki.de/sites/default/files/2023-09/Gorki_Lostheft_digital_15_Sep.pdf Accessed January 10, 2024
4 Referred to as "the statement" in the rest of the chapter.
5 Quotes from the statement have been taken directly from the translation available on the Gorki Theatre webpage: Yael Ronen, "Postponed Performance of the Situation," Maxim Gorki Theatre, October 23, 2023. www.gorki.de/en/postponed-performance-of-the-situation.
6 As noted in my fieldnotes: "As published on the website of the Gorki Theatre, in the exhibition space, and on personal social media profiles of some of the undersigned. It is also important to note that one of the authors of the *Four Faces of Omarska* exhibition within the program, Anousheh Kehar, has withdrawn from the exhibition completely after the Statement was published." Hana Ćurak, Fieldnotes from the Gorki Case, Maxim Gorki Theatre, November 22, 2023.
7 For more context, see Tanja Petrović, "Towards an Affective History of Yugoslavia," *Filozofija i Drustvo* 27, no. 3 (2016): 520. https://doi.org/10.2298/FID1603504P.
8 See Tanja Petrović, "The Past That Binds Us: Yugonostalgia as the Politics of the Future," in *Transcending Fratricide*, edited by Srdja Pavlovic and Marko Živković (Nomos Verlag, 2013): 129–148. https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845247601-129; Mitja Velikonja, "The Past with a Future: The Emancipatory Potential of Yugonostalgia," in *Tito: Views and Interpretations*, ed. Olga Manojlović-Pintar et al. (Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2011), 562–581. www.ceeol.com/search/chapter-detail?id=761491; Larisa Kurtović, "What Is a Nationalist? Some Thoughts on the Question from Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 29, no. 2 (2011): 242–253; and Stef Jansen, "After the Red Passport: Towards an Anthropology of the Everyday Geopolitics of Entrapment in the EU's 'Immediate Outside.'" *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (New Series)* 15 (2009): 815–832.
9 See Srdja Pavlovic and Marko Živković, *Transcending Fratricide: Political Mythologies, Reconciliations, and the Uncertain Future in the Former Yugoslavia* (Normos, 2013), particularly chapters by Petrović and Velikonja.

10 Ivana Bago, "Inheriting the Yugoslav Century: Art, History, and Generation" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2018), 8. https://hdl.handle.net/10161/18274.
11 See Miklavž Komelj, "Dva predavanja o partizanskoj umjetnosti," translated by Martina Šestić. Lecture at the Museum of History of Yugoslavia, May 25, 2009. Presented on November 30, 2009, at the exhibition *Political Practices of (Post)Yugoslav Art*; Gal Kirn, "New Yugoslavia as a Diasporic State?," *Journal of Belonging, Identity, Language, and Diversity* 5, no. 1 (2021): 83–106.
12 Todor Kuljić, *Yugoslavia's Workers Self-Management* (transversal texts, 2005). https://transversal.at/transversal/0805/kuljic/en.
13 Rastko Močnik, "Partizanska simbolička politika," *Zarez*, September 8, 2005, 161–162.
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18 Giorgio Agamben, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of Living among Specters," in *Nudities*, ed. Giorgio Agamben (Stanford University Press, 2010), 3. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503627413-005.
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21 As referred to by both Eva Von Redecker, *Praxis und Revolution: Eine Sozialtheorie Radikalen Wandels* (Campus Verlag, 2018) and Giorgio Agamben, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of Living among Specters," in *Nudities*, ed. Giorgio Agamben (Stanford University Press, 2010).
22 Colin Sterling, "Becoming Hauntologists: A New Model for Critical-Creative Heritage Practice," *Heritage & Society* 14, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 67–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159032X.2021.2016049.
23 Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco, *For What Tomorrow: A Dialogue* (Stanford University Press, 2004), 4, original emphasis.
24 T.J. Demos, "Introduction," in *The Postcolony Specters of Colonialism in Contemporary Art*, ed. T.J. Demos (Sternberg Press, 2013), 12.
25 Dubravka Sekulić, Srećko Horvat, and Paul Stubbs, "Against the 'Denkverbot': If You Cancel Palestine, Cancel Us," *Al Jazeera*, November 1, 2023. www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/11/1/against-the-denkverbot-if-you-cancel-palestine-cancel-us.
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27 The Four Faces of Omarska Working Group, established by artist Milica Tomić in 2010, is a collective that engages in open-ended artistic inquiry. It brings together practitioners from various fields such as art, architecture, film, political science, law, and philosophy. The group focuses on charting the violent transformations that occurred at the Omarska site in northwestern Bosnia near the city of Prijedor, using it as a microcosm to explore the post-Yugoslav and broader post-socialist experiences. The "four faces" refer to key moments of Omarska's transformation, highlighting its complex history and the intersections of global capital, nationalism, and the legacies of the Yugoslav wars. The working group has various iterations.
28 Neferti X.M. Tadiar, *Remaindered Life* (Duke University Press, 2022), 11.

