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Umiranje u Ljepoti:

***Artistic responses to the formation of wartime
narratives during the siege of Sarajevo***

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ABSTRACT

Deconstructing narratives built on a constellation of recognizable and intertwined discourses that continue to influence the global understanding and perception of the siege of Sarajevo, this study focuses on the community of visual artists active during the conflict to address how such narratives reflect and deviate from actors' lived experiences. This text mobilizes a series of discourses based on recurring concepts, such as those of a Yugoslav cultural sphere, civilization, cultural resistance and European belonging, which became popular vectors of expression and communication for the local population between 1987-1996. Highlighting and mobilizing these circular vocabularies to address how the city's inhabitants understood and navigated their positions as victims and actors throughout this conflict, this dissertation places individual siege-time experiences into the foreground of Bosnian cultural history.

Having hosted an estimated 250 exhibitions and supported by roughly 300 individuals, the artistic community in question provided avenues for expression in a time of crisis and reconfigured spaces of socialization for the local population, but also offered their own artistic contribution to the debates shaping the siege-time sociopolitical landscape. In this way, this text deals with practical and discursive shifts in Sarajevan pre-war artistic circles in relation to their Yugoslav context, and further explores artistic adaptations to wartime conditions through a lens of symbolic discursive signifiers and physical adaptation of urban space. Furthermore, the relationship between civil society and the military apparatus is addressed through concrete interactions between artists and the army. Finally, the complicated relationship between local cultural communities and their international colleagues is introduced from a vantagepoint that prioritizes Sarajevan reception.

Siege of Sarajevo – visual arts – conflict art – discourse production – Yugoslavia – cultural history

Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Dissertation dekonstruiert Narrative, die auf einer Konstellation immer wiederkehrender und miteinander verflochtener Diskurse beruhen, die nach wie vor das globale Verständnis und die Wahrnehmung der Belagerung von Sarajevo beeinflussen. Sie konzentriert sich auf eine Gemeinschaft bildender Künstler*innen, die während des Konflikts aktiv waren, um zu untersuchen, wie solche Narrative die gelebten Erfahrungen der Akteure widerspiegeln und von ihnen abweichen. Dieser Diskurs greift stets eine Reihe von wiederkehrenden Konzepten auf, wie z. B. ‚jugoslawischer Kulturraum‘, ‚Zivilisation‘, ‚kultureller Widerstand‘ und ‚europäische Zugehörigkeit‘. Diese Konzepte wurden zwischen 1987 und 1996 zu beliebten Ausdrucks- und Kommunikationsmitteln für die lokale Bevölkerung. An ihrem Beispiel wird erörtert, wie die Einwohner*innen der Stadt ihre Position als Opfer und Akteure während des Konflikts verstanden und gehandhabt haben. Damit betrachtet die Dissertation die individuellen Erfahrungen während der Belagerung vor dem Hintergrund der bosnischen Kulturgeschichte.

Mit schätzungsweise 250 Ausstellungen und der Unterstützung von etwa 300 Einzelpersonen bot die betreffende Künstler*innengemeinschaft in einer Zeit der Krise Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten und rekonfigurierte Sozialisationsräume für die lokale Bevölkerung. Sie leistete aber auch ihren eigenen künstlerischen Beitrag zu den Debatten, die die gesellschaftspolitische Landschaft der Belagerungszeit prägten. Auf diese Weise befasst sich die Dissertation mit den praktischen und diskursiven Veränderungen in den künstlerischen Kreisen Sarajewos in der Vorkriegszeit in Bezug auf ihren jugoslawischen Kontext. Darüber hinaus untersucht sie die künstlerischen Anpassungen an die Kriegsbedingungen durch die Linse der symbolischen diskursiven Signifikanten und der physischen Anpassung des städtischen Raums. Hinzu kommt die Untersuchung der Beziehung zwischen der Zivilgesellschaft und dem Militärapparat anhand konkreter Interaktionen zwischen Künstlern und der Armee. Schließlich wird die komplizierte Beziehung zwischen lokalen Kulturgemeinschaften und ihren internationalen Kollegen*innen aus einem Blickwinkel beleuchtet, der die Rezeption der Belagerung in Sarajevo in den Vordergrund stellt.

Belagerung von Sarajevo – bildende Kunst– Kunst und Konflikt – Diskursproduktion – Jugoslawien – Kulturgeschichte

RESUMÉ: UMIRANJE U LJEPOTI: LES RÉPONSES ARTISTIQUES À LA FORMATION DES NARRATIVES DE GUERRE PENDANT LE SIÈGE DE SARAJEVO

Introduction

Le siège de Sarajevo reste à ce jour l'un des symboles les plus reconnaissables de la violente désintégration de la République fédérale de Yougoslavie. Après la sécession de la Slovénie et la guerre nettement plus sanglante qui a suivi l'indépendance de la Croatie, la dissolution d'un État socialiste, au déclin économique et à la montée de la rhétorique nationaliste depuis la mort de Josip Broz Tito en 1980, a déclenché une série de conflits caractérisés par des tensions ethniques orchestrées par des politiciens, des alliances changeantes et l'intérêt et l'inaction de la communauté internationale. Ce texte porte principalement sur le siège de Sarajevo - son histoire et ses habitants, comme une partie d'une série de conflits déclenchés par la disparition de l'État yougoslave multinational et un élément intégral de la guerre de Bosnie qui s'est déroulée de 1992 à la fin de 1995.

Le blocus de la capitale bosniaque, dont le taux de mortalité est estimé de compter 4 954 vies civiles,¹ a contraint des habitants de la ville, non préparés à la guerre, à vivre sous la menace constante de tirs de snipers, de bombardements réguliers, de pénuries de nourriture et de médicaments, ainsi qu'avec un accès irrégulier aux équipements modernes tels que l'électricité, l'eau courante ou le chauffage qui, depuis des décennies, faisaient partie de la vie quotidienne. Cependant, les victimes de l'agression des Serbes de Bosnie peuvent difficilement être

¹ Si le nombre exact de victimes du conflit reste débattu, les capacités d'enquête externes du TPIY demeurent l'une des sources les plus fiables en ce qui concerne les statistiques du siège. Néanmoins, ces chiffres doivent être considérés comme une approximation, car la volatilité du conflit exclut clairement toute étude statistique définitive. Par exemple: Ewa Tabeau, Marcin Żółtkowski, and Jakub Bijak. "Population Losses in the 'Siege of Sarajevo' 10 September 1992 to 10 August 1994." May 10, 2002. Demographic Unit of the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP), ICTY, https://www.icty.org/x/file/About/OTP/War_Demographics/en/galic_sarajevo_020510.pdf; D'autres estimations, comme les rapports soumis par l'Institut de santé publique de Bosnie-Herzégovine, suggèrent un nombre plus élevé de victimes, faisant état d'environ 9 500 personnes tuées, mourant de malnutrition ou d'exposition ou simplement disparues en novembre 1993. See; Ewa Tabeau, et al., "Population Losses in the 'Siege of Sarajevo' 10 September 1992 to 10 August 1994,"; Bassiouni, *Investigating War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia War 1992–1994*, 54. Ce nombre semble encore plus élevé selon certains témoignages, comme celui d'un document faisant état de 12 000 morts civils (sur la base de 18 889 morts au total et en soustrayant 6 585 victimes militaires). Mirko Pejanović, "Pogledi istraživača o fenomenu odbrane Sarajeva u opsadi: 1992–1995.," *Pregled: Časopis Za Društvena Pitanja / Periodical for Social Issues*, no. 2 (October 8, 2015): 97–98.

qualifiées par le nombre de personnes décédées : leur nombre doit inclure les milliers de personnes mutilées et handicapées par les éclats d'obus et les tireurs embusqués, celles affectées par les dommages psychologiques durables induits par le PTSD et la malnutrition, ainsi que les conséquences à vie pour les enfants et les adolescents qui ont grandi au milieu de la violence et sans accès à des soins de santé adéquats.² Coupant presque toute communication avec le monde extérieur et limitant même fortement la liberté de mouvement à l'intérieur de la ville, puisque même traverser certaines rues devenait une affaire dangereuse. Néanmoins, le siège était poreux dans une certaine mesure, permettant à certaines marchandises d'entrer sur le marché noir et à quelques habitants chanceux d'en sortir. Le conflit n'était également qu'une petite partie de la guerre de Bosnie, menée sur de multiples fronts et dans différentes configurations entre les différentes factions, ainsi qu'une poignée de formations paramilitaires officielles et semi-officielles, et une partie encore plus petite des guerres brutales de la dissolution de la Yougoslavie. Cependant, grâce à son accessibilité aux journalistes étrangers, la ville de Sarajevo est devenue un point focal à travers lequel la communauté internationale a pu observer avec horreur les ravages causés par les politiques nationalistes et leurs partisans (proponents ?).³ Ce n'est qu'après une série de massacres de civils perpétrés par l'armée serbe de Bosnie que le conflit a été interrompu par une intervention internationale, qui s'est traduite par des frappes aériennes de l'OTAN sur les positions serbes et par la signature des accords de Dayton en novembre 1995, mettant ainsi fin à quatre années de siège de Sarajevo.⁴

Sous un feu constant, les habitants de la capitale bosniaque se sont efforcées de maintenir un semblant de normalité dans les activités quotidiennes. Dans la mesure du possible, les bureaux et les cafés sont restés ouverts, et les habitants de Sarajevo ont continué à aller au travail ou à l'école lorsqu'ils n'étaient pas occupés à chercher le bois de chauffage nécessaire pour chauffer leurs appartements ou à transporter des bidons remplis de litres d'eau potable. La communauté

² Par exemple, Rita Rosner, Steve Powell, and Willi Butollo, "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Three Years after the Siege of Sarajevo," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 59, no. 1 (2003): 41–55; Luka Lucić, "Developmental Affordances of War-Torn Landscapes: Growing up in Sarajevo under Siege," *Human Development* 59, no. 2–3 (2016): 81–106; S. Simić et al., "Nutritional Effects of the Siege on New-Born Babies in Sarajevo," *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 49 Suppl 2 (October 1, 1995): 33–6.

³ La représentation du conflit dans les médias étrangers a été abordée par certains, qui considèrent que les participants étrangers au siège de Sarajevo ont une influence sur la production du discours. Par exemple: Tanja Zimmermann, *Balkan Memories: Media Constructions of National and Transnational History* (Bielefeld, DE: transcript Verlag, 2014).

⁴ Laura Silber, "Dayton, 10 Years After," *The New York Times*, November 21, 2005, sec. Opinion, <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/21/opinion/dayton-10-years-after.html>.

culturelle de Sarajevo a également continué à produire de l'art pendant toute la durée de la guerre, organisant des représentations théâtrales, des conférences, des concerts, des projections de films et de nombreuses expositions tout au long de la période.⁵ Les chercheurs ont proposé des estimations variées du nombre d'expositions organisées pendant cette période, allant de 170 ou 177 expositions au total, soit une centaine d'expositions et "des dizaines d'expositions collectives".⁶ D'autres estimations suggèrent que le nombre total d'expositions organisées à Sarajevo assiégée se situait entre 200 et 250.⁷ Selon les mots de Karim Zaimović, publiciste, fils de Mehmed Zaimović, et l'une des victimes de la guerre,

*"Il y avait de tout, de l'amateurisme du type "même s'il est médecin ou ingénieur, la peinture est son hobby depuis ses études", en passant par des onctions brusques à conscience nationale, jusqu'à des expositions vraiment excellentes."*⁸

Dix-huit artistes auraient été tués ou seraient décédés de causes non naturelles au cours de cette période.⁹ Malgré l'intérêt existant pour le sujet, cette thèse représente peut-être la première analyse systématique des événements artistiques qui ont été organisés pendant le siège, en

⁵ Alors que cette thèse se concentre principalement sur les arts visuels sarajéviens, de nombreuses études ont détaillé d'autres productions culturelles entreprises pendant la période du siège. Pour un aperçu partiel de la littérature disponible, voir, par exemple : Davor Diklić, *Teatar u Ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva* (Sarajevo: Most Art, 2004); Joanna Zielińska, "Sztuka przeciw kulom. Działalność kulturalna i teatralna w Sarajewie podczas wojny w Bośni i Hercegowinie (1992-1995)," *Didaskalia*, no. 132 (2016): 34–42; Zlatko Dizdarević, *Oslobodjenje: Le Journal Qui Refuse de Mourir, Sarajevo 1992-1996* (La Découverte, 1996); Megan Robbins, "Intercultural Exchange and Cultural Resistance in Sarajevo's Classical Music Institutions: A Recent History of Art Music in Sarajevo" (M.A., Northwestern University, 2014); Obradović, Dragana. "Aesthetics, Spectacle and Kitsch in Literary Representation of the Sarajevo Siege." *The Slavonic and East European Review* 90, no. 2 (2012): 229–61. ; Smail Čekić, ed., "HKD Napredak u Ratnim Godinama," in *Opsada i Odbrana Sarajeva* (Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2008), 292–312.

⁶ La première chiffre vient d'un l'article d'Emir Imamović publié dans Slobodna Dalmacija et cité par Larisa Kurtović et Paul Lowe et al. tandis que la seconde est produite par Asja Mandić dans son article sur la scène artistique sarajévienne en temps de guerre. Cependant, la méthodologie qui sous-tend ces deux estimations reste floue. Emir Imamović, "Grad u Kojem Je Sve Bilo Moguće," *Slobodna Dalmacija*, April 11, 2012. in Larisa Kurtović, "Paradoxes of Wartime 'Freedom': Alternative Culture during the Siege of Sarajevo," in *Opiranje Zlu: (Post)Jugoslovenski Anti-Ratni Angažman*, ed. Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković (Zagreb: Jesenski i Turk, 2015), 197; Asja Mandić, "The Formation of a Culture of Critical Resistance in Sarajevo," *Third Text* 25, no. 6 (November 2011): 726; *Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 133; Davor Diklić, *Teatar u ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva* (Most Art, 2004), 11–12.;

⁷ Données récoltées par l'auteur.

⁸ Traduction par l'auteur: "Bilo je tu svega, od amaterizma tipa 'iako je doctor ili inženjer, slikarstvo mu je hobi još od studentskih dana', preko naglo nacionalno osviještenih mazala, pa da zaista vrhunskih izložbi." Karim Zaimović, "Slikar bosanske mirnoće," *Dani*, August 1995, 61, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁹ Diklić, *Teatar u ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva*, 11.

s'appuyant sur une méthodologie établie pour fournir une image plus claire des activités du secteur culturel.¹⁰ Ainsi, quelque 240 expositions ont été recensées comme ayant eu lieu avec la coopération d'acteurs sarajéviens, dont 202 ont eu lieu directement dans la ville assiégée de Sarajevo. Parmi celles-ci, on compte au moins 100 expositions collectives et environ 137 expositions individuelles qui se sont tenues dans une variété d'institutions et d'espaces, allant de galeries publiques et d'espaces d'exposition privés à des institutions religieuses et même à des couloirs de bâtiments, et qui ont impliqué le travail d'un nombre incalculable d'artistes, ainsi que d'un certain nombre de conservateurs, d'historiens de l'art, d'organiseurs et de travailleurs culturels.¹¹

Cette thèse suit la vie des artistes visuels de Sarajevo qui ont réagi à l'instabilité croissante et à la fragmentation politique durant les derniers jours de l'existence de la Yougoslavie, et à sa dissolution finale qui a entraîné l'agression des Serbes bosniens sur leur ville. En compilant, analysant et explorant la richesse de la documentation disponible dans les archives locales, ce texte vise à comprendre comment les artistes visuels ont entendu et parlé de leurs expériences de la guerre, en mettant l'accent sur une série de discours reconnaissables qui sont depuis devenus synonymes de la mémoire du siège de Sarajevo. Il s'agit de "gens ordinaires extraordinaires", de leurs pensées, de leurs sentiments et de leurs réactions face aux pressions politiques croissantes et à la violence brutale qui s'est finalement abattue sur eux. Basant ses arguments centraux sur une lecture micro-historique d'une communauté très particulière qui

¹⁰ Cette thèse est basée sur une archive construite de la documentation relative à la scène des arts visuels de Sarajevo assiégée. Résultat d'un examen systématique d'archives publiques, semi-publiques et privées, ainsi que d'une série de matériaux accessoires recueillis en ligne ou auprès de sources personnelles, la compilation de sources qui en résulte a été organisée dans une base de données systématisée créée par l'auteur. Cette collection comprend du matériel provenant des archives des institutions suivantes, ainsi qu'un certain nombre de documents et de publications de sources privées : le Musée Historique de Bosnie-Herzégovine, la Galerie Nationale de Bosnie-Herzégovine, l'Institut bosniaque de Sarajevo, la galerie municipale Collegium Artisticum, la Galerija Mak du Musée de la littérature et des arts du théâtre, la Galerija Gabrijel du Kamerni Teatar '55, la Galerija Paleta, les bibliothèques de l'association Duplex 100m2 et Crvena, les archives en ligne de FAMA International, les éditions de guerre du quotidien *Oslobodjenje* numérisées par Mediacentar Sarajevo, la Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Bosnie-Herzégovine, les archives de l'UNESCO, les archives personnelles de Maria Lluïsa Borràs-González conservées au MACBA, ainsi qu'une série de sources en ligne publiées par les acteurs concernés. Les premières analyses de cette collection ont été publiées dans un article préalable, sur la base d'un mémoire de master. Ewa Anna Kumelowski, "The Sarajevo Ghetto Spectacle: An Introduction to the History of the Visual Arts Scene of Besieged Sarajevo," *Third Text*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2020.1812925>.

¹¹ En raison des limites méthodologiques et des disparités dans les sources, ces chiffres doivent être considérés comme indicatifs malgré les tentatives de collecte rigoureuse des sources. Certaines expositions individuelles recensées ici pourraient être conçues comme faisant partie de séries plus larges, et selon toute vraisemblance, plusieurs expositions ont été omises en raison d'un manque d'accès aux matériaux. Néanmoins, la construction d'un tel corpus a une valeur académique particulière, en ajoutant de la visibilité à des œuvres moins connues et à des modèles de comportement malgré quelques inexactitudes numériques possibles, permettant une compréhension plus nuancée des modes de fonctionnement de la communauté culturelle de l'époque.

existait simultanément pratiquement à la périphérie des développements culturels yougoslaves et au centre de la fragmentation ethno-politique, ce texte vise à réévaluer la façon dont les gens ordinaires ont vécu et compris la désintégration de leur pays. Suivant l'approche proposée par Ivana Maček, ce texte se concentre consciemment sur les manières dont les expériences individuelles de violence ont été extériorisées, afin d'éviter les pièges d'une simplification excessive de la guerre et de l'ignorance de sa nature incompréhensible, injustifiable et inacceptable".¹² En tant que tel, ce sont à la fois les artistes et les discours qu'ils ont produits, avec lesquels ils ont interagi et qu'ils ont parfois niés, qui sont au premier plan de cette étude. L'intention n'est pas d'examiner quels discours détiennent plus de vérité que d'autres, mais d'examiner leurs origines, comment ils ont été mobilisés et comment les habitants de Sarajevo ont interagi avec ces tropes.

Pendant la guerre de Bosnie, les discussions autour des notions opposées de civilisation et de barbarie, d'Ouest et d'Est, de ville et de campagne ont construit les fondements d'un vocabulaire utilisée par ceux qui souhaitaient encadrer et comprendre le conflit. Bien liée à un contexte de siège, elles étaient intrinsèquement basées sur des discours dichotomiques qui ont historiquement dominé les conflits de l'Europe du sud-est entre les mondes "civilisés" et "non civilisés". Dans leur production, l'accent mis sur l'importance de la culture comme facteur de délimitation est devenu partie intégrante de l'opposition entre les deux concepts.¹³ Fondés sur une imagerie existant qui a trouvé sa popularité pendant les années 1980 dans la sphère publique en Yougoslavie, ces discours ont contribué à encadrer la manière dont les acteurs sarajéviens se comprenaient eux-mêmes et comprenaient leurs agresseurs, ainsi que la manière dont la communauté internationale les percevait à son tour. Ces idées ont aussi parfois dicté qui devait être considéré comme un héros et qui comme un méchant - et en raison de leur popularité hégémonique, elles ont parfois éclipsé les expériences réelles vécues par les victimes du siège. La nature dichotomique de ces perspectives a été notée, par exemple, par Franke Wilmer comme étant problématique à la lumière des modes d'analyse critiques, dans le sens où "ce ne

¹² Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 4.

¹³ Par exemple: Xavier Bougarel, "Yugoslav Wars: The 'Revenge of the Countryside' Between Sociological Reality and Nationalist Myth," *East European Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (June 1999): 157–75; Marko Živković, "Too Much Character, Too Little Kultur: Serbian Jeremiads 1994-1995," *Balkanologie. Revue d'études Pluridisciplinaires* 2, vol. 2, (December 1, 1998): Published online, <https://journals.openedition.org/balkanologie/263..>

sont pas les dichotomies en soi qui sont problématiques, mais plutôt la manière de s'y rapporter, la manière dont elles sont utilisées pour structurer la pensée."¹⁴

Cependant, les sarajéviens n'étaient pas seulement des victimes passives de la violence subi, mais des individus complexes, actifs dans diverses communautés, qui ont navigué dans les circonstances qui leur étaient imposées d'une manière bien plus complexe que ce que les discours traditionnels utilisés pour décrire le siège leur donnent à penser. En outre, les producteurs culturels de la ville et, plus particulièrement, les artistes visuels, naviguaient constamment dans un labyrinthe complexe de significations qui, parfois, de façon surprenante, contredisaient les vérités établies sur l'état des tendances de la fin de l'ex-Yougoslavie et de l'après-Yougoslavie dans le domaine de la culture. Ainsi, les artistes sarajéviens ont à la fois existé et interagi activement avec les discours utilisés pour décrire à eux et à leur ville, et les ont façonnés et influencés. Même si la condensation des opinions dans des catégories bien définies peut être considérée à juste titre comme un exercice imparfait dès le départ, le regroupement de phrases symboliques récurrentes permet une lecture structurée des opinions et des sentiments concrets des individus et des communautés. Dans cette manière, ils remettent en question les définitions existantes qui expliquent des processus qui ont rendu possible le siège de Sarajevo, permettant une lecture plus nuancée. Néanmoins, ces discours restent intrinsèquement liés les uns aux autres, se chevauchent nettement dans une façon non-linéaire, et se nourrissent souvent d'eux-mêmes, remplis d'ambiguïtés. Par conséquent, cette thèse se limite à quatre catégories qui correspondent à des contextes spatio-temporels et physiques distincts : l'existence d'une scène artistique yougoslave à la fin des années 1980 et sa relation avec une sphère culturelle yougoslave supranationale, le concept de "civilisation" comme outil pour faire face à l'agression des Serbes de Bosnie sur la Bosnie-Herzégovine, les discours basés sur la "résistance culturelle" dans le contexte de la défense armée de Sarajevo, et l'utilisation de récits "européens" comme outil de communication avec le monde extérieur.