29 As noted in my fieldnotes, Omarska Concentration Camp was a detention facility located in the town of Omarska, near Prijedor in northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina, which operated during the Bosnian War in the early 1990s. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) classified Omarska as one of the most notorious detention camps established by Bosnian Serb forces during the conflict. It was part of a system of camps where non-Serb civilians, primarily Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) and Bosnian Croats, were detained, tortured, subjected to inhumane conditions, and killed. The ICTY investigated and prosecuted individuals responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide committed during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, including those associated with the operation of camps like Omarska. Hana Ćurak, Fieldnotes from the Gorki Case, Maxim Gorki Theatre, October 23, 2023.
30 Iva Glišić and Biljana Purić, "Emergency Aesthetics: The Case of the Four Faces of Omarska," *ARTMargins* 12, no. 3 (2023): 54–75.
31 Authored by the artist, Milica Tomić, in collaboration with students, scholars of genocide, architects, and survivors of the Omarska concentration camp. Damir Arsenijević et al., *Four Faces of Omarska*. Maxim Gorki Theatre, September 27–October 18, 2023. www.gorki.de/en/four-faces-of-omarska-public-session-3/2023-10-22-1900.
32 More information on the public sessions in the exhibition publication named *The Magazine* available at www.gorki.de/en/lost.
33 Hana Ćurak, Fieldnotes from the Gorki Case, Humboldt University Berlin, January 26, 2024.
34 Hana Ćurak, Fieldnotes from the Gorki Case, Maxim Gorki Theatre, October 21, 2023.
35 In addition to Monument Group, interview by Beka Vuco, *Open Society Foundations*. Podcast audio, November 7, 2011. www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/a-conversation-with-grupa-spomenik, see, for example, Andrew Herscher, "In Ruins: Architecture, Memory, Countermemory," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 73, no. 4 (2014): 464–469. https://doi.org/10.1525/jsah.2014.73.4.464; Pavle Levi, *Raspad Jugoslavije Na Filmu. Estetika i Ideologija u Jugoslovenskom i Postjugoslovenskom Filmu* (Biblioteka XX vek, 2009); Forensic Architecture, *Forensis: Architecture of Public Truth* (Sternberg Press, 2014); Katja Kobolt and Lena Zdravković, *Performative Gestures Political Moves* (Red Athena University Press, 2014); and Marija Ratković, "Testimony in Stone: Architecture of War from Kluge to Herscher and Weizman," *Philosophy and Society* 33 (2022): 535–550.
36 Iva Glišić and Biljana Purić, "Emergency Aesthetics: The Case of the Four Faces of Omarska," *ARTMargins* 12, no. 3 (2023): 59.
37 Hana Ćurak, Fieldnotes from the Gorki Case, Maxim Gorki Theatre, October 23, 2023.
38 Hana Ćurak, Fieldnotes from the Gorki Case, Maxim Gorki Theatre, October 23, 2023.
39 Ivana Bago, "Inheriting the Yugoslav Century: Art, History, and Generation" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2018), 8. https://hdl.handle.net/10161/18274.
40 Ivana Bago, "Inheriting the Yugoslav Century: Art, History, and Generation" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2018), 8. https://hdl.handle.net/10161/18274.
41 Hana Ćurak, Fieldnotes from the Gorki Case, Maxim Gorki Theatre, November 12, 2023.
42 Hana Ćurak, Fieldnotes from the Gorki Case, Maxim Gorki Theatre, October 23, 2023.
43 Hana Ćurak, Fieldnotes from the Gorki Case, Maxim Gorki Theatre, October 21, 2023.
44 Bojana Pejić, *Collectivity? You Mean Collaboration* (transversal texts, 2004). https://transversal.at/transversal/1204/cvejic/en; Lina Džuverović, "Collaborative Actions, Continued Omissions: Notes toward a Feminist Revisiting of Yugoslav Collectives in the 1960s and 1970s: The Case of the OHO Group," in *What Will Be Already Exists: Temporalities of Cold War Archives in East-Central Europe and Beyond*, ed. Emese Kürti and Zsuzsa László (Transcript Verlag, 2021): 97–114. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783839458235-008.
45 See Eva Von Redecker, *Praxis und Revolution: Eine Sozialtheorie Radikalen Wandels* (Campus Verlag, 2018).
46 Eva Von Redecker, "Ownership's Shadow," *Critical Times* 3, no. 1 (April 1, 2020): 49.

47 Miklavž Komelj, "Dva predavanja o partizanskoj umjetnosti," translated by Martina Šestić. Lecture at the Museum of History of Yugoslavia, May 25, 2009. Presented on November 30, 2009, at the exhibition *Political Practices of (Post)Yugoslav Art*; Jernej Habjan and Gal Kirn, eds., "The Yugoslav Partisan Art," *Slavica Tergestina/European Slavic Studies Journal* 17 (2016), special issue, 40–70.
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49 Eva Von Redecker, *Praxis und Revolution: Eine Sozialtheorie Radikalen Wandels* (Campus Verlag, 2018).
50 Giorgio Agamben, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of Living among Specters," in *Nudities*, ed. Giorgio Agamben (Stanford University Press, 2010).
51 Neferti X.M. Tadiar, *Remaindered Life* (Duke University Press, 2022).
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