La ville de Sarajevo est peut-être l'un des points les mieux adaptés à l'identification de ce type de récits : capitale de la Bosnie-Herzégovine, son identité a été marquée dans l'imaginaire globale par des événements tels que l'assassinat de l'archiduc Ferdinand et de son épouse Sofia,

¹⁴ Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State and War: Identity, Conflict, and Violence in Former Yugoslavia* (New York: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2002), 234.

l'étincelle qui a déclenché la Grande Guerre,¹⁵ ou encore les Jeux olympiques d'hiver de 1984, qui ont placé ses rues autrement endormies sous les feux de la rampe.¹⁶ Ce fait est remarqué par l'un des artistes et peintres les plus célèbres de Sarajevo, Edin Numankadić, qui, par coïncidence, a également rempli le rôle de directeur du Musée olympique de Sarajevo :

"C'est triste, vraiment. Sarajevo n'est connue que pour trois choses... l'assassinat de Franz Ferdinand et la Première Guerre mondiale, le siège de Sarajevo et la guerre ethnique, et les Jeux olympiques de 1984. Une seule de ces choses était quelque chose de positif".¹⁷

En conséquence, la capitale bosniaque est connue de nom et de réputation par de nombreuses personnes qui, autrement, seraient bien en peine de situer la Bosnie-Herzégovine sur une carte. En outre, l'identité de la ville est fortement définie par son patrimoine historique inhabituel, compris par sa riche histoire en tant que royaume bosniaque indépendant, son annexion ultérieure par l'Empire ottoman et la domination suivant des Habsbourg sous l'empire austro-hongrois. Des siècles de coexistence religieuse entre les membres des églises bosniaque, orthodoxe et catholique, ainsi que les populations musulmanes et juives, se reflètent dans les particularités architecturales et la vie quotidienne de Sarajevo : la transition fluide de l'étroit quartier du marché de Bašcaršija vers les larges allées austro-hongroises bordées de cafés à la mode, ne fait pas moins partie du cœur de la ville que les nombreuses mosquées, les églises occasionnelles et les rares usines parsemées dans les quartiers résidentiels bétonnés.¹⁸

¹⁵ Le déclenchement de la guerre de Bosnie a considérablement accru l'intérêt mondial pour l'histoire de la capitale du pays. On trouve une poignée de textes mentionnant l'assignation de l'archiduc Ferdinand dans les introductions des monographies. Par exemple: Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 1; Fran Markowitz, *Sarajevo: A Bosnian Kaleidoscope*, Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010, 6,18; Kenneth Morrison, Paul Lowe, *Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo*, 1.

¹⁶ Les références aux XIV^{es} Jeux olympiques d'hiver apparaissent régulièrement dans la littérature traitant de l'histoire de la ville, ainsi que dans les textes parlant du siège en référence au caractère moderne de la capitale. Par exemple: Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 1; Kenneth Morrison, Paul Lowe, *Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo*, 1; Ivan Lovrenović, *Bosnia: A Cultural History* (London: Saqi Books / The Bosnian Institute, 2001), 191. À l'inverse, la seule monographie détaillée sur les Jeux olympiques de 1984 à Sarajevo commence son introduction par une description du voyage périlleux du bob-sleighter Igor Boras depuis la ville assiégée pour participer aux Jeux olympiques d'hiver de Lillehammer en 1994. Jason Vuic, *The Sarajevo Olympics. A History of the 1984 Winter Games* (Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015), 1.

¹⁷ Jason Vuic, *The Sarajevo Olympics. A History of the 1984 Winter Games*, epigraph-n.pag.

¹⁸ Les travaux susmentionnés sur la ville de Sarajevo mettent souvent directement en évidence l'architecture mixte de la ville et son patrimoine mixte visible, la diversité religieuse et la coexistence intercommunautaire. Par exemple: Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 1–2.

D'autre part, les vocabulaires employés depuis l'intérieur du siège de Sarajevo n'étaient pas nécessairement influencés par des essentialisations externes et étaient souvent honnêtement représentatifs des expériences des acteurs locaux. Les acteurs locaux de toutes les couches de la société avaient leurs propres définitions et compréhensions de ce que ces narratives étaient et de ce qu'ils représentaient. Ces discours ont pris des formes diverses, allant d'un sentiment d'impuissance face au "violence de guerre concrétisée mais toujours inconcevable" commun aux citoyens de l'ex-Yougoslavie, à la ferme résolution de combattre l'agresseur.¹⁹ On ne peut pas non plus nier que l'immense sympathie exprimée au sein de la ex-Yougoslavie et au-delà pour les souffrances de la ville assiégée était motivée par une empathie sincère pour sa détresse. Cependant, cette vérité ne doit pas occulter le fait que les lexiques par lesquels les acteurs individuels ont exprimé cette sympathie ne peuvent être dissociés de la position qu'elle occupait dans l'imaginaire public - une position informée par un statut en marge des identités "européennes" acceptées, mais aussi, et surtout, une position consciemment négociée par ses habitants pour atteindre certains objectifs. En conséquence, la guerre de Bosnie reste intégrée dans un cadre institutionnalisé de commémoration qui est défini autant par les expériences de ceux qui en ont été affectés que par ces mêmes expériences.

Les producteurs culturels qui sont restés à Sarajevo tout au long de la guerre ont joué un rôle crucial dans l'encadrement et la diffusion de ces discours, en leur donnant forme et en les visualisant pour les publics locaux et extérieurs. La construction des significations ne s'est pas déroulée de manière linéaire et s'est souvent développée à travers un vecteur d'échanges bilatéraux qui a vu les producteurs culturels sarajéviens interagir avec les idées défendues par des acteurs extérieurs occidentaux, qui à leur tour ont souvent repris les discours émanant de la ville assiégée. La production de tels récits par la littérature a déjà été abordée, par exemple dans la thèse de maîtrise de Kathryn Sicard, qui utilise l'œuvre d'Alexander Hemon pour traiter de la formation des récits pendant la guerre de Bosnie.²⁰ D'autres textes traitant de la production culturelle en temps de guerre ont de même identifié l'influence de discours spécifiques sur les développements culturels, comme ce fut le cas pour Larisa Kurtović, qui souligne avec précision la volonté et la capacité de la communauté culturelle alternative locale "à s'adresser

¹⁹ Milka Car, "Diskursanalyse Und Postjugoslawische Kriege: Diskurse de Ohnmacht," in *Traumata Der Transition. Erfahrung Und Reflexion Des Jugoslawischen Zerfalls*. (A. Francke Verlag, 2015), 66.

²⁰ Kathryn M. Sicard, "Aleksandar Hemon's Testimonial Metafiction: Resisting Narrativization of the Siege of Sarajevo and Representing the Effects of Exile" (M.A., Georgetown University, 2011).

aux mondes extérieurs, souvent en déployant divers tropes de 'civilisation', 'Europe' et 'art en lutte', en promouvant la situation critique de la ville à l'étranger.²¹ Dans le même temps, de nombreuses études formelles et informelles sur la scène des arts visuels en temps de guerre mobilisent et s'appuient parfois sur ces principaux discours pour encadrer les œuvres d'art qu'elles abordent, soulignant ainsi leur durabilité.²² Tant dans le contexte d'un état socialiste en déclin que dans celui de ce conflit spécifique, on sait peu de choses sur la manière dont les acteurs locaux interagissent avec les mythes qui entourent leur vie, car la majorité de la littérature passe sous silence leur implication dans sa production. Ce texte propose de revisiter ces discours en étudiant la communauté des arts visuels de Sarajevo, en plaçant ces expériences dans un cadre temporel élargi qui reconnaît la nature transitoire de la société en temps de guerre - et ses influences sur le cadrage du passé et du présent.

Ce texte se concentre principalement sur la déconstruction des diverses manières dont les artistes visuels ont interagi avec ces discours : en tant que producteurs, en tant que sujets et, parfois, en tant que sceptiques. En analysant comment la communauté artistique de la ville a interagi avec des notions essentialisées au sein de leurs propres cercles, et comment ils ont influencé les vocabulaires changeants d'auto-identification, les discours qui définissent le siège de Sarajevo doivent être étudiés à un niveau plus profond. L'argument avancé ici ne vise en aucun cas à dévaloriser le clivage moral entre l'attaquant et l'attaqué : l'agression des Serbes de Bosnie contre la ville de Sarajevo était le résultat d'une rhétorique nationaliste non provoquée qui visait à détruire non seulement l'État de Bosnie-Herzégovine, mais aussi les siècles d'histoire et de culture multiethniques partagées qu'il abritait. Cependant, mettre en lumière les

²¹ Larisa Kurtović, "Paradoxes of Wartime 'Freedom': Alternative Culture during the Siege of Sarajevo," in *Opiranje Zlu: (Post)Jugoslovenski Anti-Ratni Angažman*, ed. Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković (Zagreb: Jesenski i Turk, 2015), 220.

²² La recherche actuelle sur la scène des arts visuels en temps de guerre est relativement limitée et se présente principalement sous la forme de publications non académiques ou de dissertations conclues dans le cadre de programmes universitaires. Par exemple: Asja Mandić, "Exhibitions in Damaged and Destroyed Architectural Objects in Besieged Sarajevo: Spaces of Gathering and Socialization," in *Participation in Art and Architecture. Spaces of Interaction and Occupation*, ed. Martino Stierli and Mechtild Widrich (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 107–26; Asja Mandić, "The Formation of a Culture of Critical Resistance in Sarajevo"; Kumelowski, "The Sarajevo Ghetto Spectacle: An Introduction to the History of the Visual Arts Scene of Besieged Sarajevo"; Jasmina Gavrankapetanović-Redžić, "Enjoy Sara-Jevo," *Third Text* 36, no. 2 (March 4, 2022): 85–106; Irfan Hošić, "Mapping the 'Image of Crisis'. Art and Design in Besieged Sarajevo," *Design and Crisis* (2020): 47-77; Amira Kapetanović, *Sarajevski Memento : 1992-1995* (Sarajevo: Ministarstvo kulture i sporta Kantona Sarajevo, 1997); Marko Ilić, "The Miracle of Miracles. Sarajevo and the Last Episode of the 'Yugoslav' Contemporary Art Scene," in *A Slow Burning Fire: The Rise of the New Art Practice in Yugoslavia* (Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press, 2021), 251–94; Aida Hadžimusić, "Grafičke Mape Sarajevo '92-'95 Kao Izraz Kulturnog Otpora" (M.A., University of Sarajevo, Philosophical Faculty, Department of Art History, 2014); Ewa Anna Kumelowski, "Seeking Shelter at an Exhibition: The History of the Artists of the Siege of Sarajevo (1992-1996)" (M.A., Sciences Po Paris, 2018).

expériences divergentes des producteurs culturels pendant cette période, qui ne se sentaient pas tous représentés par une image essentialisée de leur communauté, crée des dimensions plus profondes de leur victimisation. Ainsi, l'image de Sarajevo en tant que capitale culturelle multiethnique attaquée par ceux qui souhaitaient la détruire pour ce qu'elle était n'est pas nécessairement incorrecte ou trompeuse : au contraire, l'historisation de tels cadres montre qu'ils sont tout simplement incomplets.

Cette étude se concentre exclusivement sur la communauté des arts visuels active à la fin des années 1980 et au début des années 1990 à Sarajevo, ainsi que sur les artistes visuels qui sont restés dans la ville assiégée entre 1992 et 1995.²³ L'intention ici n'est pas d'écrire un texte d'histoire de l'art sur les artistes et leurs œuvres, mais plutôt de retracer et de recadrer leur présence en tant qu'élément représentatif de la société sarajévienne en temps de guerre. Ayant trouvé la vérité dans l'adage micro-historique selon lequel "la documentation la plus improbable est potentiellement la plus riche"²⁴, le choix de se concentrer sur les arts visuels va au-delà d'un intérêt personnel et professionnel pour le domaine général. La communauté des arts visuels active pendant le siège de Sarajevo devient un parfait exemple de la "normalité exceptionnelle", en tant que groupe facile à distinguer du grand public (en tant que membres d'une élite intellectuelle) mais partageant également les expériences de la population civile de Sarajevo assiégée.²⁵ Quelque part entre une micro-histoire classique et une biographie collective, cette thèse traite la communauté des artistes visuels "comme une allégorie de questions plus larges

²³ La communauté en question, bien que constamment fluctuante, était constituée d'un groupe d'artistes visuels, d'étudiants en art, de conservateurs, de designers et de critiques qui habitaient le même espace social, même si leurs interactions restaient dictées par leurs trajectoires et préférences personnelles. Cette thèse adopte également l'approche peu orthodoxe de se concentrer sur les artistes visuels professionnels et non professionnels. L'inclusion de ce dernier groupe peut s'expliquer par leur interaction présumée régulière dans des espaces partagés avec leurs homologues formés, rendant leur présence au moins tangentielle : ils connaissaient les mêmes personnes et passaient du temps dans les mêmes endroits. Malheureusement, la portée de ce projet élimine la possibilité d'inclure les nombreuses autres contributions culturelles produites au cours de cette période, notamment les activités des experts sarajéviens en théâtre, en littérature ou en cinéma, ainsi que la majorité des projets développés par la diaspora bosniaque à l'étranger. C'est pourquoi le terme "artiste" sera exclusivement utilisé pour désigner les artistes visuels dans ce texte.

²⁴ Carlo Ginzburg, John Tedeschi, and Anne C. Tedeschi, "Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about It," *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (October 1, 1993): 33.

²⁵ Le terme "normal exceptionnel" a été inventé par Edoardo Grendi en référence aux approches micro-historiques, et sert d'inspiration pour traiter un groupe de notre communauté relativement insulaire mais hétérogène comme un miroir pour aborder les expériences de la population civile sarajévienne dans son ensemble. Ses membres sont exceptionnels dans la mesure où ils se définissent par un intérêt aigu pour un domaine étroit et élitiste (les arts visuels), leur niveau d'éducation relativement élevé et leur visibilité publique générale. En même temps, ils ont vécu le siège de Sarajevo de la même manière que les citoyens "normaux", confrontés aux mêmes pénuries, limitations et épreuves de la vie quotidienne pendant la guerre. Edoardo Grendi, "Micro-Analisi e Storia Sociale," *Quaderni Storici* 12, no. 35 (2) (1977): 506–20.

affectant la culture dans son ensemble", ou en d'autres termes, comme un miroir à travers lequel on peut aborder les perceptions variables et les interactions des sarajéviens ordinaires avec les discours qui ont dominé le langage utilisé pour décrire leurs destins.²⁶ Bien que le succès de la transposition de cette compréhension générale d'une approche micro-historique vers des généralisations plus larges sur l'appropriation des discours au sein de Sarajevo assiégée reste à déterminer, elle est mobilisée dans ce texte comme un outil pour aborder les spécificités de la production de discours dichotomiques par les acteurs qu'elle décrit, en soulignant leur *agency* dans ce processus.

Les artistes sont visibles dans les espaces publics en tant que groupe relativement homogène avec des intérêts et des aspirations partagés. Ils sont également particulièrement aptes à produire du matériel, tant visuel qu'écrit, qui exprime les pensées et les sentiments les plus intimes qu'il serait autrement difficile d'aborder dans le cadre d'une étude universitaire. L'art produit par la communauté en question et la manière dont elle interagit avec lui permettent de mieux comprendre, car "les artistes ont produit des œuvres qui reflétaient leur état d'esprit".²⁷ En même temps, la communauté culturelle en question donne également un aperçu d'expériences incroyablement variées : celles de jeunes hommes enrôlés pour combattre sur le front, de professionnels de la génération intermédiaire déterminés à offrir un espace sûr à leurs successeurs, et même de ceux qui ont mis leur vie en péril pour assister à un vernissage. Si l'étude de l'art en temps de guerre comporte une certaine dimension de frivolité, la réalité du conflit ne peut être effacée des expériences de ceux qui ont participé à sa production : à Sarajevo, des gens ont vécu et sont morts pour l'art. Alors que les artistes en tant que groupe ont tendance à appartenir à une élite intellectuelle, les participants à la scène artistique

²⁶ Pour la littérature théorique sur les approches historiques micro-historiques et biographiques formant une base méthodologique pour ce texte, voir: Ginzburg, Tedeschi, and Tedeschi, "Microhistory," 33; Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 1 (2001): 133; István Szijártó, "Four Arguments for Microhistory," *Rethinking History* 6, no. 2 (June 1, 2002): 209–15; Francesca Trivellato, "Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?," *California Italian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011): Published online, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0z94n9hq>; Zoltán Simon, "Microhistory: In General," *Journal of Social History* 49 (June 26, 2015): 237–48; Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and István M. Szijártó, *What Is Microhistory?: Theory and Practice*, 1st ed. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2013).

²⁷ Evangelische Öffentlichkeitsarbeit Frankfurt am Main, Stadt Frankfurt am Main Deutschland, and Hilfe für Sarajevo Frankfurt am Main, *Art-Rat Sarajevo 1992-1994* (Frankfurt am Main: Adin Hebib, 1994), n.n.

comprenaient des artistes non-professionnels et une foule d'acteurs non liés, dont le nombre s'élevait probablement à des milliers.²⁸

Cette étude est principalement basée sur une compilation systématique de matériel d'archives à travers un certain nombre d'archives publiques, semi-publiques et privées à Sarajevo, ainsi qu'à travers l'étendue du World Wide Web, comptant des milliers de pages de catalogues d'exposition, d'articles de journaux et de magazines, de monographies d'artistes, d'interviews de tiers, de sources photo et vidéo, de correspondance officielle et, parfois, les œuvres d'art elles-mêmes. De cette façon, les discours qui sont reflétés dans ce texte sont basés sur des pensées exprimées principalement pendant le conflit et non pas a posteriori.²⁹ En outre, il convient de noter que les éléments analysés dans ce texte ne reflètent pas nécessairement leur valeur artistique : de nombreux projets de valeur organisés pendant la période en question ne reçoivent sans doute pas l'attention qu'ils méritent, tandis que certains événements relativement obscurs sont analysés en détail. Toute omission est donc le résultat de la méthodologie employée tout au long de cette thèse, et des excuses sont présentées à ceux dont les précieuses contributions à la scène culturelle sarajévienne n'apparaissent pas dans ce texte.

Cette vaste documentation est complétée par des entretiens originaux avec une série d'acteurs accessoires, à la fois contributeurs à part entière de la scène artistique et participants sporadiques, mais n'est pas basée sur une approche d'histoire orale. Cette méthodologie peu orthodoxe est un choix délibéré pour privilégier un examen systématique des matériaux contemporains, en partie pour surmonter les difficultés d'aborder la mémoire avec l'histoire orale, en proposant une méthodologie complémentaire aux études actuellement menées sur la même période.³⁰ En raison de la nature sensible de certains des documents recueillis, les artistes

²⁸ En extrapolant à partir d'enquêtes aléatoires réalisées par l'organisation médiatique FAMA International en 1997, plus de 10 000 personnes auraient à un moment donné assisté à une exposition ou à un événement artistique dans la ville. Pour une analyse plus approfondie de ces données: Ewa Anna Kumelowski, "Seeking Shelter at an Exhibition: The History of the Artists of the Siege of Sarajevo (1992-1996)," 38-42. Surveys available under: FAMA International, "The Siege of Sarajevo 92-96: Survival Questionnaires." (Sarajevo: FAMA International, 1996-1997), accessed online April 2018, currently unavailable: <http://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/fama-original-projects/12/index.htm>

²⁹ En se concentrant sur la documentation créée pendant ou juste après le siège de Sarajevo, ce texte tente de recréer les mécanismes discursifs qui ont émergé naturellement au cours de cette période tout en évitant les recontextualisations contemporaines. En raison de l'ancienneté de nombreuses opinions exprimées dans ce texte, il est possible que certaines des citations reproduites dans ce texte ne reflètent pas les opinions actuelles des personnes en question.

³⁰ Par exemple, une étude complémentaire sur la scène des arts visuels de Sarajevo est actuellement menée par Gabriela Manda Seith. Gabriela Manda Seith, 'Sarajevo's "War Art". About Globalization, Balkanism and Representation', Free University of Berlin, title upcoming.

non professionnels dont les expériences sont directement citées dans le texte seront anonymisés.³¹

Ce texte rejoint les travaux d'histoire sociale qui abordent l'effondrement de la Yougoslavie selon une approche "d'en-bas", en considérant la dissolution à travers un prisme culturel, grâce à un petit groupe d'acteurs et à leurs opinions, impressions et expériences. Écrire l'histoire d'une ville en étudiant une fraction de ses habitants exige la mobilisation de nombreuses méthodologies et de nombreux domaines, entrelaçant les historiographies en un tout cohérent. Malgré l'insistance de l'auteur sur la méthodologie historique, qui intègre l'histoire sociale et politique de la Yougoslavie, cette thèse emprunte donc largement à des disciplines adjacentes, allant de l'histoire de l'art ou de la théorie culturelle aux domaines des études architecturales et de l'anthropologie historique. L'adoption d'une approche interdisciplinaire qui emprunte et compare de nombreuses sous-disciplines permet non seulement de discuter pleinement de l'histoire culturelle du siège de Sarajevo, mais aussi de la placer dans une trajectoire temporelle qui retrace l'impact des développements politiques sur la reproduction pratique de la Yougoslavie dans la sphère culturelle.

En tant que telle, cette dissertation vise principalement à contribuer à trois domaines : l'histoire sociale du siège de Sarajevo et de la dissolution de la Yougoslavie, l'histoire culturelle des milieux culturels yougoslaves et de Bosnie-Herzégovine, et l'histoire générale de l'art de conflit. Tout d'abord, les conclusions de cette étude sont redevables au travail précurseur effectué dans le domaine plus large de l'histoire de la Yougoslavie, et des aspects culturels de cette histoire en particulier. En abordant les processus culturels qui ont accompagné et, dans certains cas, encouragé la prolifération de la dissolution politique de l'état socialiste, ce texte s'engage dans la vaste historiographie qui a cherché à comprendre et à expliquer sa chute. Si les analyses qui dépeignent la dissolution de la Yougoslavie comme le résultat de "anciens haines ethniques"

³¹ L'hétérogénéité des protagonistes appelle une approche plus diversifiée que ne le permettrait une micro-histoire typique. Pour les artistes qui ont contribué à tout matériel publié en tant que figures semi-publiques, les noms complets et les descriptions seront inclus, avec la justification qu'il n'y a pas d'attente raisonnable pour la vie privée dans ce cas. Cependant, les expériences des individus dont l'implication dans les arts visuels ne justifie pas leur classification en tant que figure publique seront anonymisées afin de protéger leur vie privée. En outre, certaines anecdotes utiles sur le plan analytique ont été sciemment omises de ce texte, parfois à la demande explicite des acteurs concernés. Compte tenu de l'accès irrégulier aux archives et du peu de temps écoulé depuis les événements analysés dans ce texte, il est de la responsabilité de l'historien de discerner l'intéressant du pertinent en tenant compte de la vie privée des personnes impliquées.

entre les peuples constitutifs de l'état ont peu de valeur analytique, elles permettent néanmoins de comprendre la construction des discours dont il est question dans cette thèse.³² A l'inverse, des études comme celles menées par JR Lampe, Holm Sundhaussen, Sabrina Petra Ramet ou Susan L. Woodward permettent une compréhension plus nuancée des processus qui ont finalement abouti au siège de Sarajevo, et constituent donc également une toile de fond théorique pour cette thèse.³³

Bien que l'objectif ici ne soit pas d'écrire une histoire politique ou militaire, les études existantes qui traitent des développements en Bosnie-Herzégovine et à Sarajevo sous différents angles fournissent un contexte théorique pour comprendre le type de conflit auquel les habitants de la ville étaient confrontés.³⁴ Une tentative est faite d'inclure les historiographies de Bosnie-Herzégovine sur le conflit et le siège, à la fois comme sources de recherche locale et comme éléments qui interagissent avec, naviguent et/ou reproduisent les discours existants traités dans ce texte.³⁵ Le riche héritage culturel et sa spécificité géopolitique ont fait de la ville de Sarajevo

³² Par exemple: Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (London: Picador, 2014).

³³ Aussi: John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country*, 2 edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia From the Death of Tito the Fall of Milošević*; Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1995); Holm Sundhaussen, *Jugoslawien Und Seine Nachfolgestaaten 1943-2011: Eine Ungewöhnliche Geschichte Des Gewöhnlichen*, 2nd 2., Aktual. (Wien Köln Weimar: Bohlau Verlag, 2012); Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia: Tito, Communist Leadership and the National Question* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

³⁴ Par exemple: Xavier Bougarel, *Bosnie, Anatomie d'un Conflit* (Paris: La Découverte, 1996); Xavier Bougarel, Elissa Helms, and Ger Guijzings, eds., *The New Bosnian Mosaic. Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2007); Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999); Nenad Stefanov and Michael Werz, *Bosnien Und Europa: Die Ethnisierung Der Gesellschaft* (Germany: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994); Xavier Bougarel, Hannes Grandits, and Nenad Stefanov, eds., "Did the Wars in Yugoslavia Change the Perception of Societal Conflicts? Debates in France and Germany," *Südosteuropa. Zeitschrift Für Politik Und Gesellschaft* 61, no. 4 (2013); Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); Norman M. Naimark, *Yugoslavia and Its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); Marie-Janine Calic, *Krieg und Frieden in Bosnien-Herzegovina* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995); Boris Previšić, Svjetlan Lacko Vidulić, *Traumata der Transition: Erfahrung und Reflexion des jugoslawischen Zerfalls*, 1. edition (Tübingen: Francke, A, 2015); Neven Andjelić, *Bosnia-Herzegovina: The End of a Legacy*, Annotated edition (London ; Portland, Or.: Routledge, 2003).

³⁵ Par exemple: Smail Čekić, *Opsada i odbrana Sarajeva 1992-1995. Referati sa okruglog stola održanog 23. novembra 2005. godine*. (Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2008); Nedžad Ajnadžić, *Opsada Sarajeva u Kontekstu Historijskih Iskustava* (Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2012); Husnija Kamberović and Dubravka Stojanović, *Ratovi 1990-ih u Regionalnim Historiografijama. Kontroverze, Interpretacije, Nasljedje*. (Sarajevo: Udruženje za modernu historiju, 2021); Aleksandar R. Miletić, "Iz svakodnevice života u Sarajevu tokom opsade 1992-95 godine. Prilog gradnji usmene istorije o ratu na prostorima bivše SFRJ," *Tokovi istorije*, no. 3-4 (2005): 283-93.

l'objet de nombreuses études récentes, englobant une variété de disciplines et touchant à l'histoire sociale, culturelle et politique de la ville, vieille de 550 ans.³⁶ En outre, cette thèse espère apporter des contributions significatives à l'histoire sociale du siège de Sarajevo lui-même, en se concentrant sur les expériences vécues au quotidien par les personnes affectées par la guerre. L'étude anthropologique de la vie quotidienne menée par Ivana Maček, l'un des textes clés sur lesquels s'appuie cette thèse, reste la contribution la plus solide à l'histoire du conflit malgré ses divergences méthodologiques de cette thèse. En soulignant la nécessité de reproduire un sentiment de "normalité" dans un contexte de destruction totale du siège est un élément crucial du cadre théorique de ce texte, et continuera d'informer ses arguments tout au long de la thèse.³⁷ Bien que l'histoire culturelle du siège de Sarajevo n'ait pas été négligée dans une quelconque mesure, l'objectif de cette étude est également d'intégrer une approche historiographique rigoureuse qui privilégie la recherche archivistique sous-utilisée jusqu'à présent, en rejoignant les différents auteurs qui se sont penchés sur les développements culturels pendant et après le siège de Sarajevo, mais aussi les histoires culturelles plus larges de la

³⁶ Pour la littérature du domaine de l'anthropologie sur la ville de Sarajevo, avant, pendant et après la guerre, voir par exemple: Markowitz, *Sarajevo*; Stef Jansen, *Yearnings in the Meantime: "Normal Lives" and the State in a Sarajevo Apartment Complex*, 1st edition (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015). For further discussions of BiH ethnic composition and inter-community integration, see, for example: Tone R. Bringa, "Nationality Categories, National Identification and Identity Formation in 'Multinational' Bosnia," *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 11, no. 1 & 2 (1993): 80–89.

³⁷ Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*; Ivana Maček, "'Imitation of Life': Negotiating Normality in Sarajevo under Siege," in *The New Bosnian Mosaic. Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society*, ed. Xavier Bougarel, Elissa Helms, and Ger Guijzings (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 39–57; Ivana Maček, "Transmission and Transformation: Memories of the Siege of Sarajevo," in *Civilians Under Siege from Sarajevo to Troy*, ed. Alex Dowdall and John Horne (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018), 15–35, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-58532-5_2.

région.³⁸ Ces conversations sont en outre enrichies par l'étude relativement bien développée de l'architecture en temps de guerre, dont la focalisation sur la renégociation de l'espace au sein d'une société en conflit ainsi que l'introduction d'outils théoriques tels que la notion d'urbicide fournissent une autre outil d'analyse.³⁹ Un accent particulier est mis sur les spécificités de siège comme outil de guerre dans l'analyse des expériences des civils, où la "domestication" de la violence et la nature statique de ce type de guerre offre des risques et des vulnérabilités distincts pour les non-combattants, compte tenu de leur rôle en tant que cibles délibérées de la violence destinée à briser le moral et la résistance dans un contexte social et militaire.⁴⁰

En se concentrant sur la production artistique à l'aube de la dissolution de la Yougoslavie, cette dissertation espère apporter un nouvel éclairage sur les ruptures et les continuités au sein des sphères culturelles de la région à la fin des années 1980 et tout au long des années 1990. S'inspirant d'études antérieures traitant la société yougoslave, ce texte considère que la

³⁸ Par exemple: Dragana Obradović, "Aesthetics, Spectacle and Kitsch in Literary Representation of the Sarajevo Siege," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 90, no. 2 (2012): 229–61; Jelena Hadžiosmanović, "How Is Culture Used as a Tool for Dissuasion in Conflict and Consensus: A Case of Sarajevo (1992-1995)," *Epiphany* 7, no. 1 (2014): 22–46; Larisa Kurtović, "Paradoxes of Wartime 'Freedom': Alternative Culture during the Siege of Sarajevo"; Lida Hujić, "Learning from Sarajevo: Visual Expression Through the Lens of Yugoslavia's Countercultural Music Scenes and Their Enduring Legacy (From the 1980s to the Present)," *The Design Journal* 18, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 555–83; Megan Kossiakoff, "The Art of War: The Protection of Cultural Property during the 'Siege' of Sarajevo (1992-95)," *DePaul Journal of Art, Technology & Intellectual Property Law* 14, no. 1, Special Section: Art and War (2004): 109–70; Diklić, *Teatar u ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva*; Joanna Zielińska, "Sztuka przeciw kulom. Działalność kulturalna i teatralna w Sarajewie podczas wojny w Bośni i Hercegowinie (1992-1995)"; Gradimir Gojer, "Uloga i značaj kulture u periodu opsade i odbrane Sarajeva," in *Opsada i Odbrana Sarajeva. 1992 -1995* (Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2008), 286–91; Mirsada Baljić, "Uloga i značaj umjetnika u okviru OS RBiH u periodu opsade i odbrane Sarajeva," in *Opsada i Odbrana Sarajeva, 1992-1995*, ed. Smail Čekić (Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2008), 313–20; Klara Wyrzykowska, "La redéfinition de l'espace culturel post-yougoslave. Le cas du Festival du film de Sarajevo: 1993-2008" (M.A., Sciences Po Paris, 2009); Megan Robbins, "Intercultural Exchange and Cultural Resistance in Sarajevo's Classical Music Institutions"; Claudia Bell, "Sarajevska Zima: A Festival Amid War Debris in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Space and Culture* 12, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 136–42.

³⁹ Par exemple: Cynthia Simmons, "Urbicide and the Myth of Sarajevo," *Partisan Review* 4 (2001): 624–30; Martin Coward, *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction* (London, New York: Routledge, 2008); Asja Mandić, "Exhibitions in Damaged and Destroyed Architectural Objects in Besieged Sarajevo: Spaces of Gathering and Socialization"; Emina Zejnilović, and Erna Husukić, "Culture and Architecture in Distress - Sarajevo Experiment," *ArchNet-IJAR: International Journal of Architectural Research* 12, no. 1 (March 2018): 11–35; Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War: The Destruction and Reconstruction of Sarajevo*, 1st ed. 2018 (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018); Armina Pilav, "Before the War, War, After the War: Urban Imageries for Urban Resilience," *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science* 3, no. 1 (March 2012): 23–37; Bogdan Bogdanović, and Klaus Detlef. *Die Stadt Und Der Tod: Essays*. 1. Klagenfurt: Wieser, 1993.

⁴⁰ Alex Dowdall, "Introduction," in *Civilians Under Siege from Sarajevo to Troy* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018), 8.

communauté artistique de la guerre descend directement des communautés d'avant-guerre.⁴¹ Plus important encore, le texte s'appuie sur une lecture alternative du concept de culture commune yougoslave. Alors que les revendications directes d'identification personnelle à l'idéal yougoslave restent presque impossibles à retracer, les impacts culturels de cette profonde transition socio-politique sont explorés dans le contexte d'une transition temporelle plutôt que d'une série de ruptures hermétiques.⁴² Mobilisant des concepts d'histoire de l'art tels que la "second line" de Ješa Denegri, qui fait référence à l'existence d'un mouvement artistique yougoslave parallèle à l'esthétique étatique, cette thèse s'appuie fortement sur l'affirmation qu'un espace culturel yougoslave a existé en tant qu'entité séparée des structures politiques, dirigée par des acteurs, qui a néanmoins interagi avec les développements politiques d'un état

⁴¹ Pour la littérature sur l'histoire sociale plus large de l'État yougoslave tardif et ses représentations historiographiques, voir par exemple: Hannes Grandits, "Titoismus. Ein Wandelbares Gesellschaftssystem in Zeiten Des Kalten Kriegs.," *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte. Begriffe, Methoden Und Debatten Der Zeithistorischen Forschung*. (blog), April 14, 2017, <https://docupedia.de/zg/Titoismus?oldid=100819>; Hannes Grandits, *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism*, ed. Karin Taylor (Budapest ; New York: Central European University Press, 2010); Hannes Grandits, Vladimir Ivanović, and Branimir Janković, eds., *Reprezentacije socijalističke Jugoslavije: preispitivanja i perspektive*, 1. izd, Preispitivanja i perspektive (Sarajevo: Udruženje za modernu historiju, 2019); Predrag Matvejević, *Granice i sudbine : o jugoslavenstvu i prije i poslije Jugoslavije* (Zagreb: VBZ, 2015); Dubravka Stojanović, Božo Repe, and Husnija Kamberović, eds., *Jugoslavija u Historiografskim Ogledalima - Zbornik Radova*, Edicija Zbornici, vol. 6 (Sarajevo: Udruženje za modernu historiju, 2018); Djordje Tomić. "From 'Yugoslavism' to (Post)Yugoslav Nationalisms: Understanding Yugoslav 'Identities'." In *European National Identities: Elements, Transitions, Conflicts*, 271–92, Piscataway, NJ: 2014.

⁴² Les discussions entourant la construction et la réalité d'une identité yougoslave apparaissent souvent au moins partiellement partisans, et si les affirmations sur le succès d'un projet de construction d'une identité nationale yougoslave restent difficiles à soutenir, les arguments soutenant l'existence d'une sphère culturelle yougoslave basée sur la pratique ont reçu un soutien récent. Par exemple: Zoran Milutinović, "What Common Yugoslav Culture Was, and How Everybody Benefited from It," *The Cultural Spaces of a Vanished Land*, n.d., 75–87; Duško Sekulić, Garth Massey, and Randy Hodson, "Who Were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia," *American Sociological Review* 59, no. 1 (1994): 83–97. Research on contemporary visual arts in Yugoslavia offers a case-study of an alternative analytical framework that emphasizes the lived experiences of practical cooperation and the construction of networks, in particular the concept of the arts as evidence of a "parallel cultural infrastructure" that remains to be studied more rigorously from a historical perspective. See, for example: Zdenka Badovinac, "Zdenka Badovinac, in Conversation with J. Myers-Szupinska," in *Comradeship. Curating, Art, and Politics in Post-Socialist Europe*, ed. J. Myers-Szupinska (New York: Independent Curators International, 2019), 11–40; Zdenka Badovinac, "Art as a Parallel Cultural Infrastructure / Legacy of Post War Avantgardes from Former Yugoslavia" (Lecture, Haus der Kunst, Munich, January 14, 2016), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2Gr8Rr7swA>.

en point d'effondrement.⁴³ En tant que tel, ce texte est une tentative de lecture parallèle de l'idée d'une communauté yougoslave et de ses incorporations pratiques.⁴⁴

Plus spécifiquement, cette thèse interagit directement avec l'histoire des mouvements artistiques et culturels bosniaques, qui jusqu'à présent ont largement restée relégués à des analyses superficielles.⁴⁵ La production artistique centrée sur Sarajevo a historiquement occupé une place marginale par rapport à l'axe plus visible de Zagreb-Belgrade-Ljubljana, mais a montré une augmentation constante de l'intérêt vers la fin des années 1980.⁴⁶ En outre, des textes d'histoire de l'art traitant des éditions 1987 et 1989 de la *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* fournissent une base pour le premier chapitre de cette thèse, qui traite de cette "dernière exposition yougoslave" comme point de départ théorique et pratique.⁴⁷ Il est frappant de constater que les histoires de la production artistique en Yougoslavie, ainsi que de la production en temps de guerre dans la sphère ex-yougoslave en général, se sont limitées à des niveaux

⁴³ Pour un examen plus approfondi des textes de Ješa Denegri, voir par exemple: Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, eds., *Impossible Histories: Historic Avant-Gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes, and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia 1918-1991* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003). See also: Ješa Denegri, "The Reason for the Other Line," in *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta '89* (Sarajevo: Collegium Artisticum / RO ZOI '84, 1989), 35–38; Ješa Denegri, "The Properties of the New Art Practice of the Seventies in the Yugoslav Art Space," *Treći Program Radio Beograda*, no. 61 (1984), <https://www.avantgarde-museum.com/en/jesa-denegri-the-properties-of-the-new-art-practice-of-the-seventies-in-the-yugoslav-art-space-english~no6583/>.

⁴⁴ Par exemple: Dejan Djokic, *Yugoslavism: Histories Of A Failed Idea, 1918-1992*, 1 edition (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003).

⁴⁵ L'ouvrage d'Ivan Lovrenović sur l'histoire culturelle de la Bosnie-Herzégovine est peut-être la seule publication en langue anglaise disponible sur le sujet à l'heure actuelle. Ivan Lovrenović, *Bosnia: A Cultural History*.

⁴⁶ La majorité des nouvelles études et de l'intérêt pour l'art sarajévien des années 1980 se concentre principalement sur l'émergence de l'influent groupe d'avant-garde Zvono et de ses précurseurs. Par exemple: Sandra Bradvić, "Exhibition History Beyond Western and Eastern Canon Formation: A Methodological Proposal Based on the Example of the Art Group Zvono," in *Liminal Spaces of Art Between Europe and the Middle East*, ed. Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić et al. (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), 28–41; Irfan Hošić, "Zvono Prije Zvona." *Visura Magazine*. (n.d.): 93-9. [https://www.academia.edu/38144489/Zvono_prije_zvona](https://www.academia.edu/38144489/Zvono_prije_zvona;); *Zvono - Priča o Umjetnosti*. Video. Svjetlana Živanov, and Nihad Lubovac. Sarajevo: Federalna, 2020. <https://federalna.ba/public/zvono-prica-o-umjetnosti-igpou>.

⁴⁷ Par exemple: Zdenka Badovinac, "An Exhibition About an Exhibition. The Heritage of 1989, Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents," in *The Heritage of 1989. Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition*. (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija Ljubljana, 2017), n.pag.; Bojana Piškur, "Yugoslav Document(s) Exhibitions," in *The Heritage of 1989. Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition*. (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija Ljubljana, 2017), n.pag.; Muhamed Karamehmedović, ed., *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta '89*. (Sarajevo: Olimpijski Centar "Skenderija," 1989); Davor Matičević, "A View of the Eighties. The Eighties – The Way to Remember Them," in *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta '89*, ed. Muhamed Karamehmedović (Sarajevo: Olimpijski Centar "Skenderija," 1989), 39–45. Private collection.

locaux et nationaux, avec peu d'intérêt accordé à un traitement comparatif ou intégré.⁴⁸ Alors que les analyses individuelles fournissent certaines informations sur l'état de la sphère artistique de la fin de la Yougoslavie, ce texte la traite comme un tout intégré, par opposition à une série de milieux individuels. L'histoire de la production artistique pendant le siège de Sarajevo reste également marginale, les travaux d'Asja Mandić sur le rôle de l'art en tant qu'élément de "résistance critique" à l'agression des Serbes de Bosnie demeurant la principale référence en la matière.⁴⁹

Enfin, cette thèse touche et contribue à une histoire de l'art globale axée sur l'intersection entre l'art et la guerre. Le cas de Sarajevo est particulièrement important car il s'agit de l'un des rares conflits armés dans lequel les artistes ont travaillé activement sur les champs de bataille, au lieu de produire leurs peintures et sculptures a posteriori ou dans un espace géographiquement éloigné. En comprenant mieux la scène artistique de Sarajevo, il est possible d'avancer dans l'étude des changements dans les contextes post-totalitaires en effervescence, des processus de développement de nouveaux discours et matériaux dans les œuvres d'art, ou même du fonctionnement d'une scène ou d'une communauté artistique en l'absence de marché ou de matrice institutionnelle complète.

La clé de la production artistique en temps de guerre réside dans le fait que les peintures et les dessins ont le pouvoir de générer des représentations physiques d'expériences émotionnelles, créant ainsi de nouveaux espaces d'expression.⁵⁰ Néanmoins, l'acceptation de longue date de

⁴⁸ Par exemple: Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, *Impossible Histories: Historic Avant-Gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes, and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia 1918-1991*; Jelena Pašić, "Devedesete: Borba za kontekst," *Časopis za Suvremena Likovna Zbivanja/ Magazine for Contemporary Visual Arts* (2012): 12–21; Seraina Renz, "'Art and Revolution' – The Student Cultural Center in Belgrade as a Place between Affirmation and Critique," *Kunsttexte.de/Ostblick*, no. 3 (2014): Published online, <https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/handle/18452/8216>; Ana Janevski, "Art and Its Institutional Framework in Croatia After '68," in *1968-1989. Political Upheaval and Artistic Change*, ed. Claire Bishop and Marta Dziewańska (Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, 2009), 50–63. Private collection; Davor Matičević, "A View of the Eighties. The Eighties – The Way to Remember Them.,"; Marko Ilić, "'A Taster of Political Insult.' The Case of Novi Sad's Youth Tribune" *Third Text*, September 7 (2018): 1–16.

⁴⁹ Asja Mandić, "The Formation of a Culture of Critical Resistance in Sarajevo"; Asja Mandić, "Exhibitions in Damaged and Destroyed Architectural Objects in Besieged Sarajevo: Spaces of Gathering and Socialization."

⁵⁰ Bien qu'un examen approfondi de la littérature de l'histoire de l'art sur le sujet de l'art et de la guerre dépasse la portée de ce texte, le rôle historiquement significatif de l'art dans les conflits a été discuté dans une multitude de contextes géographiques et temporels, allant du travail des artistes de l'après-Première Guerre mondiale à des œuvres plus anciennes dépeignant la guerre, comme les célèbres *Désastres de la guerre* de Francisco Goya. Pamela Blotner, "Art out of Rubble," in *My Neighbor, My Enemy. Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*, ed. Eric Stover and Harvey M. Weinstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 269–86; Jo Tollebeek et al., eds., *Ravages: l'Art et la Culture en Temps de Conflit* (Leuven: Fonds Mercator, Museum Leuven, 2014).

"l'art de la guerre" en tant que courant artistique majeur, utilisé principalement pour décrire non seulement "les peintures sur les batailles" mais "plus important encore, les relations entre la guerre et l'art", s'est limitée principalement à la discussion des œuvres des artistes de guerre traditionnels (dont l'objectif principal consistait à documenter les conflits) ou des tentatives plus propagandistes d'influencer l'opinion publique (comme le *Guernica* de Pablo Picasso).⁵¹ L'historienne de l'art sarajévienne Azra Begić propose une définition différente de l'art de guerre dans le contexte de la production en temps de siège, en mettant l'accent sur la réappropriation de nouveaux matériaux et d'expériences de guerre plutôt que sur la valeur documentaire qui lui est traditionnellement attribuée :

"La partie la plus intéressante et la plus vitale de la scène artistique de Sarajevo tout au long de cette guerre est l'art fermement ancré dans notre infernale existence quotidienne obtenant de celle-ci non seulement l'inspiration pour ses idées et ses envolées créatives mais aussi les matériaux pour leur réalisation. C'est pourquoi je l'ai, à un moment donné, qualifié d'art de guerre."⁵²

Si le souvenir de la Seconde Guerre mondiale est particulièrement influent dans le patrimoine artistique yougoslave, la prédominance d'un "art partisan" et de matériaux propagandistes reste quelque peu éloignée, voire totalement étrangère, à l'histoire de Sarajevo.⁵³ Certaines similitudes peuvent être trouvées dans des situations où les artistes se sont également trouvés en détention, par exemple en tant que prisonniers des camps de prisonniers de guerre, ou en tant que victimes des camps de concentration et des ghettos de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Bien que beaucoup de choses restent inconnues en raison du manque des sources, certains aperçus sur les tendances thématiques et l'utilisation des matériaux peuvent être précieux pour mieux

⁵¹ Laura Brandon, *Art and War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 3.

⁵² Nermina Kurspahić, *Svjedoci Postojanja / Witnesses of Existence. Exhibition Catalogue*. (Sarajevo: Obala Art Centar, 1993), n.pag. National and University Library of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

⁵³ Par exemple: Ivan Jelić, Dunja Rihtman-Augustin, and Vice Zaninović, eds., *Kultura i umjetnost u NOB-u i socijalističkoj revoluciji u Hrvatskoj* (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, 1975); Nevenka Božanić-Bezić, "Likovni umjetnici pri oblasnom narodnooslobodilačkom odboru Dalmacije," in *Kultura i umjetnost u NOB-u i socijalističkoj revoluciji u Hrvatskoj* (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, 1975), 295–300; Gal Kirn, *The Partisan Counter-Archive: Retracing the Ruptures of Art and Memory in the Yugoslav People's Liberation Struggle* (De Gruyter, 2020).

comprendre comment les artistes en tant qu'individus gèrent l'expérience traumatisante d'un enfermement violent.⁵⁴

Transposant grossièrement le *pladoyer* de Sabine Rutar pour une histoire de la Yougoslavie écrite depuis le début de l'état plutôt que dans sa fin, cette dissertation commence par une discussion de la scène artistique sarajévienne à l'aube de la dissolution de la Yougoslavie, en présentant une scène artistique d'avant-guerre de plus en plus active et les acteurs qui composaient cette communauté.⁵⁵ Le premier chapitre commence donc par l'introduction de la "dernière exposition yougoslave", en se concentrant sur les éditions 1987 et 1989 de la *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*, et retrace les réactions de la scène artistique sarajévienne à l'instabilité politique croissante au sein des cercles culturels, et finalement, à l'avènement de la guerre. Le chapitre suivant traite de cette transition et du début du siège à travers le prisme des discours sur la "civilisation", en liant ces récits aux processus pratiques d'adaptation à la vie en temps de guerre. Le troisième chapitre est consacré au concept d'art comme résistance, qui sera abordé sous l'angle des adaptations artistiques à l'imposition d'une violence extrême dans la vie quotidienne, en se concentrant particulièrement sur les différentes formes de participation des artistes professionnels à l'effort de guerre. Le quatrième et dernier chapitre traitera des dimensions internationales du siège à travers la relation entre les artistes locaux et étrangers, en invoquant spécifiquement les conceptualisations basées sur l'appartenance culturelle (ou non) de Sarajevo à "l'Europe". Enfin, une conclusion revient sur la façon dont la production de ces exemples variés de récits de guerre peut être utilisée pour mieux aborder les expériences des sarajéviens qui les ont vécues, ouvrant la question de ce qu'ils pourraient signifier pour une compréhension contemporaine de l'histoire sociale et culturelle du siège de Sarajevo.

⁵⁴ Luba K. Gurdus, "Reconstruction of an Artist's Life: Genia (Gela) Seksztajn-Lichtensztajn," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 2, no. 2 (1987): 277–87; Joanna K.M. Hanson, "Entertainment and Schooling," in *The Civilian Population and the Warsaw Uprising of 1944* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 235–37.

⁵⁵ Sabine Rutar, "Versponnene Fäden. Kriegsnarrative Im Jugoslawischen Raum.," in *Traumata Der Transition. Erfahrung Und Reflexion Des Jugoslawischen Zerfalls*. (A. Francke Verlag, 2015), 159.

Chapitre I : Pays en voie de disparition et communautés en mutation. Retracer la désintégration d'une communauté culturelle yougoslave supranationale au sein d'un État supranational

Bien que l'arrivée de la guerre était un choc pour de nombreux habitants de Sarajevo qui considéraient leur ville, et leur république, comme un symbole de cohabitation pacifique, la guerre en Bosnie-Herzégovine a été le résultat d'années de lutte pour le contrôle par les mains de leaders nationalistes dans toute l'ex-Yougoslavie, aidés par la crise économique. Les processus qui ont accompagné le démantèlement de l'état se sont naturellement reflétés dans les politiques et les développements culturels qui ont eu lieu pendant les dernières heures de la existence de la Yougoslavie, les spécialistes s'accordant généralement à dire que, dans les années 1980, tout semblant de coopération entre les républiques de l'État socialiste avait été mise en pause, voire carrément abandonné.⁵⁶ Cependant, un examen plus approfondi de la communauté des arts visuels de Sarajevo au cours de l'immédiat avant-guerre, c'est-à-dire entre 1987 et 1992, permet de jeter un regard neuf et légèrement plus précis sur les processus culturels qui ont accompagné cette période.

Comprendre comment ces changements ont été vécus par les citoyens est crucial pour comprendre leurs expériences dans le conflit qui a suivi. Cette approche fournisse un aperçu des réactions artistiques à l'attaque de leur ville mais aussi du contexte dans lequel les artistes ont conceptualisé leurs propres rôles dans le conflit, que ce soit à titre individuel ou collectif. Bien que n'apportant pas de réponses définitives, cette approche se prête à quelques questions cruciales qui doivent être posées lorsqu'on aborde les arts visuels des années 1990 : comment cette communauté spécifique a-t-elle continué à naviguer dans une sphère d'un paysage culturel commun apparemment disparu ? De quelle manière les acteurs culturels ont-ils interagi avec les débats politiques contemporains et la montée de la rhétorique nationaliste ? Quels effets la dissolution du système dominant à parti unique a-t-elle eu sur les artistes et, plus important encore, comment se sont-ils adaptés à ces nouvelles circonstances ?

⁵⁶ Alors que la production artistique et culturelle yougoslave des années 1980 n'a suscité qu'un intérêt limité de la part des chercheurs, de nombreux universitaires de renom ont souligné avec justesse l'érosion des institutions culturelles publiques qui ont dominé les années 1980 comme un miroir des changements politiques et une contribution à la dissolution de l'État. Par exemple: Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation*.

Cette section ne traite pas d'un discours spécifique en tant que tel, mais examine plutôt comment le concept d'une culture commune yougoslave a été invoqué, traité ou dénigré à la fin du siècle. Discuter du rôle, ou même de l'existence, d'une culture yougoslave commune n'est pas une tâche particulièrement simple : en tant que concept composé d'un éventail de définitions, de significations et de points de départ, la préférence accordée à une histoire intellectuelle basée sur l'état l'a généralement défini comme faisant partie d'un récit yougo-nostalgique peu intéressant. Si l'on considère que la recherche actuelle sur les arts visuels des années 1990 en Yougoslavie se limite presque entièrement à des études axées sur la production culturelle nationale, il est facile de négliger l'existence continue de réseaux informels au sein des arts visuels yougoslaves, qui constituaient une "infrastructure culturelle parallèle" transrépublicaine existant en dehors de l'histoire culturelle traditionnelle de la période.⁵⁷ En prenant l'idée d'une culture yougoslave commune pas comme un marqueur d'identité mais comme une solution aux problèmes sociaux et économiques concrets, cette section introduit la notion d'une culture yougoslave unifiée mais supranationale qui, malgré les attentes, a continué d'exister alors que "à toutes fins pratiques (législatives, économiques, culturelles), la Yougoslavie avait déjà cessé d'exister".⁵⁸

Présentant l'un des derniers événements culturels pan-yougoslaves, la *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* (Yugoslav Documenta), organisée pour la première fois à Sarajevo en 1987, comme un point d'ancrage, ce chapitre se concentre sur la deuxième édition de la biennale comme pour discuter des représentations d'une culture yougoslave commune en contrastant les écrits des organisateurs de l'évènement avec sa réception. Généralement considérée comme l'une des dernières tentatives de maintien de la sphère culturelle yougoslave commune, la deuxième édition de la *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* offre un point de départ idéal pour comprendre la manière dont les acteurs culturels ont interagi avec la réalité politique dans laquelle ils vivaient à la fin des années 1980. La première édition de la *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* s'est déroulée

⁵⁷ L'expression "parallel cultural infrastructure" a été inventée par Zdenka Badovinac et est reprise ici pour désigner les structures institutionnelles qui ont émergé des interactions, des programmes et des réseaux d'acteurs en dehors des projets directement parrainés par l'État. Par exemple: Jelena Pašić, "Devedesete: Borba za kontekst"; Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, *Impossible Histories: Historic Avant-Gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes, and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia 1918-1991*; Branislava Adelkovic, Branislav Dimitrijevic, and Dejan Sretonovic, eds., *On Normality: Art in Serbia 1989-2001* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, 2005); Ana Janevski, "Art and Its Institutional Framework in Croatia After '68."

⁵⁸ Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia From the Death of Tito the Fall of Milošević*, 27.

dans un contexte de paix entrecoupé par des premiers signes d'insécurité.⁵⁹ La deuxième édition a suscité beaucoup plus de critiques. La *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*, en tant que l'une des "dernières expositions yougoslaves", a été organisée dans un contexte de crise dont la politique s'étendait au domaine de la culture.

La première section de ce chapitre est consacrée à l'analyse de la présentation et de la réception de l'exposition yougoslave, en se concentrant d'abord sur les considérations théoriques avancées par les commissaires et les organisateurs de l'exposition. En apparence, le catalogue de la *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* trahit peu "d'indices sur les conditions qui, à l'époque déjà, étaient évidentes et qui allaient conduire, au début des années 1990, à des affrontements ethniques et politiques sanglants".⁶⁰ Au milieu des polémiques sur l'influence étatique sur une culture yougoslave commune, la *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* est peut-être l'illustration la plus poignante de l'existence indépendante d'une sphère culturelle supranationale, résultat d'efforts individuels plutôt que d'un soutien gouvernemental tangible. Les auteurs choisis pour contribuer au catalogue partagent tous un langage qui traite l'art yougoslave comme faisant partie d'un cercle unique, tout en admettant simultanément les différences et les traditions régionales. Cependant, les organisateurs de l'exposition évitent simultanément toute provocation politique - pour eux, les aspects pratiques de la scène artistique ont éclipsé toute valeur polémique qu'ils auraient pu avoir. À ce stade, peu des discours qui allaient émerger au cours des années de guerre suivantes étaient présents dans le vocabulaire des hôtes - un point de vue qui n'était pas entièrement partagé par les critiques de l'exposition. Si les organisateurs de la *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* ont cherché à donner une image politiquement neutre de leur exposition, le contexte social dans lequel l'événement s'est déroulé a dicté sa réception et, finalement, son héritage. La situation politique précaire de la Yougoslavie a été largement ignorée par l'équipe de commissaires de Sarajevo, mais ceux qui ont visité et examiné l'exposition ont été beaucoup plus rapides à contextualiser l'événement en utilisant une série de discours qui avaient commencé à envahir le débat public. Bien qu'à la mi-1989, il n'y ait toujours "aucune tentative d'organiser des

⁵⁹ Par exemple, le projet de mémorandum de l'Académie serbe des sciences et des arts (SANU) a fait l'objet d'une fuite dans la presse en 1986, un an avant la tenue de la première *Dokumenta*. Le document en question "contenait des critiques économiques retraçant les débuts de la décentralisation" et introduisait pour la première fois la "question nationale" serbe dans l'arène politique. Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 325–26.

⁶⁰ Zdenka Badovinac, "An Exhibition About an Exhibition. The Heritage of 1989, Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents."

organisations politiques ethniques", les tensions sont évidentes dans le riche corpus de documentation créé par des critiques (parfois pas entièrement) professionnels.⁶¹

L'analyse des réactions extérieures à la dernière exposition d'art yougoslave offre une vision plus nuancée de l'état de la culture yougoslave commune à l'époque. Allant de notes informatives aux critiques éditoriales de deux pages, la *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* a reçu une couverture impressionnante de la part de la presse régionale. Bien que les critiques uniquement négatives aient été minoritaires, ceux qui ont écrit sur la Documenta yougoslave ont émis des avis critiques sur le processus du commissariat, le jugeant trop provincial ou manquant de professionnalisme, ou ont montré un désaccord ouvert sur le soutien voilé d'un espace culturel yougoslave. Au-delà des désaccords logistiques et pratiques, la *Yugoslav Documenta* a également été critiquée pour le concept sur lequel elle était basée : celui d'une tradition culturelle supranationale unifiée qui relie les traditions locales en un tout multilatéral mais collectif.⁶² Différents en termes de ton et de sévérité, une collection des articles a fait référence à plusieurs reprises aux motivations politiques soupçonnés d'avoir guidée des artistes organisateurs, fondant leur critique sur une approche du commissariat qui ne séparait pas les œuvres d'art par république et les disposait plutôt en fonction du mouvement et de la génération.⁶³ Le contraste surprenant entre les intentions déclarées des organisateurs et la réception critique en dehors de la république bosniaque se lit en parallèle avec les défis sociopolitiques auxquels la société yougoslave était confrontée à cette époque, suggérant que si des fissures fatales dans le vernis yougoslave étaient clairement visibles dans la fragmentation

⁶¹ Andjelić, *Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 89.

⁶² En revanche, il est intéressant de noter que les quelques articles de presse critiques parus sur l'édition 1987 de l'exposition se limitaient à un commentaire sur la valeur artistique de l'événement plutôt qu'à des coups de gueule politiques. Ainsi, jusqu'en 1989, il semble que les critiques d'art yougoslaves aient été moins enclins à attaquer directement le concept unitaire de l'exposition. Par exemple: V. Rozman, "Sumnjiva autentičnost," *Una*, May 25, 1987, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive; Ljiljana Domić, "Interventna Izložba," n.pag. Un critique anonyme, écrivant sous le pseudonyme "Art Lover", a critiqué le manque de représentativité de l'exposition, tout en reconnaissant que le concept d'un événement yougoslave à grande échelle reste important pour la scène artistique régionale, et en notant que Sarajevo est particulièrement bien adapté à une telle tâche. Art Lover, "Čip je već ubačen," *Glas Omladine*, May 28, 1987, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

⁶³ En raison de la situation archivistique actuelle, la documentation sur les branches de la Ligue des communistes actives en Bosnie reste inaccessible aux chercheurs, ce qui rend difficile l'évaluation des allégations de pandering politique. Le vernissage a suscité un certain intérêt de la part des politiciens locaux, étant donné qu'il a été inauguré par le professeur Milenko Brkić, du Comité de la République pour la réflexion, la science et la culture, et visité par le maire de Sarajevo, qui aurait même conduit sa voiture de golf à l'inauguration. Cependant, rien ne prouve que l'organisation de l'événement était liée de quelque manière que ce soit au soutien de la parti, ce qui rend les arguments en faveur d'un contrôle du parti plutôt improbables. See: n.n., "Jugoslovenska Dokumenta," n.pag.; Zlatko Kostović, "Tvrde, Lijepe Stvari," n.pag.

des communautés culturelles, ces sentiments de division n'étaient pas aussi inévitables dans le contexte artistique de Sarajevo qu'on pourrait le croire.

La deuxième section de ce chapitre décrit les suites de cette dernière grande exposition yougoslave, en suivant la communauté artistique de Sarajevo dans la transition difficile de son pays vers un processus démocratique. L'abandon du socialisme à Sarajevo s'est accompagné d'une polarisation politique selon des lignes nationales, l'introduction d'un système multipartite dans un climat économique particulièrement instable qui avait créé un malaise au sein de la communauté culturelle de la ville. Les artistes et les amateurs d'art qui fréquentaient la *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* ont réagi activement à ces changements tout en maintenant les réseaux qui avaient rendu possible l'exposition fondatrice, rejetant presque unilatéralement la rhétorique nationaliste tout en restant relativement neutres jusqu'aux élections de novembre 1990. Après la victoire décisive des partis nationalistes et les sécessions subséquentes de la Slovénie et de la Croatie en 1991, les artistes visuels sarajéviens qui se rassemblaient autour du *Collegium Artisticum* sont devenus plus explicites dans leur rhétorique pacifiste et antinationaliste, et ont continué à organiser une coopération active avec des collègues d'autres villes et républiques.

Enfin, ce chapitre aborde les réactions artistiques à la désintégration de l'État yougoslave entre 1990 et 1992. En apparence, les acteurs culturels de Sarajevo ont manifesté peu d'intérêt pour les développements politiques qui ont eu lieu en Bosnie-Herzégovine et en Yougoslavie au début des années 1990, concentrant leur attention sur leur survie économique. Alors que les discussions sur une sphère culturelle yougoslave commune devenaient moins présentes, l'instabilité croissante des nationalistes, qui a culminé avec l'indépendance de la Slovénie et de la Croatie, et les guerres qui ont suivi, est devenue le catalyseur d'appels politiques ouverts émanant de la scène des arts visuels de Sarajevo. La plupart de ces positions se traduisaient par un pacifisme militant, et si le souhait de maintenir un état yougoslave unifié n'était pas toujours au cœur de ces protestations artistiques, leurs organisateurs formulaient des positions ouvertement opposées aux politiques nationalistes qui avaient balayé la région et le pays dès l'été 1991. Ainsi, même à cette époque, il existe des preuves qui suggèrent qu'une communauté culturelle yougoslave imaginée était plus résistante qu'on ne l'a supposé à l'époque. Certes, la rareté des sources disponibles sur cette période rend difficile de tirer des conclusions catégoriques, mais une étude plus approfondie pourrait être bénéfique pour comprendre comment les milieux culturels ont réagi à ces changements radicaux. Néanmoins, le refus

obstiné de concevoir une escalade de la violence d'abord sur le sol bosniaque puis dans les collines sarajéviennes suggère également un certain degré de séparation, soutenant l'idée d'une communauté régionale fluctuante.

Chapitre II : "Une ville multiethnique et multiculturelle" : Le concept de civilisation dans Sarajevo assiégée et dans les arts visuels sarajéviens

Tout au long du siège de Sarajevo, les conditions ont constamment évolué en fonction de la situation militaire, des marchandises disponibles et d'une foule d'autres circonstances quelque peu déroutantes. Le système d'aide humanitaire officiellement mis en place et dirigée par l'ONU, ont permis à la nourriture et aux autres biens ménagers d'entrer dans la ville, empêchant ainsi la population de mourir de faim. Ayant arraché le contrôle de l'aéroport à l'armée serbe de Bosnie au début du conflit, les forces de la FORPRONU (Force de protection des Nations unies) ont surveillé et géré l'un des principaux points d'entrée et de sortie de la ville.⁶⁴ Dans le même temps, la destruction continue et conséquente de la ville a également lourdement handicapé son infrastructure, ce qui signifie que de nombreux citoyens ont vécu dans des appartements endommagés ou même détruits, anciennes cibles des mortiers, ou ont rejoint leurs voisins dans des abris souterrains et des sous-sols. Les fenêtres brisées par les explosions ont été recouvertes de l'incontournable film plastique fourni par le HCR. L'accès à l'électricité était au mieux irrégulier et l'eau courante est devenue une denrée rare dans les maisons où les machines à laver étaient un élément essentiel du foyer depuis des années.⁶⁵ Les problèmes liés à l'élimination des déchets et des ordures, les effets d'une exposition prolongée au froid et à la malnutrition, la mobilité limitée et l'absence quasi-totale de transports publics, l'accès inadéquat aux soins de santé de base et la difficulté à communiquer avec les proches qui ont quittés la ville sont autant de problèmes auxquels les gens ordinaires ont été soudainement confrontés.⁶⁶

Malgré la résilience de la ville, la détérioration extrême des conditions de vie a eu un effet profond sur le moral de ses habitants. Beaucoup d'entre eux s'étaient habitués aux commodités

⁶⁴ Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 131–32.

⁶⁵ Armina Pilav, "Before the War, War, after the War," 17–18.

⁶⁶ Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 318–21.

modernes que sont les cuisinières électriques, les machines à laver et les ordinateurs, tous devenus pratiquement inutilisables du jour au lendemain. Souvent passée sous silence dans les textes contemporains sur le conflit, l'ampleur des destructions a conduit de nombreuses personnes à vivre dans une "situation limite", dans laquelle "l'ampleur des destructions rend les conditions de vie méconnaissables et incompréhensibles", éradiquant les normes et la normativité.⁶⁷ Alors que "les conditions de guerre ne facilitent pas la créativité", ceux qui vivent dans les zones de guerre doivent recréer des significations culturelles, remodeler les connaissances et les formes d'expression - tout en faisant face aux profondes questions existentielles qui accompagnent la proximité incessante de la mort.⁶⁸ Les artistes visuels qui sont restés dans la ville assiégée se sont donc trouvés dans une situation qui a nécessité le développement simultané de mécanismes et de stratégies d'adaptation physiques et psychologiques.

Dans ces circonstances extrêmes, le besoin d'identifier une logique derrière le bouleversement de la vie a conduit à la typification des divisions moralement codifiées, et qui s'exprimaient souvent à travers un cadre binaire. De cette manière, ces classifications permettaient aux personnes de s'orienter dans un monde de plus en plus hostile.⁶⁹ Tout au long du siège de Sarajevo, l'un des lexiques les plus utilisés pour délimiter, décrire et discuter de ce clivage a pris la forme du terme "civilisation", un terme accompagné d'une série de vocabulaires facilement adaptés à la situation de guerre de Sarajevo.⁷⁰ Le concept de civilisation est apparu dans une variété de contextes comme un outil permettant de dénoter l'innocence et de blâmer, donnant aux acteurs locaux et étrangers un vocabulaire dans lequel exprimer les délimitations morales tout au long du conflit.

Une analyse plus approfondie révèle qu'il n'y avait pas de définition acceptée du concept de civilisation parmi les artistes sarajéviens. Alors que certains ont employé l'idée de civilisation comme un reflet de leurs expériences et réactions personnelles au début de la guerre, d'autres

⁶⁷ Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 35.

⁶⁸ Ivana Maček, 35.

⁶⁹ Ivana Maček, 4.

⁷⁰ Comme il ressort de la discussion ci-dessous, le terme "civilisation" n'est en aucun cas un concept descriptif précis. Que ce soit en raison de ses définitions changeantes et instables ou de sa mobilisation historiquement problématique dans une grande variété de contextes, la "civilisation" en tant qu'idée doit généralement être considérée comme un terme idéologiquement pesant. Cependant, en raison de sa récurrence tout au long de ce texte, il sera référencé sans les guillemets qui dénoteraient autrement ce statut fluctuant de l'idée en question.

ont consciemment instrumentalisé ces vocabulaires comme un moyen de s'adresser directement à la communauté internationale par le biais de lexiques familiers. En outre, certains sarajéviens ont également parlé de la civilisation d'une manière qui s'écartait des définitions communément admises, en façonnant et en modelant un cadre familial pour refléter des expériences indescriptibles. Le but ici n'était pas de placer l'artiste sarajévien dans des catégories idéologiques rigides, mais d'explorer comment la mobilisation répétée des récits de civilisation a été comprise, utilisée et modifiée par les acteurs culturels de la ville. Par conséquent, ce chapitre offre également un aperçu de l'une des questions centrales de l'art sarajévien du temps de siège : pourquoi les artistes ont-ils continué à produire de l'art pendant le siège de Sarajevo ? Que signifiait pour eux cette production artistique ? Et, par ailleurs, que peut-on apprendre de ces artistes sur les expériences quotidiennes de la vie en état de siège ?

Ce chapitre se concentre sur la manière dont les artistes sarajévians ont utilisé, discuté, mobilisé ou rejeté des vocabulaires basés sur le récit dichotomique et moralement chargé qui établissait Sarajevo comme une ville civilisée subissant la violence d'attaquants non-civilisés. La première section du texte se concentre sur les développements artistiques et conceptuels au sein de la pratique locale qui a mobilisé le "discours de la civilisation" comme un outil pour délimiter et négocier les expériences vécues pendant le siège. D'une part, la conversation réciproque entre les acteurs culturels internationaux, principalement occidentaux, et les artistes sarajéviens locaux utilisant un langage basé sur des concepts de civilisation est abordée en détail en tant qu'appropriation consciente. Remplissant principalement la fonction de cadre moral linguistique, elle a permis aux sarajéviens de rejeter la violence imposée à leur ville en utilisant des vocabulaires facilement identifiables par les publics locaux et étrangers, dont certains ont été reproduits lors de la communication avec un public extérieur. Certains acteurs culturels ont intégré un discours de civilisation dans des concepts de commissariat d'origine locale, créés dans et pour la ville, offrant à ses habitants un cadre dans lequel ils pouvaient traiter et extérioriser leurs expériences de guerre. Des expositions telles que la célèbre exposition *Svjedoci Postojanja* ou des initiatives plus modestes ont activement intégré ces lexiques dans divers aspects de leur conception, et les artistes individuels ont régulièrement présenté leur production artistique continue comme une continuation de leurs propres routines civilisées. Il semble que les acteurs étrangers se soient aussi volontiers appropriés le même langage que les acteurs culturels sarajéviens afin de faire passer leur message, mais qu'ils ne l'aient pas fait de la même manière - mobilisant parfois ces termes pour indiquer leur compréhension et leur soutien, ou les utilisant même parfois pour exprimer un jugement moral sur un conflit qu'ils

connaissaient peu. De même, tous les artistes ne s'identifient pas volontairement aux idéaux de ces multiculturalismes, certaines personnalités allant même jusqu'à les dénoncer ouvertement.⁷¹

En outre, la façon dont les acteurs bosniaques utilisent le terme pour faire référence à leurs expériences diffère parfois d'une définition acceptée du concept de civilisation, et offre une nouvelle voie pour comprendre les effets du siège sur la vie quotidienne des habitants de Sarajevo. Pour certains habitants de la ville assiégée, les références à la civilisation étaient utilisées dans le cadre d'une forme d'expression intime qui ne servait pas de but particulier au-delà de l'extériorisation des expériences vécues, souvent destinée uniquement à un public privé. Pour de nombreux artistes, professionnels ou non, l'acte de création artistique était une activité profondément cathartique qui leur permettait de traiter les émotions extrêmement difficiles qui accompagnent la vie en état de siège. Pour d'autres, ces vocabulaires ont permis aux acteurs individuels d'aborder les difficultés pratiques que la détérioration du niveau de vie infligeait à leurs routines quotidiennes, en se référant non pas à des discussions discursives politiques ou morales, mais plutôt aux défis quotidiens de la vie en état de siège. La discussion sur Sarajevo en tant que "ville européenne civilisée" prend ainsi un sens différent, selon que la phrase et l'imagerie qui l'accompagne sont destinées à des publics externes ou internes. Si ces frontières n'étaient en aucun cas hermétiques, leurs différentes interprétations peuvent également contribuer à expliquer l'importance que le concept de civilisation prenait au sein de la scène culturelle de Sarajevo.

La deuxième partie de ce chapitre se concentre sur l'impact pratique de la relation lexicale entre vies urbaines et vies civilisées, traité à travers le prisme des développements dans les pratiques du commissariat, surtout dans la forme de leur débordement dans l'espace public comme outil de reconstruction du paysage détruit. S'il faut souligner que les notions d'urbanité et civilisation ne sont pas toujours utilisées dans une façon analogique, les sarajéviens ont souvent utilisé le discours sur la civilisation comme une forme d'affirmation de leur normalité, en soulignant leur identification principale avec les modes de vie urbains et modernes qu'ils menaient avant la guerre plutôt qu'avec leur situation actuelle. Souvent mobilisés dans la description des expériences de guerre, ces lexiques sont devenus porteurs d'un large éventail de significations, qu'il s'agisse de l'expression de mécanismes de survie individuels, de tentatives de

⁷¹ C'est le cas, par exemple, du peintre Mersad Berber, comme le rapporte le journal *Dani*. See: S. Pećanin, "Nikoletina Berber," *Dani*, May 1, 1994, 16, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

communication externe ou de l'expression d'expériences collectives - parfois mal comprises ou mal interprétées par des acteurs étrangers qui ne comprenaient pas toute l'expérience de la vie en état de siège.

Ce phénomène a également été étudié en profondeur par l'anthropologue Ivana Maček, qui souligne la nécessité de maintenir un sentiment de normalité dans des circonstances anormales. En récupérant ces normes d'avant-guerre, souvent en les plaçant dans un cadre moral dénotant des positions idéologiques, l'importance du maintien de la normalité à Sarajevo en temps de guerre a été constamment renégociée en réponse à la destruction régulière des institutions créatrices de normes et à l'insécurité permanente de la vie en état de siège.⁷² La création et la consommation de la culture sont donc devenues une méthode de récupération d'un semblant de normalité dans des circonstances impossibles. En fournissant une voie d'expression pour des émotions difficiles à comprendre qui accompagnent la vie dans une zone de guerre, elles ont offert simultanément aux individus une forme de sécurité sous la forme de routine. Alors que le pouvoir de la 'civilisation' en tant qu'outil utilisée pour lancer des appels à l'intervention et exprimer des expériences personnelles était peut-être le plus visible sur la scène artistique sarajévienne, le lexique qui l'accompagne s'a aussi ancré dans la matérialité de la communauté culturelle de la ville, affectant la manière dont les artistes interagissent avec leur environnement urbain.

Enfin, la prolifération d'espaces d'exposition urbains et non traditionnels comme forme de reproduction de la normalité est abordée à travers un prisme qui relie l'expérience civile du siège de Sarajevo à la manière dont elle est exprimée. La destruction de la ville a nécessité l'adoption de nouvelles pratiques spatiales et de stratégies d'adaptation pour s'ajuster à la nouvelle géographie de la ville, un fait qui s'est également traduit par de nouvelles pratiques artistiques. Bien qu'elle ne soit pas universelle et pas particulièrement courante, la pratique consistant à introduire des interventions artistiques dans des espaces culturellement importants, souvent abandonnés ou détruits, constitue une rareté discursive développée par les artistes

⁷² Ivana Maček, "'Imitation of Life': Negotiating Normality in Sarajevo under Siege"; Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 318.

sarajéviens.⁷³ D'une part, les événements culturels fournissent un abri physique contre les bombardements quasi-constants, tout en apparaissant simultanément "comme un moyen d'affirmer la ville face à son anéantissement systématique", par lequel les producteurs et les consommateurs de culture dépassent leurs rôles d'acteurs d'un événement culturel pour devenir une "congrégation de citoyens".⁷⁴

En lien avec le discours sur la civilisation décrit dans ce chapitre, les artistes et les *curators* ont régulièrement choisi de placer leurs œuvres dans des espaces qui avaient été délibérément détruits par l'Armée de la république serbe de Bosnie. Ceci était une réponse à non seulement une attaque physique contre l'architecture de la ville, ce qui a été interprété comme une attaque contre ses traditions multiculturelles et sa culture urbaine - la civilisation de la ville. Les artistes qui se sont engagés sur les sites de destruction l'ont fait principalement d'un point de vue esthétique, en interagissant avec des lieux significatifs et des notions d'urbicide pour créer, de manière quelque peu involontaire, des lieux de rassemblement qui ont facilité la création de liens communautaires par le biais de processus de socialisation.⁷⁵ L'adaptation des espaces aux conditions difficiles de la guerre par les civils devient ainsi un modèle conscient de défense spatiale qui reconquiert le paysage urbain détruit pour la vie civile, participant activement à la reconstruction physique de la ville mais liant aussi émotionnellement les actes physiques aux effets psychologiques.⁷⁶

La scène artistique en temps de guerre est restée, peut-être pour des raisons différentes, un signe d'exception pour les habitants de la ville, les artistes qui vivaient et travaillaient dans Sarajevo assiégée partageaient beaucoup des espoirs, des craintes et des luttes des habitants ordinaires. Le chevauchement de la spécificité historique des vocabulaires construits sur des idées de civilisation avec le pouvoir d'expression personnelle que de tels discours fournissent ne sont

⁷³ Les acteurs sarajéviens eux-mêmes ont également adopté le terme d'urbicide au cours de cette période. Par for example: Ibrahim Spahić, "Zašto?," in *Dvadeset godina Internacionalni Festival Sarajevo - Sarajevska Zima 1984-2004* (Sarajevo: Medjunarodni Centar za Mir, 2005), 35,36; N.n., *Warchitecture: Urbicide Sarajevo* (Sarajevo: DAS-SABIH, 1994).

⁷⁴ Silvija Jestrović, *Performance, Space, Utopia. Cities of War, Cities of Exile.*, 130.

⁷⁵ Asja Mandić explore ce sujet dans ses travaux sur la culture en tant que résistance critique, et reste la principale référence en matière de reconfiguration d'espaces détruits au sein de la scène artistique visuelle de Sarajevo. Asja Mandić, "Exhibitions in Damaged and Destroyed Architectural Objects in Besieged Sarajevo: Spaces of Gathering and Socialization"; Asja Mandić, "The Formation of a Culture of Critical Resistance in Sarajevo."

⁷⁶ Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War*, 108.

qu'une des approches que l'on peut adopter pour mieux comprendre les expériences vécues par les civils assiégés, tout en soulignant leur *agency* en tant qu'individus dans un conflit beaucoup plus large. Après tout, ce sont leurs voix et leurs images qui peuvent le mieux expliquer ce que c'est que d'être un artiste en guerre. Cette approche ouvre également la voie à une discussion nécessaire sur les expériences individuelles et collectives du siège par ceux à qui il a été imposé. Alors que certains artistes ont utilisé leur identification comme acteur 'civilisé' comme une stratégie de communication avec les publics externes, en utilisant consciemment un langage spécifique pour signaler leur statut de victime morale, d'autres l'ont utilisé pour exprimer leur propre souffrance au sein de leur communauté. En outre, ce lexique se prête à une nouvelle lecture des principaux concepts théoriques qui ont été déployés dans l'étude de la vie quotidienne pendant le siège de Sarajevo, offrant ainsi de nouvelles pistes de réflexion.

Chapitre III : Défendre la patrie par l'art. La vie quotidienne sur les lignes de front vue par les artistes

Les artistes ont depuis longtemps joué un rôle intégral, bien que marginal, dans les conflits armés : qu'ils soient engagés pour documenter les victoires militaires de puissantes armées, employés pour apaiser et motiver les populations civiles face aux difficultés de la guerre, ou dénonçant de manière indépendante les horreurs inhérentes à la guerre, les artistes sont présents sur le champ de bataille depuis presque aussi longtemps que les guerres. Le cas de Sarajevo assiégée a cependant créé un contexte spatial presque unique dans lequel des individus ont produit et consommé de l'art dans une zone de guerre active. Bien que cette singularité soit souvent négligée dans les comptes rendus traitant de l'art sarajévien en temps de guerre, elle est cruciale pour comprendre à la fois les œuvres d'art produites à cette époque et les expériences des artistes impliqués : les comparaisons récurrentes avec le célèbre *Guernica* de Pablo Picasso ne sont que partiellement exactes – Picasso n'a pas peint son chef-d'œuvre au milieu des éclats d'obus et des tirs de snipers. En tant que telle, l'existence d'une communauté d'arts visuels directement au sein d'un conflit armé et, par extension, d'une production artistique qui n'a pas eu lieu à la suite d'une guerre ou dans un lieu éloigné de celle-ci est une anomalie presque totale dans l'histoire de l'art mondial. Parallèlement, les interactions spécifiques entre les artistes et les aspects militaires de leur environnement en temps de siège reflètent également les expériences d'autres groupes d'acteurs qui ont été soumis aux mêmes conditions, offrant une nouvelle voie pour discuter des relations entre le civil et l'armée.

La disparition de l'état yougoslave dans un tourbillon de batailles, d'escarmouches et de cessez-le-feu a laissé derrière elle un paysage complexe d'allégeances et de traditions militaires changeantes qui a eu un impact direct sur la création de nouvelles formations militaires dans la région, et sur les personnes qui ont combattu pour elles. La complexité même de ces structures et la mobilité des acteurs qui y participent font qu'il est difficile de retracer les expériences des soldats individuels, mais l'influence des fondements d'avant-guerre a eu un impact considérable sur les chemins qu'ils ont empruntés. Les relations constamment fluctuantes entre les acteurs individuels et les structures militaro-étatiques ont créé une situation dans laquelle les citoyens ordinaires de Sarajevo ont vécu le siège de leur ville en dehors de la dichotomie typique du soldat et du civil. Au contraire, la violence du combat s'est inscrite dans les pratiques quotidiennes et les structures sociales de la ville, les civils devenant les cibles de la violence militaire tandis que d'autres s'impliquaient activement dans la défense militaire de leur ville. Cela ne veut pas dire que la distinction juridique entre civil et soldat n'a aucune utilité dans ce contexte : au contraire, le fait que de nombreux civils ont vécu la violence du siège qui leur était imposé de la même manière que les soldats, indépendamment de leur statut de non-combattants, devrait être exploré plus avant pour comprendre comment ils ont fait face à de telles conditions. L'effacement des frontières entre civils et combattants, caractéristique de la guerre de siège aujourd'hui presque disparue, a modifié la définition même de la défense, entraînant l'emploi d'un vocabulaire militaire unique pour décrire des récits ambigus ou divergents sur la production artistique en temps de siège. Dans ce chapitre, le discours populaire basé sur la 'résistance culturelle' ou la 'défense culturelle' ; sera utilisé pour explorer les expériences des civils et des combattants individuels à travers les yeux de la communauté artistique de Sarajevo.

Tout comme le reste des habitants de Sarajevo, les artistes de la ville ont interagis sous différentes formes avec les forces armées qui défendaient la ville, ayant des expériences divergentes avec l'institution et le discours qu'elle produisait et favorisait. Même dans ce cas, les catégories formelles de 'civil' et de 'soldat' deviennent floues dans la pratique, si pas dans leur signification, car les individus naviguent dans les différentes arènes entre le foyer et le front. En abordant le concept binaire de 'résistance culturelle', ce chapitre explore les rôles et les voix divergents des artistes impliqués dans l'action militaire dans la ville assiégée, que ce soit en tant que soldats sur la ligne de front, à des postes administratifs dans l'armée, ou en tant qu'acteurs externes contribuant à la lutte armée.

Théoriquement ancrée dans un vocabulaire construit sur des idéaux discursifs de civilisation, tangentiellement intégrée dans le patrimoine social yougoslave, la popularité d'un concept de 'défense culturelle' ou de 'résistance culturelle' au sein de la communauté culturelle de Sarajevo est exemplaire de la manière dont les citoyens ordinaires encadraient les expériences de guerre. Utilisés pour désigner le soutien civil à la campagne militaire menée par l'Armée de bosnie-herzégovine (ARBiH) contre l'Armée serbe de Bosnie (BSA) et, de manière moins systématique, contre des éléments de l'Armée croate de Bosnie (HVO), une série de lexiques invoquant les notions de défense ou de résistance sont régulièrement apparus dans le contexte des arts visuels. Apparu avant même le début du siège, un discours fondé sur l'idée d'une 'double défense' a été popularisé par les acteurs culturels locaux avant de s'imposer dans la mémoire académique et populaire du conflit. L'identification ou l'assimilation de la production culturelle en temps de siège comme analogue à la défense militaire de la ville a accompagné l'effacement des frontières entre les domaines militaire et civil, exprimé principalement par des termes tels que 'défense culturelle', 'défense artistique', 'résistance artistique' et 'résistance culturelle', ou toute combinaison de ces termes. En mobilisant une imagerie reconnaissable et un langage intrinsèquement lié à un lexique militaire, les artistes ont commencé à discuter de l'art dans le contexte de la défense, de la résistance, des tranchées ou des lignes de front, mêlant ces concepts militaires avec un vocabulaire typiquement culturel. Se présentant essentiellement comme les protecteurs de la culture multinationale et civilisée de la ville, une idée dont la construction est discutée au chapitre III, la production artistique est devenue un moyen de résistance à la destruction d'une culture intrinsèquement sarajévienne.

Les artistes actifs dans le Sarajevo assiégé ont continué leur pratique dans un contexte d'instabilité extrême, mobilisant un portfolio de stratégies de défense qui allaient au-delà de la simple survie physique et émotionnelle et leur permettaient d'exprimer leur *agency* individuel. Au cours des quatre années de siège, au moins trente-deux expositions ont été organisées sous le patronage ou en soutien de l'ARBiH, tandis que de nombreux créateurs ont rejoint la compagnie d'artistes officielle de l'ARBiH ou ont été intégrés dans ses brigades actives au combat.

La première section de ce chapitre traite des cas où l'appareil militaire a interagi avec les artistes visuels dans le cadre de structures formelles. Ainsi, les activités de la *Umjetnička Četa* (La Compagnie d'artistes) sont présentées dans le contexte d'un discours de 'double défense'. Bien que les membres de la compagnie aient participé, dans différents contextes et à différents

degrés, à des activités de première ligne, ses principaux rôles en tant que représentation institutionnelle officielle des artistes de la ville consistaient à organiser des expositions qui soutenaient financièrement l'armée bosniaque et à remonter le moral des troupes. La rhétorique mise en avant par la Compagnie d'artistes n'a pas seulement suivi de près les discours populaires encouragés par les pouvoirs publics, mais semble également être la source des descriptions discursives les plus uniformes au sein de la production artistique en temps de siège. Si l'on compare avec d'autres types d'engagement artistique, qu'il s'agisse de l'armée ou de l'extérieur, on constate que leurs activités sont relativement peu couvertes et que leur discours est étonnamment cohérent, mettant fortement l'accent sur les principaux fondements du concept de 'double défense'. Sarajevo n'était pas seulement défendue par l'homme (implicitement non-civilisé) avec un fusil, mais aussi par l'artiste avec son pinceau - de plus, ces deux hommes imaginés étaient en réalité une seule et même personne. Cette uniformité de la *Umjetnička Četa* s'explique, du moins en partie, par le capital culturel et social que la majorité de ses membres avaient déjà accumulé dans leur carrière avant le conflit, et par l'influence apparente des structures politiques sur l'unité. Alors que la manière dont les activités de la brigade sont décrites par ses participants, à l'époque et a posteriori, reflète une vision du monde presque exemplaire fondée sur l'idée d'une 'défense artistique' de la ville, l'unité est également l'une des catégories de producteurs culturels les moins visibles dans le paysage archivistique plus large de la scène artistique en temps de guerre.

La section suivante du texte suit les activités des artistes visuels qui ont rejoint l'ARBiH dans des autres compagnies qu'une unité artistique dédiée. Alors que les sources relatives aux soldats individuels révèlent l'importance de la relation entre la défense physique et intellectuelle de la ville assiégée, ces récits sont étonnamment plus divers que ceux qui ont été promus par les organes officiels, et qui ont dominé la compréhension populaire des expériences locales en temps de guerre. Au moins parmi les artistes, il semble que de nombreux combattants ne se percevaient pas d'abord comme des soldats, et qu'ils étaient réticents à s'identifier publiquement comme tels. L'enrôlement actif dans les forces armées n'a pas empêché les soldats de participer à des événements culturels, car ceux qui étaient en permission ont continué à assister à des événements culturels à des taux similaires à ceux des non-combattants. L'importance de la défense culturelle, qui plaçait discursivement l'armée bosniaque et ses associés dans une sphère de supériorité morale, "civilisée", par rapport à l'armée serbe de Bosnie qui les attaquait, était généralement reçue par les soldats réguliers de manière visiblement moins enthousiaste que par les acteurs qui naviguaient les unités exceptionnelles.

Le mélange occasionnel de vocabulaires associés aux arts avec ceux appartenant à la sphère militaire est apparu principalement dans des contextes où les artistes étaient en fait directement impliqués dans le combat armé, contribuant à un discours qui présentait la défense armée comme analogue à la "défense culturelle", et étendant la pertinence de la production culturelle à un élément actif du conflit lui-même. Dans le même temps, de nombreux artistes ne considéraient pas leur travail comme inhérent à la lutte pour l'indépendance de la Bosnie-Herzégovine, le présentant plutôt comme une forme de maintien de la normalité des routines d'avant-guerre, ou même rejetant activement le concept comme irréaliste. En revanche, la façon dont les artistes individuels ont raconté, réfléchi et interprété leur position de soldats dans le contexte d'une sphère culturelle représente une identification plus large avec un discours de défense culturelle, et son utilisation était souvent accompagnée de réserves ou même d'un rejet pur et simple.

Alors qu'une mobilisation militaire exige une participation militaire, pas tous les acteurs culturels de Sarajevo ont pu ou voulu prendre les armes pour défendre leur ville. La prolifération de la violence au-delà du combat régulier a également encouragé les civils à contribuer à la résistance au siège par des moyens alternatifs, contribuant directement à l'effort de guerre par un soutien dans des positions non-combattants. Si les rôles les plus visibles d'artistes proches de l'armée étaient effectivement liés au combat, une catégorie d'acteurs impliqués dans le développement de structures administratives au sein de l'armée bosniaque nouvellement créée ou de cadres auxiliaires de défense civile est également apparue dans la ville assiégée. Ces individus étaient simultanément en contact avec le quotidien de l'appareil de l'armée, s'exposant parfois aux mêmes risques que leurs homologues armés, tout en conservant leur statut de civil et, par extension, en se tenant à distance d'un mode soldat d'expérience du combat.

L'une des façons dont les artistes ont participé à la défense de Sarajevo a été la protection et la défense du patrimoine culturel activement ciblé par l'Armée serbe de Bosnie. D'autres artistes ont contribué à l'effort de guerre par leur engagement dans des tâches administratives et logistiques au sein de l'Armée bosniaque, souvent présentant dans leurs récits une image beaucoup plus positive de la collaboration entre les artistes et l'armée. Particulièrement fréquents chez les artistes établis, les postes de non-combattants au sein de l'armée nécessitant des compétences artistiques étaient occupés par ceux qui souhaitaient contribuer à l'effort de guerre. Un autre point d'entrée pour les artistes visuels dans des postes non combattants au sein de la structure officielle de l'armée bosniaque s'est présenté par la participation à la production

de bulletins militaires distribués dans les différentes unités. Enfin, une autre voie semi-officielle pour la participation des artistes individuels au conflit se trouve dans l'organisation d'expositions directement consacrées à l'armée bosniaque et à ses soldats, organisées en dehors des limites des structures officielles de l'armée. Lorsque l'on explore la manière dont ces acteurs discutent de leur relation aux tâches adjacentes à l'armée, il apparaît que les lexiques utilisés pour ce faire interagissent souvent avec un discours axé sur la 'double défense', tout en le faisant de manière beaucoup plus diversifiée que les soldats réguliers ou les artistes officiellement intégrés à l'*Umjetnička Četa*.

Le soutien à l'armée bosniaque dans le domaine culturelle ne s'est pas limité à des initiatives individuelles, mais a également trouvé un débouché dans les institutions culturelles officielles actives pendant le siège. De nombreux musées, galeries et espaces d'exposition de tailles diverses ont coopéré avec l'armée bosniaque pour soutenir l'effort de guerre sans s'engager directement dans la structure militaire, ou ont simplement réagi à l'incursion de la violence militaire dans les espaces civils par des processus d'adaptation innovants qui ont contribué à la protection de la ville. Ces types d'initiatives ont pris plusieurs formes, allant de l'activité traditionnelle de l'organisation d'expositions en soutien à l'armée, à la fourniture directe de structures supplémentaires pour la protection et le soutien des civils dans toute la ville. Des institutions telles que la Galerie Nationale de Bosnie-Herzégovine, l'Académie des Beaux-Arts ou des organisations plus petites comme la *Galerija Paleta* ou la *Galerija Mak* ont toutes ajusté leurs modes de fonctionnement en fonction de l'évolution des réalités, non seulement en reproduisant les lignes discursives dominantes associées aux aspects militaires du siège, mais aussi en mettant en œuvre des mesures spécifiques permettant aux soldats individuels de continuer à participer à la vie culturelle de la ville malgré leurs engagements en temps de guerre. Ainsi, un double lexique de la défense était à la fois présent en liaison directe avec les événements organisés par, ou sous le patronage, de l'armée bosniaque et mobilisé tout au long du conflit dans des contextes purement culturels. Si la présence du discours de défense était, comme déjà noté, plus forte au sein des structures institutionnelles, l'adhésion à ses principes n'était pas universelle au sein de la communauté artistique institutionnelle, pour laquelle les réponses pragmatiques aux problèmes quotidiens occupaient une place plus importante.

Tout comme le reste des habitants de Sarajevo interagissait sous différentes formes avec les forces armées qui défendaient la ville, les artistes de la ville avaient des expériences très différentes avec l'institution et le discours qu'elle produisait et favorisait. Même dans ce cas, les

catégories formelles de "civil" et de "soldat" deviennent floues dans la pratique, sinon dans leur signification, car les individus naviguent dans les différentes arènes entre la maison et la ligne de front, interagissant avec d'autres par le biais des institutions de l'armée bosniaque ou en tant qu'acteurs individuels. En abordant le concept binaire de "résistance culturelle", ce chapitre explore les rôles et les voix divergents des artistes impliqués dans l'action militaire dans la ville assiégée, que ce soit en tant que soldats sur la ligne de front, à des postes administratifs dans l'armée ou en tant qu'acteurs externes contribuant à l'armée. En ce sens, le rôle réel de l'armée dans la facilitation de ces échanges n'est pas toujours clair, et bien qu'elle fasse souvent preuve d'un soutien tacite ou actif aux initiatives des artistes, elle semble être organisée au-delà de la logique du champ de bataille. Certains individus, qu'ils participent ou non au combat, ont soutenu l'idée d'une défense artistique de la ville par leurs paroles et leurs actions. Tout en faisant écho à une ligne principalement acceptée par les institutions, l'hétérogénéité des approches présentées dans ce chapitre suggère que les artistes individuels l'ont fait à la fois par conviction et identification personnelles, et par soutien aux politiques gouvernementales en place. Cependant, plus on s'éloigne des structures institutionnelles ou militaires officielles, plus les critiques actives d'un tel discours deviennent évidentes, exposant les divergences populaires par rapport à un vocabulaire apparemment unifié.

Chapitre IV : Construire un pont culturel : revisiter le sarajevien dans la scène des arts visuels de Sarajevo assiégée

L'une des principales caractéristiques qui distinguent le siège de Sarajevo des autres conflits est l'isolement des habitants de la ville, dont les déplacements et la communication avec le monde extérieur ont été fortement limités pendant toute la durée de la guerre. Une fois les lignes de front établies, seuls quelques chanceux ont été autorisés à quitter la ville légalement, tandis que le contact avec les proches à l'étranger sont devenues difficiles à maintenir et l'information sur les actualités mondiales difficiles à trouver. Toutefois, les structures qui ont maintenu le siège présentaient une certaine porosité, créant des opportunités pour les individus de quitter la ville ou d'interagir avec des visiteurs étrangers, leur permettant ainsi de participer à la scène artistique mondiale malgré leur isolement. Cet isolement n'a non plus dissuadé les acteurs culturels étrangers de se rendre dans la capitale bosniaque, qui ont rejoint les quelque 100 000 étrangers (représentant près d'un quart de la population de la ville avant la guerre) qui s'étaient impliqués

dans le conflit.⁷⁷ Si la majorité des étrangers étaient employés par la douzaine d'agences des Nations Unies et les quelque 200 ONGs actives dans la ville à l'époque, les personnes de l'extérieur ont également afflué dans la capitale bosniaque pour jouer le rôle de soldats, de diplomates, de travailleurs humanitaires, de journalistes et de célébrités.⁷⁸ Cette dimension globale du siège de Sarajevo a fait l'objet de nombreuses recherches, en part car son statut de siège le plus long et le plus internationalisé de l'histoire moderne s'est accompagné d'une médiatisation sans précédent d'un conflit.⁷⁹

La ville de Sarajevo était connectée au monde extérieur grâce à l'importante infrastructure mise en place pour soutenir les flux d'aide humanitaire dans la ville. Principalement gérée et sécurisée par la FORPRONU, la force de maintien de la paix des Nations Unies chargée de 'maintenir la paix' en Bosnie-Herzégovine, la mise en place d'un 'pont aérien' à partir de l'aéroport sous le contrôle des Nations Unies a offert une alternative à l'intervention militaire directe. Dès le début du conflit, ce service a commencé à proposer des vols peu fiables vers Zagreb ou Trieste, principalement accessible au personnel humanitaire ou diplomatique, sous le surnom mordant de "Maybe Airlines", et est devenu peu à peu plus accessible aux personnes non-affiliées souhaitant s'impliquer dans la cause sarajévienne.⁸⁰ La politique humanitaire des Nations Unies et des forces de l'OTAN, qui consistait à maintenir un flux d'aide vers la ville, en s'appuyant en partie sur la bonne volonté (et les pots-de-vin) des assiégeants, a ainsi empêché la population sarajévienne de mourir de faim ou de froid, mais a également été accusée d'avoir prolongé le siège.

Cette situation était déjà reconnue par les médias étrangers dans les années 1990, les journalistes discutant ouvertement du rôle de la communauté internationale dans la crise en cours : "sans aide, le siège n'aurait pas pu durer".⁸¹ Cependant, l'accessibilité de la zone de guerre de Sarajevo en a également fait une destination attrayante pour divers personnages qui ont désiré de mieux

⁷⁷ Sundhaussen, *Jugoslawien Und Seine Nachfolgestaaten 1943-2011*, 333.

⁷⁸ The international landscape was further complicated by the presence of foreign mercenaries or irregular militias, who, to different degrees, joined the fighting on all sides of the conflict. See: Sundhaussen, 333. Peter Andreas, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), iii–ix.

⁷⁹ Peter Andreas, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo*, 8, iii–ix.

⁸⁰ Andreas, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo*, iii.

⁸¹ N.n., "Bosnia: The Strange Siege of Sarajevo," *The Economist*, July 31, 1993, n.pag.

comprendre le conflit. Ainsi, diverses personnalités publiques, des hommes politiques, des philosophes ou des travailleurs culturels ont pu se joindre à l'équipe considérable de reporters et de journalistes stationnés dans le tristement célèbre hôtel Holiday Inn. La couverture médiatique offerte par les correspondants étrangers à des publics éloignés de la région, rendue possible par la relative facilité d'accès, signifiait que ceux qui suivaient le déroulement de la guerre de Bosnie depuis le confort de leur salon étaient surtout au courant des développements à Sarajevo, mais n'avaient pas accès à des informations actualisées sur d'autres champs de bataille tels que Mostar ou Goražde. Ainsi, la ville assiégée de Sarajevo est devenue la "lentille à travers laquelle la plupart des étrangers ont vu" la guerre de Bosnie, devenant ainsi une incarnation du conflit aux yeux du public mondial.⁸²

Bien que nettement moins nombreux que les acteurs culturels d'autres domaines, des artistes visuels de renom se sont également rendus dans la ville assiégée pour exposer leurs œuvres et interagir avec leurs collègues locaux. Même si ces voyages et ces expositions aient bénéficié d'une publicité positive à l'étranger grâce au calibre des artistes visuels qui s'y sont impliqués, ils étaient aussi presque entièrement le fruit de relations et d'une coopération réciproque, et résultaient souvent de connexions établies avant la guerre dans le cadre d'expositions internationales et d'échanges culturels. Ainsi, des artistes reconnus tels que Christian Boltanski, Sophie Ristelhueber ou Annie Leibovitz ont été invités à participer à la scène des arts visuels en temps de guerre, et au moins dix artistes étrangers se sont rendus dans la capitale bosniaque. En outre, plus de cinquante expositions présentant des œuvres d'artistes étrangers ont été organisées dans la ville, souvent le résultat d'efforts de collaboration entre des institutions locales et des initiatives étrangères.⁸³ Nombre de ces contributions ont été discutées principalement à travers un prisme extérieur, la couverture internationale de ces événements se concentrant sur les expériences et les pensées de ces artistes itinérants plutôt que sur leur réception dans la ville. Ainsi, beaucoup de choses restent incertaines sur les dimensions internationales de la scène des arts visuels en temps de guerre, et plusieurs questions restent inexplorées : quelles formes ont pris les coopérations internationales dans le domaine des arts visuels, et comment ces initiatives ont-elles été reçues dans la ville assiégée ? Comment les artistes internationaux ont-ils parlé de leurs expériences dans le contexte des récits qui ont reproduit l'image du conflit, et comment ceux-ci ont-ils divergé des expériences des artistes

⁸² Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 287.

⁸³ Data compiled by author.

locaux ? Étant donné qu'une grande partie de la littérature disponible sur le sujet se limite à des entretiens avec les acteurs en question et à des textes rédigés par eux, la diversité des réponses locales à de telles initiatives reste gravement sous-étudiée et contribue à un récit unilatéral de la présence culturelle étrangère dans Sarajevo assiégée.

Ce chapitre vise à aborder de manière critique l'impact de la présence artistique étrangère sur les développements de la scène artistique de Sarajevo, en explorant la construction de récits entourant leurs activités dans la ville et en les comparant aux discours venant de l'étranger. Abandonnant la focalisation traditionnelle sur les transferts unilatéraux de l'Ouest vers l'Est, ce chapitre tente de mieux comprendre comment les habitants de la ville ont vu, interagi et parlé des acteurs internationaux qui étaient venus dans leur ville. Pour ce faire, les principales tendances discursives qui ont été discutées dans ce texte sont revisitées dans une perspective internationale, en accordant une attention particulière à l'importance de la prévalence d'un discours 'européen' dans le contexte de la légitimation et de la coopération internationale.

L'un des discours communs proliférés par et au sein de la scène culturelle de Sarajevo pendant la guerre peut être défini par l'appartenance de la ville à une tradition culturelle européenne, une qualité qui place la ville dans le contexte d'une communauté régionale plus large et réaffirme la nature 'civilisée' de ses habitants. Lié intrinsèquement aux lexiques basés sur un discours dichotomique délimitant le civilisé du barbare, le rôle d'un trope qui conceptualisait Sarajevo comme une ville spécifiquement 'européenne' était populaire principalement en tant que substitut discursif utilisé pour désigner ses habitants comme faisant partie d'une culture 'civilisée' - et donc, digne de la protection internationale. Cependant, la caractérisation de la ville, ou de la région dans son ensemble, comme appartenant à cette tradition européenne n'est pas apparue avec le début du conflit, mais peut être retracée dans les arts visuels jusqu'à sa position instable dans l'État socialiste yougoslave. Ainsi, les identifications locales aux idéaux européens n'ont pas seulement été imposées de l'extérieur, mais sont profondément ancrées dans l'histoire de la région. S'appuyant sur des structures discursives utilisées pour définir ou exclure certains groupes d'une 'Europe' imaginaire, les acteurs (ex)-yougoslaves ont utilisé des géographies symboliques pour indiquer leur inclusion et l'exclusion d'autres personnes de cette communauté culturelle, et ont constitué un outil populaire tout au long des guerres de dissolution de la Yougoslavie pour désigner les parties 'civilisées' des 'barbares'. Les références à une culture européenne partagée ont introduit un lexique qui a permis aux acteurs locaux de se positionner discursivement comme les égaux de leurs homologues 'occidentaux',

capables d'intervenir et de faire valoir que la violence qui leur était infligée était inexcusable. Dans le même temps, la poursuite de la production artistique ou culturelle était considérée comme un élément clé du maintien des identités européennes et de la supériorité morale sur les agresseurs, les artistes et les critiques faisant régulièrement référence à leur travail avec un vocabulaire qui soulignait leur appartenance européenne.

Après avoir brièvement décrit l'apparition de ces vocabulaires dans la pratique, le dernier chapitre met un accent sur le rôle des collaborations artistiques avec des acteurs d'autres espaces de l'ex-Yougoslavie, qui jusqu'à présent a été manifestement absent des considérations précédentes. Pendant le siège de la capitale, la communauté artistique locale, contrairement à ce que l'on pourrait soupçonner, a soutenu et dans certains cas développé des projets indépendants avec des acteurs culturels des républiques voisines, principalement mais pas exclusivement avec celles dont les proto-états affiliés n'étaient pas activement en guerre. Pendant le siège de Sarajevo, de nombreux échanges artistiques avec des artistes et des acteurs culturels de toute la région ont souvent été éclipsés par la notoriété des expositions d'artistes occidentaux, mais ils sont restés une partie importante du paysage créatif de la période de siège, avec des œuvres d'art et des artistes de Zagreb, de Ljubljana ou même de Belgrade qui se rendaient dans la capitale bosniaque, ou des œuvres qui voyageaient dans les pays voisins. Ces événements variaient en nature et dépendaient souvent de l'absence de conflit actif entre les républiques en question, mais lorsqu'on y regarde de plus près, on constate la présence soutenue de réseaux professionnels interpersonnels qui ne suivaient pas les directives des élites politiques, se maintenaient au contraire de manière organique. En outre, cette section se concentre sur les échanges réciproques et les expositions organisées dans l'espace de l'ex-Yougoslavie, les artistes et les œuvres d'art sarajéviens voyageant dans la région.

Au sein de cette catégorie d'acteurs, la référence à l'appartenance européenne était nettement moins populaire que dans le cas des acteurs non yougoslaves, principalement venant d'Europe occidentale et des États-Unis, mais elle n'était pas totalement absente des textes qui traitaient de l'art créé par des artistes de la région.⁸⁴ Dans la sphère de l'ex-Yougoslavie, les acteurs

⁸⁴ One such example can be found in a text by Planinka Mikulić, whose review of a retrospective collection of works by Karlo Mijić (1887-1964), a Yugoslav painter primarily known for his depictions of the Bosnian landscape. Throughout her article, Mikulić returns to the artists' Croat and Bosnian roots, yet emphasizes his European education and connections in a way that creates a continuum between his experiences and his European belonging. See: Planinka Mikulić, "Neprolazno djelo," *Oslobodjenje*, August 9, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

culturels se réfèrent rarement à des vocabulaires européens ou s'identifient comme européens, une différence qui devient flagrante lorsqu'on la compare à la littérature concernant les acteurs internationaux. Bien que cela ne soit en aucun cas définitif, il semble que les artistes sarajéviens ressentent moins le besoin d'inclure de tels lexiques lorsqu'ils interagissaient avec leurs collègues de la sphère ex-yougoslave qu'avec ceux de l'étranger. De même, on ne trouve aucune mention du 'touriste de safari' provenant de la sphère ex-yougoslave dans les documents d'archives datant de la période du siège de Sarajevo ou après, et donc très peu de critiques des artistes des pays voisins.

En parlant des artistes venant de l'extérieur de la région, les connexions culturelles qui ont émergé tout au long du siège étaient presque exclusivement le résultat de trois types de mobilités : des initiatives résultant de contacts internationaux d'avant-guerre, des invitations lancées par des conservateurs sarajéviens à des acteurs étrangers spécifiques, et des projets indépendants développés par des artistes étrangers non affiliés avec le soutien des ONGs.⁸⁵ Les artistes ne représentaient qu'un faible pourcentage des activistes étrangers se rendant à Sarajevo, limité à une douzaine de personnes, mais étaient mieux représentés par les plus de cinquante expositions d'œuvres d'art d'artistes étrangers qui ont eu lieu tout au long du conflit.⁸⁶ En dépit d'un récit dominant qui présentait le soutien culturel européen comme un symbole significatif de solidarité et l'expression d'une aide concrète, certaines de ces initiatives n'ont pas atteint leurs objectifs, du moins aux yeux de certaines parties de la communauté culturelle. Alors que certains artistes locaux ont accueilli des artistes étrangers dans leur ville, d'autres ont affiché des points de vue critiques sur les visiteurs, souvent en invoquant le fossé entre 'l'Européen' perçu et 'l'Autre' imaginé. Cela ne veut pas dire que la scène artistique sarajévienne n'a pas bénéficié ou n'a pas accueilli d'artistes étrangers : la contribution de nombreux acteurs internationaux sur la scène sarajévienne a été remarquée et appréciée par la communauté locale. Les normes rigoureuses des conservateurs locaux signifiaient que n'importe qui ne pouvait pas exposer dans les espaces sarajéviens, car la plupart des expositions

⁸⁵ The internationalization of the siege was also not exclusively a Western phenomenon, with a significant percentage of humanitarian and military aid towards BiH originating from Muslim-majority states. However, only one exhibition has been located featuring material support from a non-Western state, namely an exhibition of artworks by students of the local high school for applied arts, sponsored by the Humanitarian Organization of Qatar (Humanitarna Organizacija Katar). National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina, "Izložba Radova Učenika Škole Primjenjene Umjetnosti - Sarajevo" (Sponzor Humanitarna Organizacija Katar, May 1995), Poster carton, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁸⁶ Data compiled by author.

individuelles étrangères avaient lieu sur invitation, ce qui signifie que leur présence était à la fois demandée et de grande qualité.

La deuxième section de ce chapitre se concentre sur les cas où les artistes sarajéviens ont pu exporter leurs œuvres et soi-même au-delà des limites du siège, en examinant les mécanismes qui ont permis de tels échanges, ainsi que leur encadrement dans le contexte des récits existants sur l'appartenance "européenne" de leurs participants. Bien que l'intérêt pour les dimensions internationales de la communauté culturelle sarajévienne en temps de guerre ait surtout porté sur les productions étrangères dans la ville, les événements organisés conjointement par des artistes locaux et des acteurs internationaux ont été parmi les entreprises les plus impressionnantes sur le plan logistique pendant les quatre années du siège. Cette section explore les projets culturels internationaux qui ont été organisés en coopération avec, et pas seulement pour, les artistes sarajéviens par leurs homologues internationaux. Souvent négligés, nombre de ces événements ont eu lieu avec l'aide et le soutien actifs d'artistes et de conservateurs sarajéviens, facilitant ainsi la collaboration entre les deux groupes. Des efforts à grande échelle pour sensibiliser, collecter de l'argent ou soutenir la ville assiégée ont eu lieu tout au long du conflit grâce aux efforts de groupes internationaux, d'ONG ou d'acteurs individuels. Souvent négligés, nombre de ces événements ont eu lieu avec l'aide et le soutien actifs d'artistes et de conservateurs sarajéviens, facilitant ainsi la collaboration entre les deux groupes.

Qu'ils apparaissent sous la forme d'événements véritablement co-construits ou qu'ils soient le résultat de projets de coopération continus impliquant des expositions d'artistes sarajéviens à l'étranger ou d'artistes internationaux à Sarajevo, le fait d'aborder ces types d'événements artistiques comme le résultat d'une collaboration consciente fournit de nouvelles pistes pour traiter la relation entre les artistes bosniaques et étrangers. S'appuyant sur les réseaux existants d'avant-guerre et sur les concepts internationaux du commissariat, les artistes visuels de Sarajevo se sont engagés dans des pratiques innovantes telles que l'organisation d'expositions par télécopie, ont collaboré avec des artistes étrangers dans le cadre de projets existants ou ont été impliqués dans des interactions réciproques avec des acteurs spécifiques, tels que ceux actifs à Barcelone ou en République Tchèque. De cette façon, certains des acteurs culturels venant de l'étranger qui se sont impliqués dans le paysage artistique de Sarajevo assiégée ont participé activement à des échanges bilatéraux souvent négligés. L'implication des artistes sarajéviens dans les différentes étapes de la conception et de l'organisation d'expositions internationales est peut-être l'un des aspects de la scène artistique de la guerre qui illustre le mieux les manières

interconnectées dont les habitants de la ville assiégée interagissaient avec ceux de l'extérieur. Les vocabulaires faisant référence au patrimoine européen partagé n'étaient pas des éléments essentiels des concepts d'exposition qui impliquaient les sarajéviens dans les projets existants, mais ils étaient souvent intégrés comme un moyen d'exprimer l'affiliation (souvent émotionnelle) ressentie par les acteurs des deux côtés du blocus. Ainsi, la mobilisation d'un lexique qui utilise le concept de la proximité de la Bosnie-Herzégovine avec l'Europe, souvent à travers un prisme civilisationnel, a permis aux acteurs culturels de la ville de s'adresser à leurs homologues étrangers sur un pied d'égalité, tout en exprimant leur gratitude pour les manifestations de solidarité. À l'inverse, certains acteurs étrangers ont utilisé ce vocabulaire pour expliquer leur intérêt et leur solidarité avec la ville assiégée, arguant qu'un héritage et une connaissance historique partagés leur font un devoir d'intervenir de la manière dont ils savent le faire - par la création de réseaux culturels.

Enfin, le chapitre traite de la réception des artistes visuels sarajéviens dans les centres artistiques extérieurs. Bien que la documentation sur les œuvres d'art exposées en dehors des limites de la ville reste fragmentaire, les artistes bosniaques de la ville assiégée ont régulièrement participé à des événements culturels au-delà des frontières du blocus. Naviguant dans les structures poreuses qui définissaient en grande partie la vie quotidienne dans la ville, qu'elles soient imposées par la politique locale ou par la présence de la FORPRONU, de nombreux artistes ont réussi à amener leurs œuvres, et parfois eux-mêmes, à des expositions internationales. Ainsi, au moins vingt expositions ouvertes à Sarajevo ont également été mises à la disposition de publics étrangers, tandis qu'au moins vingt-trois expositions organisées à l'étranger ont présenté des œuvres d'artistes sarajéviens.

Si nombre de ces événements ont été évoqués dans les sections précédentes de ce chapitre, l'échelle indicative à laquelle les artistes sarajéviens ont été présentés sur une scène artistique mondiale est, par extrapolation, non négligeable, et est donc également abordée en tant que phénomène indépendant. Généralement reconnues comme émissaires culturels, influençant l'opinion publique mondiale dans l'espoir d'encourager une intervention et la fin du siège, ces expositions ont été discutées à Sarajevo principalement du point de vue de ceux qui ont pu se rendre à leurs vernissages. Malgré les difficultés de transport des personnes, il était plus facile de faire passer les œuvres d'art de l'autre côté de la frontière, d'où un flux relativement régulier d'expositions sarajéviennes dans des galeries étrangères. Des expositions organisées à

Barcelone et à Paris jusqu'à New York et Tokyo, les artistes bosniaques ont utilisé leur art pour communiquer avec le monde extérieur dans l'espoir d'influencer l'opinion publique et politique.

Si le grand public sarajévien a compris que les interventions culturelles étaient un moyen d'atteindre un public international et de sensibiliser les gens à la situation critique de la ville, les artistes qui ont pu voyager y ont vu une occasion de communiquer avec le monde extérieur au siège à une échelle plus intime. Pour beaucoup d'artistes qui ont pu quitter la ville assiégée, leur présence sur la scène artistique internationale s'est articulée dans un cadre qui soulignait le besoin de communication avec le monde extérieur comme une solution pratique aux effets plus intimes de l'isolement imposé par le siège. Par conséquent, la capacité des arts visuels à fournir une voie de communication avec le monde extérieur semble avoir été cruciale pour la pratique de ceux qui ont choisi d'exposer à l'étranger. Il est toutefois intéressant de noter que, si l'importance de partager l'expérience sarajévienne avec le monde a été activement intégrée dans les discours, peu d'artistes ont choisi d'utiliser des termes qui font référence à l'unité européenne lorsqu'ils parlaient aux collègues à l'intérieur.

D'une part, la nécessité de communiquer 'l'humanité' de la population sarajévienne, ou les "valeurs et les expressions créatives de la culture bosnienne et herzégovine", à un monde extérieur qui était généralement peu familier avec la région est devenue intrinsèquement liée aux résultats d'une telle communication : soutien matériel sous la forme de 'sponsors potentiels' et, finalement, une intervention étrangère envisagée.⁸⁷ Dans le même temps, la notion d'appartenance européenne n'était pas toujours directement utilisée par ceux qui tentaient de négocier une aide avec des institutions culturelles extérieures, ni au sein des cercles sarajéviens qui discutaient des expositions à l'étranger. En part, il semblait d'être principalement destinés à communiquer avec et par des acteurs internationaux. Si le grand public sarajévien a compris que les interventions culturelles étaient un moyen d'atteindre un public international et de sensibiliser les gens à la situation critique de la ville, les artistes qui ont pu voyager les ont également vues comme des occasions de communiquer avec le monde extérieur au siège à un niveau plus intime. Par conséquent, la capacité des arts visuels à fournir une voie de communication avec le monde extérieur semble avoir été cruciale dans la pratique de ceux qui ont choisi d'exposer à l'étranger. Il est toutefois intéressant de noter que, si l'importance de partager l'expérience sarajévienne avec le monde a été activement intégrée dans les discours,

⁸⁷ Nermina Kurspahić, 9.

peu d'artistes ont choisi d'utiliser des termes qui font référence à l'unité européenne lorsqu'ils se tournent vers l'intérieur.

La relation entre les acteurs culturels étrangers et les artistes sarajéviens s'est forgée dans un contexte qui liait les discours internes qui circulaient à l'époque, à travers lesquels la 'communauté internationale' et l'élite culturelle locale encadraient leurs positions dans un conflit aux multiples facettes. La présence et l'implication de la "communauté internationale" sur la scène culturelle du temps de siège s'est engagée dans la diplomatie de la "symbologie culturelle".⁸⁸ Cependant, l'intérêt étendu des arts visuels sarajéviens ne se limitait pas à la production théorique de symboles, mais résultait de leurs propres expériences vécues en tant que victimes de l'agression. Mobilisant leur position d'acteurs culturels dans leur interaction avec des publics étrangers, ils ont souvent employé des discours basés sur des expériences historiques partagées de lutte antifasciste comme moyen d'identifier leur position d'une manière culturellement traduisible. En même temps, il semble que les références à une culture européenne partagée étaient moins importantes dans un contexte local, car peu de textes destinés directement aux publics locaux ont jugé nécessaire de plaider pour l'inclusion des Sarajevans dans une communauté culturelle européenne. Ainsi, alors que de nombreux artistes sarajéviens comprenaient sans aucun doute leur propre position en tant que membres appartenant à la sphère européenne, cet aspect de leur expression en temps de guerre a principalement gagné en importance discursive lors de l'interaction avec un public international.

Conclusion : Les œuvres d'art dans la fosse aux lions.

Cette étude est née du désir de documenter et de contextualiser la scène des arts visuels de Sarajevo assiégée, sur laquelle on sait encore peu de choses, mais qui a pris une dimension secondaire avec le temps : aborder cette communauté d'acteurs en tant que représentants d'une ville au centre d'une multiplicité de discours et de récits déterminants. À travers la délimitation d'une série d'images discursifs, celles d'une sphère yougoslave (non) existante, celles qui positionnent Sarajevo comme une ville civilisée et moderne, et ses habitants comme résistant activement à leurs oppresseurs, et celles qui positionnent la lutte pour la ville comme une lutte pour des valeurs distinctement européennes, cette étude traite la communauté des arts visuels

⁸⁸ Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 215.

du temps de la guerre comme représentative de la multiplicité des expériences qui ont accompagné la vie sous le siège.

De cette façon, la désintégration perçue des réseaux transrégionaux au sein de l'ex-Yougoslavie peut être démontrée comme n'étant pas aussi définitive qu'on le croit, car les continuités dans la collaboration suggèrent le maintien de structures parallèles politiquement indépendantes de longue date au-delà des initiatives de l'État. De même, en abordant les spécificités d'un discours qui positionne Sarajevo comme une ville moderne et civilisée, la nature dichotomique des encadrements qui ont accompagné la guerre de Bosnie peut être mieux comprise comme reposant sur de nombreuses définitions de ce que signifie être 'civilisé'. En outre, les compréhensions binaires de la nature de l'urbanité peuvent aider à contextualiser et à expliquer certaines des pratiques artistiques et spatiales développées dans la communauté culturelle pendant le siège de Sarajevo, et à une échelle plus large, parmi sa population civile. Une discussion sur la nature de la 'résistance culturelle', qui en soi produit également des concepts binaires, permet également une compréhension plus nuancée de la résistance armée, montrant que si la culture était un élément crucial pour la survie de beaucoup, d'autres la considéraient comme secondaire par rapport à leur survie physique. Enfin, un examen renouvelé de la position discursive de l'appartenance européenne dans le contexte sarajévien offre un aperçu des manières dont l'intérêt étranger pour le conflit a été reçu, ainsi que de la manière dont ces identifications ont servi d'outils dans des échanges culturels activement réciproques. Dans l'ensemble, ces lignes de questionnement collectives révèlent deux éléments cruciaux souvent oubliés lors des discussions sur l'impact humain de la guerre de Bosnie : ceux qui ont vécu sous cette guerre ont été activement impliqués dans la production de récits qui définissent le conflit jusqu'à aujourd'hui, et certains de ceux qui l'ont fait n'étaient pas toujours d'accord sur leur nature ou leur valeur.

Une fois encore, il convient de souligner que les catégories construites dans cette étude sont exactement telles : construites par un observateur externe et ne reflétant pas une véritable démarcation entre les discours individuels. Servant principalement d'outil analytique pour aborder divers aspects de la scène des arts visuels en temps de guerre, la qualité interconnectée des récits utilisés pour parler du siège est quelque peu obscurcie par leur différenciation en chapitres individuels, mais peut facilement être tracée à partir de la nature récurrente des acteurs, des événements et des lexiques qui apparaissent tout au long de ce texte. La démarcation des discours traitant d'une sphère culturelle yougoslave supranationale, des récits

de civilisation, de la résistance artistique et de l'appartenance européenne ne reflète pas une véritable séparation des idées, mais offre plutôt des voies pour aborder les expériences de guerre individuelles et les modes utilisés pour exprimer ces expériences, soulignant l'agencement de ceux dont les vies ont été affectées par le conflit.

Indirectement, ce texte représente une chronique unique de la communauté des artistes visuels de Sarajevo en temps de guerre qui offre, pour la première fois, un large aperçu des développements artistiques des années 1990 dans la capitale bosniaque. Les pratiques spatiales modifiées, les normes du commissariat et les réactions artistiques à la violence qui ont dominé la période sont juxtaposées aux expériences personnelles d'artistes individuels actifs pendant le siège de Sarajevo, introduisant ainsi de nombreux aspects peu étudiés de cette génération artistique dans la recherche universitaire. En outre, une méthodologie basée sur une vaste documentation d'archives, dont une grande partie n'avait jamais été consultée auparavant, a permis d'introduire des événements et des acteurs dans une analyse globale, indépendamment des souvenirs fragmentés des récits personnels. Les recherches empiriques approfondies sur lesquelles se fonde cette étude permettent un compte rendu global sans précédent de la communauté, indépendamment des réalisations individuelles ou de la position sociale, écrivant ainsi une histoire non pas de l'art, mais des artistes eux-mêmes. Ainsi, ce texte présente l'histoire la plus complète disponible de la scène des arts visuels active pendant le siège de Sarajevo, et apporte ainsi une contribution cruciale à l'étude actuelle de l'histoire de l'art en Bosnie-Herzégovine et dans la région de l'ex-Yougoslavie en général.

Plus largement, une meilleure compréhension de la scène artistique de Sarajevo en temps de guerre peut offrir un aperçu de l'étude globale du rôle de l'art dans les conflits. Si l'on considère que de nombreux exemples, sinon la plupart, de production artistique en temps de guerre ont historiquement eu lieu soit dans le temps, soit géographiquement loin du conflit actif, et presque jamais dans le contexte d'une violence militaire prolongée, l'exemple de Sarajevo constitue une excellente étude de cas pour étudier la manière dont les artistes réagissent à la guerre. Dans ce contexte, quelques remarques peuvent être dégagées de ce texte. Dans Sarajevo assiégée, les personnes qui faisaient de l'art le faisaient pour maintenir un semblant de normalité dans leur vie, et celles qui continuaient à consommer leur art le faisaient pour des raisons similaires. Cependant, beaucoup ont également mobilisé leur travail avec des objectifs distincts : influencer l'opinion publique, apporter un soutien pratique aux structures dirigeantes, ou

simplement comme outil de communication lorsque les mots ne parviennent pas à exprimer les horreurs qui leur sont imposées.

Ce texte s'inscrit également dans une histoire sociale du siège de Sarajevo. Dans l'espoir de diminuer le monopole des images abstraites souvent associées à de telles expériences, cette étude propose des exemples concrets de pratiques adaptatives et de stratégies de survie adoptées par la population sarajévienne, en soulignant leurs usages dans ce contexte très spécifique. Bien que les personnes en question représentent une communauté limitée construite autour d'un intérêt commun peu commun et d'un parcours éducatif et professionnel similaire, elles ne constituent pas non plus un groupe homogène : ses membres divergent en termes d'âge, de sexe, d'affiliations politiques et d'encastrement dans cette communauté malgré leur intérêt commun pour les arts visuels. Malgré leur position spécifique, les expériences de ceux dont il est question dans cette thèse ont beaucoup en commun avec celles des Sarajéviens 'ordinaires'. Ainsi, de nombreux outils utilisés par les citoyens de la ville pour faire face aux horreurs du siège se retrouvent dans ce texte, remettant en cause la notion de victime passive et sans visage qui occulte leur position de cible réactive de la violence nationaliste. En outre, en abordant les artistes visuels, et par extension les producteurs culturels, comme des contributeurs actifs à une série de récits historiques dominants, l'*agency* des acteurs sarajéviens dans leur propre lutte est remise au premier plan.

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ALU – Academy of Fine Arts of Sarajevo (*Akademija Likovnih Umjetnosti Sarajevo*)

ARBiH – Army of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina (*Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*); also referred to as Bosnian Army

BiH – Bosna i Hercegovina (Bosnia-Herzegovina)

BSA – Bosnian Serb Army (Vojsko Republike Srpske – VRS)

GRAS –City Transport (of) Sarajevo (*Gradski saobraćaj Sarajevo*)

HDZ - Croat Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*)

HVO – Croatian Defense Council (*Hrvatsko vijeće obrane*); also referred to as Bosnian Croat Army

IPC – International Peace Center (*Medjunarodni Centar za Mir*)

JNA - Yugoslav People's Army (*Jugoslovenska narodna armija*),

SDA –Party of Democratic Action (*Stranka demokratske akcije*)

SDS – Serb Democratic Party (*Srpska demokratska stranka*)

TO - Territorial Defense forces (*Teritorijalna Odbrana*)

ULUBiH – Association of visual artists of Bosnia-Herzegovina (*Udruženje likovnih umjetnika Bosne i Hercegovine*)

ULUPUBiH – Association of visual artists, applied arts and designers of Bosnia-Herzegovina
(*Udruženje likovnih umjetnika primjenjenih umjetnosti i dizajnera BiH*)

UNPROFOR – United Nations Protection Force

UMIRANJE U LJEPOTI: ARTISTIC RESPONSES TO THE FORMATION OF WARTIME NARRATIVES DURING THE SIEGE OF SARAJEVO⁸⁹

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCING THE VISUAL ARTS SCENE OF BESIEGED SARAJEVO: A CREATIVE COMMUNITY IN WAR

“Nema grešaka u historiji. Cijela historija je greška.” - Braco Dimitrijević

“There are no mistakes in history, all of history is a mistake.” - Braco Dimitrijević

On the 3rd of August 1994, a massive sculpture depicting a mythical centaurian struggle for survival was seen attempting to traverse the besieged city of Sarajevo by way of the city's circular tramway line. A curious contraption constructed from the carcass of a tramway car hit by Bosnian Serb artillery in the first days of the siege, Alma Suljević's imposing composition is made up of an amalgamation of structured wires and steel beams presumably scavenged by the artist. Assisted in her work by a handful of welders employed by GRAS, the local transportation company that donated the destroyed tramcar, the sculptress transformed a wreck that had spent the previous two years immobilized in front of the central Skenderija shopping complex into a symbol of personal defiance. Known under the name “Kentauiromahija”, the sculpture is quite literally a visualization of a celestial struggle between civilization and barbarism, personified by the Greek myth that recounted a fierce battle between the centaurs and their human, Lapith, cousins. For art historian Muhamed Karamehmedović, the work in question signified exactly this dichotomy:

“Alma's miraculous and intelligent personal vision of events shown in the scope of this work,, in the hell of its everyday existence, that certain sociological sensitivity to everyday phenomena as well as the extraordinary ability to capture it all in one form through the struggle of centaurs and horses, through the truth of legends. Just as Picasso takes a toy in the shape of a car and

⁸⁹ Umiranje u ljepoti, author translation: “Dying in beauty”. Title inspired by a press article by Nada Salom under the same name.

turns it into a baboon's jaws. From a scorched tram to this miraculously represented struggle of good and evil, and from our existence to the eye, from the eye to the stars, to the victory of good over evil in this symbolic representation (...). ”⁹⁰

The piece was conceived as a direct metaphor for Sarajevo's plight, pointing to the senseless violence inflicted upon a civilian population, but it was also much more personal than a direct political statement might suggest. Suljević, while rarely truly going into detail about the more intimate dimensions of her work, sheds some light on the conflict raging in not only her, but many others' minds:

“I tried to capture my inner centauromachy, so that each of us, who recognizes this struggle, sees in it their own struggle and that at night, when shells are falling next to their head or their bed, remembers their first thought: should I remain in Sarajevo?”⁹¹

True to its form, the sculpture was placed into motion during the opening of a large-scale group exhibition of the same name, organized by the artist. Beginning its journey at the tramway depot just outside of the city center, the sculpture was intended to continue along Sarajevo's circular tramway tracks, running the length of the capital and circling back towards its origin. Despite best intentions, the mythical sculpture never completed its intended circuit due to safety concerns.⁹² After all, the large gathering of people that such an event would surely convene could become the target of snipers or artillery, a somber fact of life under siege that the citizens of Sarajevo had become accustomed to ever since the beginning of the Bosnian Serb attack on

⁹⁰ Author translation: “Ta Almina čudesna i inteligentna lična vizija događaja u toku ovog rada, u paklu njegove svakodnevnice, ta izvjesna sociološka osjetljivost za svakodnevne pojave kao i izvanredna sposobnost da sve to uhvati u jednoj formi kroz borbu kentaura i konja, kroz istinu o legendama kao što Pikaso uzima igračku u obliku automobila i pretvara je u vilice pavijana.. Od tog sprženog tramvaja do te čudesne predstavljene borbe dobra i zla na njemu od našeg bitisanja do oka, od oka do zvijezda, do pobjede dobra nad zlom od ovog simboličnog prikaza (...)” Muhamed Karamehmedović, “Izazov feniksa,” *Oslobodjenje*, July 31, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo. Abridged version published in exhibition catalogue: Muhamed Karamehmedović, *Kentauromahija* (Sarajevo: National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1994), n.pag, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

⁹¹ Nermina Omerbegović, “Sarajevska kentauromahija,” *Oslobodjenje*, August 5, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁹² An. Šimić, “Kentauromahija se nastavlja,” *Oslobodjenje*, August 14, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

the city on the 6th of April, 1992.⁹³ The caution was perhaps not entirely unwarranted: that day, three people were reported to have been wounded while riding the tramway.⁹⁴

The siege of Sarajevo remains to this day one of the most recognizable symbols of the violent disintegration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Beginning with the relatively painless secession of Slovenia and the significantly bloodier war following Croatian independence, the dissolution of a socialist state plagued by economic decay and rising nationalist rhetoric since the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980 unleashed a series of conflicts characterized by claimed politically orchestrated ethnic tensions, shifting alliances, and international interest and inaction. This text is primarily about the siege of Sarajevo – its history and its inhabitants, part of a series of conflicts unleashed by the untimely demise of the multi-national Yugoslav state and an integral element of the Bosnian War that took place from 1992 until late 1995.

Following the progressive declarations of independence of Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia, the republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was the last to officially leave the Yugoslav Federation, leaving behind a rump state made up of the Serbian and Montenegrin republics.⁹⁵ The ensuing Bosnian War progressed as rapidly as it did confoundingly, leaving ordinary Sarajevans watching from the sidelines as a complex web of actors battling for territory across the state.⁹⁶ The four year war simultaneously involved disputes between a number of factions whose allegiances changed rapidly, as such creating a handful of nearly independent conflicts throughout the Bosnian territory, many of which whose scope evades the focus of this text. As

⁹³ While the exact incidence of fatal attacks on cultural events is currently undetermined, it is absolutely clear that exhibitions were amongst the direct marks of the Bosnian Serb forces, which systematically sought to terrorize the city's population through the shelling of civilian targets. It is uncertain how many lives were lost in this manner, but witnesses have reported at least two deliberate massacres taking place at exhibitions, targeted as densely populated civilian spaces. Nermina Zildžo, interview by Ewa Anna Kumelowski, November 26, 2021; Anonymous source, conversation with author, 2021. Regarding the interruption of the "Kentuaromahija" tramway circuit, some sources reported that the besieging forces had previously warned of an imminent attack on the tramcar. N.n., "Sarajevski Kentauri," *Dani*, September 1, 1994, 80, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁹⁴ Jelena Mrkić, and Senka Račić, "1994: Hronologija. August 1994, Abdićev Bijeg.," *Dani*, December 31, 1994, 20, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁹⁵ Bosnia and Herzegovina will be henceforth referred to as either Bosnia or the acronym BiH to improve readability.

⁹⁶ Similarly to Ivana Maček, who argued that "these periods had only indirect significance for people in Sarajevo", this text largely omits the complexities of the many individual conflicts that accompanied the dissolution of Yugoslavia, as well as many of the intricacies of the Bosnian War. Accepting Maček's claim that "the periodizations imposed by historians are not useful for comprehending what war was like for the people who lived it", only a brief contextual background into the development of the siege will be given in this introduction as many of the developments of this period had little impact on the everyday life of isolated Sarajevans. As such, this decision is guided by the claim that "for Sarajevans, the war began on whatever day they were first subjected to heavy shelling." Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, 2011), 198.

such, the Bosnian War was fought by, at various times and in various constellations, the following actors: the Serbian-controlled Yugoslav Army, as well as its predecessor the Yugoslav People's Army (1992), the Bosnian Serb Army (1992-1995), the Krajina Serb Army (1992-1995), the Croatian Army (known as the Croatian National Guard from 1991 and renamed in 1993), the Croatian Defense Council army of the Croat Republic of Herceg-Bosna (1992-1994, first known under the name *Hrvatska Zajednica Herceg-Bosna*), and the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995). These main warring parties were joined by a variety of independent paramilitary formations that collaborated and allied themselves with the major players.⁹⁷

Just as Croatian forces signed a brief ceasefire with what remained of the Serb-dominated Yugoslav Army under the neighboring conflict, the proclamation of an independent Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina on the 9th of January 1992 dampened hopes that Bosnia-Herzegovina could avoid any serious bloodshed.⁹⁸ Amidst increasing pressure, a referendum for Bosnian independence took place in late February of the same year, primarily receiving support from the Muslim-dominated SDA (*Stranka demokratske akcije*) and Croat-dominated HDZ (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*) parties. The boycott called for by Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić (and the SDS, *Srpska demokratska stranka*) did little to affect its outcome, and Bosnia & Herzegovina formally proclaimed its independence from Yugoslavia on March 3rd, 1992.⁹⁹

While many were hopeful that the secession of Bosnia would be peaceful, the increasingly hostile climate became openly so following the referendum. Sarajevans saw the first signs of war on their doorsteps as Bosnian Serb militias set up short-lived barricades in response to the action, swiftly countered by SDA-dominated barricades, and which were received by the majority of the city's inhabitants with a mixture of disbelief and confusion, and pressuring the paramilitaries to quickly disassemble their positions. In the meantime, the president of Republika Srpska, Radovan Karadžić, had begun openly speaking of war to "keep Serbian

⁹⁷ M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Investigating War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia War 1992–1994: The United Nations Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992)* (Schoten, BE: Intersentia, 2017), 43–44.

⁹⁸ Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia From the Death of Tito the Fall of Milošević*, 4th ed. (New York: Avalon, 2002), 205.

⁹⁹ Sabrina Petra Ramet, 206.

regions of Bosnia attached to the FRY”.¹⁰⁰ The rising incidence of violent skirmishes and outright massacres that had begun accumulating throughout Bosnia, tied to the purported defense of the self-proclaimed Croat and Serb autonomous zones created in late 1991, eventually culminated into full-scale hostilities on the 6th of April 1992 following official recognition of the Bosnian state by the European Community.¹⁰¹

Meanwhile in Sarajevo, the prospect remained a distant one for many of the city’s inhabitants. Even as the recognition of Bosnian independence sparked the renewed erection of Bosnian Serb barricades throughout the city, citizens rallied in massive pro-democratic protests spontaneously organized on the 5th of April. Encouraged by their success at dismantling the previous barricades, protesters rallied around the building of the Parliamentary Assembly in the center of the city, with the aim of doing the same. Although often omitted from popular memory, this somewhat spontaneous demonstration for peace by Sarajevo civilians was defined strongly by anti-nationalist sentiment targeting all of the local parties, and represents a “last attempt to resist the violent imposition of national separatism” in the newly independent state.¹⁰² Instead of success, the protesters were met with violence as Bosnian Serb paramilitaries fired on unarmed demonstrators in the city.¹⁰³ Two women, Suada Dilberović and Olga Sučić, were killed in the attack as thousands watched in shock – including Alma Suljević, who helped carry one of the victims out of the throng to receive medical attention, marking her first experience of violence associated with the blockade of her city.¹⁰⁴ The following day, the undeterred crowds swelled to number roughly 50,000 people “filling much of the expanse from the Assembly Building to Marindvor and across the street to the Holiday Inn”.¹⁰⁵ Carrying

¹⁰⁰ For Bosnian Serb nationalists, the dissolution of a federalized Yugoslav state was contingent on the maintenance of Serb autonomy in the region. Claiming to be under (an imagined) threat, leaders such as Karadžić argued that any land inhabited by Serbs was rightfully Serbian, and should remain under the control of the rump-Yugoslav state. This rationale was used to explain the aggression on an independent Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as both republics-turned-states contained ethnically Serb populations. See, for example: Filip Švarn, “Pet krvavih godina,” *Vreme*, July 30, 2008. Published online: <https://www.vreme.com/vreme/pet-krvavih-godina/>.

¹⁰¹ While there is some disagreement on the date of the beginning of the Bosnian War, historians generally cite the 6th of April as the first day of the siege of Sarajevo. See, for example: Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia From the Death of Tito the Fall of Milošević*, 207; Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography* (London: Hurst & Company, 2006), 282.

¹⁰² Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 207.

¹⁰³ That same day, JNA forces and the newly-created local Serb military police assaulted and overtook the police academy located on the Vraca Hill, overlooking the city. Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 283–84.

¹⁰⁴ Emina Bošnjak, and Saša Gavrić, eds., *Zabilježene - Žene i javni život Bosne i Hercegovine u 20. vijeku* (Sarajevo: Sarajevski otvoreni centar; Fondacija CURE, 2015), 208.

¹⁰⁵ Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 285.

signs championing peace and rejecting nationalist party leaders, part of the protestors made their way towards the notorious yellow cube that housed the now-rebranded Holiday Inn hotel, in which Serb nationalists had taken up camp. In response, snipers began shooting into the crowd below.¹⁰⁶ The protestors quickly dispersed under a hail of bullets, signaling the beginning of the 1,425 days of the siege of Sarajevo.

Costing an estimated 4,954 civilian lives,¹⁰⁷ the blockade of the Bosnian capital forced the city's unprepared inhabitants to live under a constant threat of sniper fire, regular shelling, food and medication shortages, as well as with irregular access to modern amenities such as electricity, running water or heating that for decades had become a part of everyday life. However, the victims of the Bosnian Serb aggression can hardly be qualified by the number of deceased: their numbers must include the thousands of people maimed and disabled by shrapnel and snipers, those affected by the lasting psychological damage induced by PTSD and malnutrition, as well as the life-long consequences for children and adolescents who grew up amidst violence and without access to adequate healthcare.¹⁰⁸ Cutting off nearly all communication with the outside world and even heavily limiting freedom of movement within the city, as even crossing some streets became a dangerous affair, the siege was nevertheless porous to some degree, allowing some goods to enter the black market and some lucky inhabitants to get out. The conflict was also only a small part of the Bosnian War, fought on multiple fronts and in different configurations between the different factions, as well as a handful of official and semi-official paramilitary formations, and an even smaller part of the brutal wars of Yugoslav dissolution.

¹⁰⁶ Robert Donia, 285.

¹⁰⁷ *While the exact death toll of the conflict remains debated within the academic community, the external fact-finding capacities of the ICTY will be regarded as a baseline for statistical information on the siege of Sarajevo. Nevertheless, these numbers should be considered as an approximation, as the volatility of the conflict quite clearly precludes definitive statistical studies. See: Ewa Tabeau, Marcin Żółtkowski, and Jakub Bijak. "Population Losses in the 'Siege of Sarajevo' 10 September 1992 to 10 August 1994." May 10, 2002. Demographic Unit of the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP), ICTY, https://www.icty.org/x/file/About/OTP/War_Demographics/en/galic_sarajevo_020510.pdf. Other estimates, such as reports submitted by the BiH Institute for Public Health suggest a higher number of casualties, claiming roughly 9,500 persons killed, dying from malnutrition or exposure or simply missing by November 1993. See; Ewa Tabeau, et al., "Population Losses in the 'Siege of Sarajevo' 10 September 1992 to 10 August 1994,"; M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Investigating War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia War 1992–1994*, 54. Other accounts cite a higher death toll, for example claiming 12,000 civilian deaths (based on 18,889 total deaths and subtracting 6,585 military casualties). Mirko Pejanović, "Pogledi istraživača o fenomenu odbrane Sarajeva u opsadi: 1992–1995.," *Pregled: Časopis Za Društvena Pitanja / Periodical for Social Issues*, no. 2 (October 8, 2015): 97–98.*

¹⁰⁸ See, for example: Rita Rosner, Steve Powell, and Willi Butollo, "Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Three Years after the Siege of Sarajevo," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 59, no. 1 (2003): 41–55; Luka Lucić, "Developmental Affordances of War-Torn Landscapes: Growing up in Sarajevo under Siege," *Human Development* 59, no. 2–3 (2016): 81–106; S. Simić et al., "Nutritional Effects of the Siege on New-Born Babies in Sarajevo," *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 49 Suppl 2 (October 1, 1995): 33–6.

However, thanks to its accessibility to foreign reporters, the city of Sarajevo became a focal point through which the international community watched on in horror at the ravages caused by nationalist policies, many of which were encouraged by a colorful cast of political elites.¹⁰⁹ Only after series of civilian massacres perpetrated by the Bosnian Serb Army was the conflict cut short by international intervention, resulting in NATO airstrikes on Serb positions and the signing of the Dayton Accords in November of 1995, and ending the four-year siege of Sarajevo.¹¹⁰

While under constant fire, the Bosnian capital struggled to maintain a semblance of normalcy in everyday routines. When possible, offices and cafés remained open, and the inhabitants of Sarajevo continued to attend work or school when not busy tracking down the firewood needed to heat their apartments or carrying canisters filled with liters of drinking water. The Sarajevan cultural community also continued to produce throughout the entire period of the war, organizing theater performances, lectures, concerts, cinema screenings and numerous exhibitions. As such, Suljević's equine creation was only one of the thousands of artworks conceived and constructed between April 1992 and November 1995. Scholars have offered varied estimates of the number of exhibitions held during this time, ranging from 170 or 177 exhibitions in total, or roughly a hundred shows and "dozens of group shows".¹¹¹ In the words of Karim Zaimović, publicist, son of Mehmed Zaimović, and one of the victims of the war,

*"There was everything, from amateurism such as "even though he is a doctor or an engineer, painting has been his hobby since his student days", through abruptly nationally conscious doodles, to really excellent exhibitions."*¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ The portrayal of the siege of Sarajevo in international media has been noted to have impacted discourse production on the conflict, for example by Tanja Zimmermann. See, for example: Tanja Zimmermann, *Balkan Memories: Media Constructions of National and Transnational History* (Bielefeld, DE: transcript Verlag, 2014).

¹¹⁰ Laura Silber, "Dayton, 10 Years After," *The New York Times*, November 21, 2005, sec. Opinion, <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/21/opinion/dayton-10-years-after.html>.

¹¹¹ The first estimate is cited in Emir Imamović's article published in *Slobodna Dalmacija*, reproduced by both Larisa Kurtović and Paul Lowe et al., while the second estimate is produced by Asja Mandić in her article on the Sarajevan wartime art scene. However, the methodology behind both estimates remains unclear. Emir Imamović, "Grad u kojem je sve bilo moguće," *Slobodna Dalmacija*, April 11, 2012. in Larisa Kurtović, "Paradoxes of Wartime 'Freedom': Alternative Culture during the Siege of Sarajevo," in *Opiranje Zlu: (Post)Jugoslovenski Anti-Ratni Angažman*, ed. Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković (Zagreb: Jesenski i Turk, 2015), 197; Asja Mandić, "The Formation of a Culture of Critical Resistance in Sarajevo," *Third Text* 25, no. 6 (November 2011): 726; *Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), 133; Davor Diklić, *Teatar u ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva* (Most Art, 2004), 11–12.;

¹¹² Author translation: "Bilo je tu svega, od amaterizma tipa 'iako je doktor ili inženjer, slikarstvo mu je hobi još od studentskih dana', preko naglo nacionalno osviještenih mazala, pa do zaista vrhunskih izložbi." Karim Zaimović, "Slikar bosanske mirnoće," *Dani*, August 1995, 61, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

Eighteen artists are reported to have been killed or deceased from not-so-natural causes during this period.¹¹³ Despite this existing interest in the subject, this dissertation represents perhaps the first systematic analysis of artistic events that were organized under the siege, relying on an established methodology to provide a clearer picture of the cultural sector's activities.¹¹⁴ As such, some 244 exhibitions have been found to have taken place with the cooperation of Sarajevan actors, of which some 222 took place directly in besieged Sarajevo. These included some 100 group exhibitions and roughly 137 solo shows that were held in a variety of institutions and spaces, ranging from public galleries and private exhibition spaces to religious institutions and even building hallways, and involved the work of an innumerable number of artists, as well as a number of curators, art-historians, organizers and cultural workers.¹¹⁵

Artists such as Suljević painted, sculpted, and printed their way through the conflict, leaving behind traces of their experiences in documentation hidden across the city. As such, her metal contraption provides perhaps an archetypal example of the art created during this period: deeply personal, vulnerable, yet constructed out of the wreckage of war as if in defiance to the destruction around her. Almost paradoxically, the apparent balance of steel and wire reveals a plasticity and fluidity that encompasses the contradictory tendencies in much of the original “war art” created during this period: hardened by suffering, yet deeply vulnerable and personal.

¹¹³ Diklić, *Teatar u ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva*, 11.

¹¹⁴ This dissertation is based upon a comprehensively constructed archive of documentation pertaining to the visual arts scene of besieged Sarajevo. As the result of a systematic review of public, semi-public, and private archives, as well as a series of incidental materials gathered online or from personal sources, the resulting compilation of documentation has been organized into a systematized database created by the author. This collection includes material from the archives of the following institutions, as well as a number of documents and publications from private sources: the Historical Museum of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Bosniak Institute of Sarajevo, the Collegium Artisticum municipal gallery, the Galerija Mak of the Literature and Theatre Arts Museum, the Galerija Gabrijel of the Kamerni Teatar '55, Galerija Paleta, the libraries of Duplex 100m2 and Crvena association, the online archives of FAMA International, the wartime editions of the daily *Oslobodjenje* digitized by Mediacentar Sarajevo, the National and University Library of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the UNESCO archives, the personal archives of Maria Lluïsa Borràs-González held in the MACBA, as well as a series of online sources published by relevant actors. The first analyses of this collection have been published based on a previously developed M.A. thesis. See: Ewa Anna Kumelowski, “The Sarajevo Ghetto Spectacle: An Introduction to the History of the Visual Arts Scene of Besieged Sarajevo,” *Third Text*, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09528822.2020.1812925>.

¹¹⁵ Due to methodological limitations and some disparities in source material, these numbers should be considered as indicative despite attempts at rigorous source collection. Some individual exhibitions counted here could be conceived as part of broader series, and with all likelihood, several exhibitions have been omitted due to a lack of access to archival materials. Nevertheless, the construction of this corpus is instrumental to a better academic understanding of the wartime visual arts scene, as it provides visibility to smaller events and forgotten practices that are often omitted from analyses of the period – and hereby offering a more accurate view of the community in question despite possible numerical inaccuracies.

The subject matter is clearly allegorical, as the battle between the typographically evil centaurs and their emblematically good Lapith cousins, below the surface her work appears to question the fundamentality of such divisions. Suljević masterfully navigates some of the most pressing questions that plagued Sarajevan minds, providing insight into and yet opening the field for questions on how the conflict was understood by those living in it. As such, the art produced during this time created unique channels of communication, restricted to local communities but sometimes also extending beyond, which provides insight into the true lived experiences of the siege.

This dissertation follows the lives of Sarajevan visual artists as they respond to the rising instability and political fragmentation during the last days of Yugoslavia's existence, and its eventual dissolution that resulted in the Bosnian Serb aggression on their city. Through compiling, analysing and exploring the wealth of documentation available in local archives this text aims to understand how visual artists understood and spoke about their experiences of war, putting a focus on a series of recognizable discourses that have since become synonymous with the memory of the siege of Sarajevo. It is about "extraordinary ordinary people", their thoughts, feelings, and reactions to mounting political pressures and the eventual onset of brutal violence committed against them. Hinging its central arguments on a micro-historical reading of a highly particular community that existed simultaneously on the practical periphery of Yugoslav cultural developments and within the center of ethno-political fragmentation, this text aims at reassessing the ways ordinary people lived and understood the disintegration of their country. Following in the footsteps of Ivana Maček, this text consciously focuses on the ways in which individual lived experiences of violence were exteriorized, in order to "avoid the pitfalls of oversimplifying war and ignoring its incomprehensible, unjustifiable, and unacceptable nature."¹¹⁶ As such, it is both the artists and the discourses that they produced, interacted with and sometimes negated that are in the forefront of this study. The intention is not to examine which discourses hold more truth than others, but to examine their origins, how they were mobilized and how the inhabitants of Sarajevo interacted with said tropes.

During the Bosnian War, discussions surrounding contrasting notions of civilization & barbarity, the West and the East, the city & the countryside became common staples in the vocabularies of those wishing to frame and understand the conflict. Emerging from a siege-time context, they were inherently based on similar dichotomous discourses that historically

¹¹⁶ Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 4.

dominated South-Eastern European conflicts between the “civilized” and “uncivilized” worlds, for which the consistent emphasis of the importance of culture as a delineating factor became integral to the opposition of the two.¹¹⁷ At the same time, intellectuals such as Gajo Sekulić have remarked upon the almost universal appearance of ethnically-founded and patriotic language that framed the conflict also in Bosnia.¹¹⁸ Founded on existing, pre-coded imagery that appeared throughout the 1980s in the Yugoslav public sphere, these discourses contributed to the framing of how Sarajevan actors understood themselves and their attackers, as well as how the international community perceived them in turn. These ideas also sometimes dictated who was to be seen as hero, and who as villain – and as a result of their hegemonic popularity, sometimes overshadowed the actual lived experiences of the siege’s victims. The dichotomous nature of these perspectives has been noted, for example, by Franke Wilmer to be problematic in light of critical modes of analysis, in a way that “it is not dichotomies per se that are problematic, but rather the way we relate to them, the way they are used to structure thinking.”¹¹⁹

However, Sarajevans were not only simply passive victims of violence inflicted upon them, but complex individuals active in a variety of communities that navigated the circumstances thrust upon them in ways far more complicated than traditional discourses used to describe the siege give them credit for. Furthermore, the city’s cultural producers and, more specifically, artists, were constantly navigating a complicated labyrinth of meanings that sometimes, surprisingly, contradicted established truths about the state of late-Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav tendencies in the field of culture. As such, Sarajevan artists both existed in tandem but also actively interacted with, shaped and influenced the discourses used to describe them and their city. While the condensation of opinions into neat categories can rightly be considered a flawed exercise from its outset, the grouping of recurring symbolic phrases allows for a structured reading of opinions and concrete feelings of individuals and communities that both uphold and question existing understandings of the processes that made the siege of Sarajevo a possibility.

¹¹⁷ See, for example: Xavier Bougarel, “Yugoslav Wars: The ‘Revenge of the Countryside’ Between Sociological Reality and Nationalist Myth,” *East European Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (June 1999): 157–75; Marko Živković, “Too Much Character, Too Little Kultur: Serbian Jeremiads 1994-1995,” *Balkanologie. Revue d’études Pluridisciplinaires* 2, vol. 2, (December 1, 1998): Published online, <https://journals.openedition.org/balkanologie/263..>

¹¹⁸ See, for example: Nenad Stefanov, and Michael Werz, *Bosnien Und Europa: Die Ethnisierung Der Gesellschaft* (Düsseldorf: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994), 141–42.

¹¹⁹ Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State and War: Identity, Conflict, and Violence in Former Yugoslavia* (New York: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2002), 234.

Nevertheless, these discourses remain intrinsically tied to one another, distinctly overlapping and entirely unlinear, often feeding into themselves and filled with ambiguities. As a result, this dissertation is confined to four categories of meaning that correspond to distinct spacio-temporal and physical contexts: the existence of a Yugoslav arts scene in the late 1980's and its relationship to a supranational Yugoslav cultural sphere, the concept of "civilization" as a tool for addressing the Bosnian Serb aggression on BiH, discourses based on "cultural resistance" within the context to Sarajevo armed defense, and the use of "European" narratives as a communication tool with the outside world.

The discursive models that appear in this text did not originate during the wars of Yugoslav dissolution. Instead, they are the continuation of a long-standing heritage of narratives that have come to define the Western Balkan sphere – not only the result of external imaginations, but also internal self-definitions. The city of Sarajevo is perhaps one of the best suited points for the identification of these narratives: the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, its identity has nevertheless been marked in global imagination by events such as the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand and his wife Sofia, the spark that ignited the Great War,¹²⁰ or the wildly successful 1984 Winter Olympics that placed its otherwise sleepy streets in the global limelight.¹²¹ This fact is remarked upon by one of Sarajevo's most celebrated artists and painters, Edin Numankadić, who coincidentally also fulfilled the role of director at the Sarajevo Olympic Museum:

*"It is sad, really. Sarajevo is known for only three things...the assassination of Franz Ferdinand and the World War I, the siege of Sarajevo and ethnic war, and the 1984 Olympics. Only one of those things was something positive."*¹²²

¹²⁰ While the advent of the Bosnian War significantly increased global interest in Sarajevo history, commentators regularly refer to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand renowned for sparking World War I in introductions to monographs treating the conflict. See, for example: Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 1; Fran Markowitz, *Sarajevo: A Bosnian Kaleidoscope*, Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010, 6,18; Kenneth Morrison, Paul Lowe, *Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo*, 1.

¹²¹ References to the XIV Winter Olympic Games appear regularly in literature treating the history of the city, as well as texts speaking of the siege in reference to the capital's modern nature. See, for example: Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 1; Kenneth Morrison, Paul Lowe, *Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo*, 1; Ivan Lovrenović, *Bosnia: A Cultural History* (London: Saqi Books / The Bosnian Institute, 2001), 191. Conversely, perhaps the only detailed monography on the 1984 Olympics held in Sarajevo begins its introduction with a description of bobsleighter Igor Boras's perilous journey from the besieged city to attend at the 1994 Lillehammer Winter Olympics. Jason Vuic, *The Sarajevo Olympics. A History of the 1984 Winter Games* (Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015), 1.

¹²² Jason Vuic, *The Sarajevo Olympics. A History of the 1984 Winter Games*, epigraph-n.pag.

As a result, the Bosnian capital is known by name and reputation by many who would otherwise be hard-pressed to locate Bosnia-Herzegovina on a map. Furthermore, the identity of the city is strongly defined by its unusual historical heritage, defined by its rich history as the independent Bosnian Kingdom, its latter annexation by the Ottoman Empire and the later Habsburg rule under the Austro-Hungarian empire. Centuries of religious co-existence between members of the Bosnian, Orthodox, Catholic churches as well as Muslim and Jewish populations are reflected in Sarajevo's architectural particularities and everyday life: the flowing transition of the narrow marketplace district of Baščaršija to wide Austro-Hungarian walkways lined with fashionable cafés, not less part of the heart of the city than the numerous mosques, occasional churches and rare factories dotted around concrete non-commercial neighborhoods.¹²³

The uniqueness of the city's architecture that seamlessly blends into the sprawling mountains that surround it has long since been memorialized by travelers to the region, whose often Orientalizing impressions have also not failed to impact the way contemporary actors perceive and describe the city.¹²⁴ In fact, the way the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sarajevo has been written up to date has been, consciously and unconsciously, deeply intertwined in concordance or in opposition to orientalist discourses that have dominated the South-Eastern European sphere.¹²⁵ These discourses found their way into contemporaneous descriptions of violence on the Balkan Peninsula, which became characterized, in part, by the international

¹²³ Commentators often directly point to the city's mixed architecture as evidence of its visible mixed heritage, religious diversity and inter-community coexistence. See, for example: Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 1–2.

¹²⁴ Some insight into the formation of imaginaries of Bosnia-Herzegovina in foreign spaces, positive and negative expressions of exotic "otherness", can be found in travelogues on the Balkan region, and specifically BiH travel literature spanning the 15th to the 20th Century. See, for example: Amira Žmirić, *Austrijski i njemački putopisi o Bosni i Hercegovini do 1941. godine* (Banja Luka: Besjeda, 2012); Andrew Hammond, *Through Another Europe: An Anthology of Travel Writing on the Balkans* (Oxford: Signal Books, 2019). A more specific analysis of the construction of external perceptions has been provided, for example, in: Elena Dell'Agnese, "Making and Remaking Sarajevo's Image," *Spaces of Identity* 3, no. 4 (2003): Published online, <https://soi.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/soi/article/view/8016/7177>.

¹²⁵ The influence of notions of Balkanism on the region, see: Milica Bakić-Hayden, "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia," *Slavic Review* 54, no. 4 (1995): 917–31; Marija N. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Milica Bakić-Hayden and Robert M. Hayden, "Orientalist Variations on the Theme 'Balkans': Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics," *Slavic Review* 51, no. 1 (1992): 1–15.

community as the result of “ancient ethnic hatreds”.¹²⁶ These images, reproduced in part with the help of the international media, resulted in an image of the former Yugoslavia, and by extension, Sarajevo, as a space of recurring communal violence where barbarity is the norm.¹²⁷

On the other hand, the vocabularies employed from within the siege of Sarajevo were not necessarily influenced by external essentializations and often were authentically representative of the experiences of local actors. Instead, local actors from across all spectrums of society had their own definitions and understandings of who they were and what they represented. These defining discourses took varying forms, from feelings of powerlessness in response to the “*konkret gewordenen und doch unvorstellbar bleibenden Kriegsgewalt*” common amongst ex-Yugoslav citizens, to strong resolve to fight the aggressor.¹²⁸ It also cannot be denied that the overwhelming sympathy expressed within the now-gone Yugoslavia and beyond for the suffering of the besieged city was directed by honest empathy for its plight. However, this truth does not overshadow the fact that the lexicons through which individual actors voiced this sympathy cannot be dissociated from an imagined position it held in public imaginations – one informed by a status as existing on the margins of accepted “European” identities, but crucially also one consciously negotiated by its inhabitants to achieve certain aims. As a result, the Bosnian War remains integrated into an institutionalized framework of remembrance that is defined as much by the experiences of those affected by it as it defines the same experiences.

The cultural producers that remained in Sarajevo throughout the war played a crucial role in the framing and dissemination of these discourses, giving form to and visualizing them for local and external publics. The construction of meanings did not take place in a linear manner, and many times developed through a vector of bilateral exchanges which saw Sarajevo cultural producers interact with ideas championed by external, Western actors, who in turn often picked up discourses emanating from the besieged city. The production of such narratives through

¹²⁶ The processes behind meaning-production within a Western-European and “occidental” framework is addressed at further length in Chapter IV, including additional qualifications of a broader term that cannot necessarily be used to reflect a cohesive or unified position. The prevalence of discourses, endemic to foreign press and media at the time, which pushed ideas based on a “clash of civilizations” mindset within the context of the Bosnian War and the siege of Sarajevo has been noted, for example, by Peter Andreas, who refers to popular works such as Robert Kaplan’s *Balkan Ghosts*, critiques by V.P. Gagnon Jr. in *The Myth of Ethnic War*, as well as Samuel Huntington’s controversial *The Clash of Civilizations*. Peter Andreas, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 11.

¹²⁷ Representations of the Bosnian War are further treated in, for example, Stefanov and Werz, *Bosnien Und Europa*, 8.

¹²⁸ Milka Car, “Diskursanalyse Und Postjugoslawische Kriege: Diskurse de Ohnmacht,” in *Traumata Der Transition. Erfahrung Und Reflexion Des Jugoslawischen Zerfalls*. (A. Francke Verlag, 2015), 66.

literature has already been touched upon, for example in the master's thesis of Kathryn Sicard, who uses the work of Alexander Hemon to address narrative formation during the Bosnian War.¹²⁹ Other texts treating wartime cultural production have similarly identified the influence of specific discourses on cultural developments, as was the case for Larisa Kurtović, who accurately points to the willingness and ability of the local alternative cultural community “to speak to the outside worlds, often through deployment of various tropes of ‘civilization’, ‘Europe’, and ‘art under struggle’”, promoting the plight of the city abroad.¹³⁰ At the same time, many formal and informal studies of the wartime visual arts scene mobilize and sometimes rely on these main discourses to frame the artworks that they engage with, underlining their durability.¹³¹ Both in the context of a declining socialist state and this specific conflict, little is known about how local actors interact with the myths that surround their lives, as the majority of literature glosses over their involvement in its production. This text proposes to revisit these discourses through studying the Sarajevan visual arts community, placing these experiences into an enlarged timeframe that acknowledges the transitional nature of wartime society – and its influences on framing the past and the present.

This text will focus primarily on deconstructing the diverse ways in which specifically visual artists interacted with such discourses: as producers, as subjects, and occasionally, as skeptics. Through analyzing how the city's artistic community interacted with essentialized notions within their own circles, and how they impacted changing vocabularies of auto-identification, the discourses that define the siege of Sarajevo are to be studied on a deeper level. The argument

¹²⁹ Kathryn M. Sicard, “Aleksandar Hemon's Testimonial Metafiction: Resisting Narrativization of the Siege of Sarajevo and Representing the Effects of Exile” (M.A., Georgetown University, 2011).

¹³⁰ Larisa Kurtović, “Paradoxes of Wartime ‘Freedom’: Alternative Culture during the Siege of Sarajevo,” in *Opiranje Zlu: (Post)Jugoslovenski Anti-Ratni Angažman*, ed. Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković (Zagreb: Jesenski i Turk, 2015), 220.

¹³¹ Current scholarship on the wartime visual arts scene is relatively restricted, and is mostly represented in the form of non-academic publications or dissertations concluded in the scope of university programs. See, for example: Asja Mandić, “Exhibitions in Damaged and Destroyed Architectural Objects in Besieged Sarajevo: Spaces of Gathering and Socialization,” in *Participation in Art and Architecture. Spaces of Interaction and Occupation*, ed. Martino Stierli and Mechthild Widrich (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 107–26; Asja Mandić, “The Formation of a Culture of Critical Resistance in Sarajevo”; Ewa Anna Kumelowski, “The Sarajevo Ghetto Spectacle: An Introduction to the History of the Visual Arts Scene of Besieged Sarajevo”; Jasmina Gavrankapetanović-Redžić, “Enjoy Sara-Jevo,” *Third Text* 36, no. 2 (March 4, 2022): 85–106; Irfan Hošić, “Mapping the ‘Image of Crisis’. Art and Design in Besieged Sarajevo,” *Design and Crisis* (2020): 47-77; Amira Kapetanović, *Sarajevski Memento : 1992-1995* (Sarajevo: Ministarstvo kulture i sporta Kantona Sarajevo, 1997); Marko Ilić, “The Miracle of Miracles. Sarajevo and the Last Episode of the ‘Yugoslav’ Contemporary Art Scene,” in *A Slow Burning Fire: The Rise of the New Art Practice in Yugoslavia* (Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press, 2021), 251–94; Aida Hadžimusić, “Grafičke Mape Sarajevo '92-'95 Kao Izraz Kulturnog Otpora” (M.A., University of Sarajevo, Philosophical Faculty, Department of Art History, 2014); Ewa Anna Kumelowski, “Seeking Shelter at an Exhibition: The History of the Artists of the Siege of Sarajevo (1992-1996)” (M.A., Sciences Po Paris, 2018).

being made here in no way aims to devalue the moral cleavage between the attacker and the attacked: the Bosnian Serb aggression on the city of Sarajevo was the result of unprovoked nationalist rhetoric that sought to destroy not only the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also the centuries of shared, multiethnic history and culture to which it was home. However, shining a spotlight on the divergent experiences of cultural producers during this period, not all of whom felt represented by an essentialized image of their community, creates deeper dimensions for their victimhood. As such, the image of Sarajevo as a multi-ethnic cultural capital attacked by those who wished to destroy it for what it was is not necessarily incorrect or misleading: instead, historicizing such frameworks makes it apparent that they are simply incomplete.

1.1. WHO WERE THE VISUAL ARTISTS OF BESIEGED SARAJEVO? METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF STUDYING CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

This study focuses exclusively on the visual arts community active during the late 1980s and early 1990s in Sarajevo, as well as those who remained in the besieged city between 1992-1995.¹³² Without regard to expected patterns, the intention here is not to write an art historical text about the artists and their artworks, but instead trace and reframe their presence as a representative element of Sarajevan wartime society. Having found truth in the micro-historical adage that “the more improbable sort of documentation as being potentially richer”¹³³, the choice of focusing on the visual arts goes beyond a personal and professional interest in the general field. The visual arts community active during the siege of Sarajevo becomes a perfect example of the “exceptional normal”, as an easily distinguished group that is equally distinct from the general public (as members of an intellectual elite) but also very much sharing the

¹³² The community in question, while constantly fluctuating, was made up of a group of visual artists, art students, curators, designers, and critics that inhabited a shared social space, even if their interactions remained dictated by personal trajectories and preferences. This dissertation also takes the unorthodox approach to focus on professional as well as non-professional visual artists. The inclusion of the latter group can be explained through their presumed regular interaction in shared spaces with their trained counterparts, making their presence at least tangential: they knew the same people and spent time in the same places. Unfortunately, the scope of this project eliminates the possibility for including the many other cultural contributions produced during this period, including the absolutely crucial activities of Sarajevan experts in theatre, literature, or film, as well as the majority of projects developed by Bosnian diaspora abroad. As such, the term ‘artist’ will be used exclusively to refer to visual artists in this text.

¹³³ Carlo Ginzburg, John Tedeschi, and Anne C. Tedeschi, “Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about It,” *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (October 1, 1993): 33.

experiences of the civilian population of besieged Sarajevo.¹³⁴ Somewhere between a classical micro-history and a collective biography, this dissertation treats the visual arts community “as an allegory for broader issues affecting the culture as a whole”, or in other words, a mirror through which to address the variable perceptions and interactions of regular Sarajevans with the discourses that dominated the language used to describe their fates.¹³⁵ While the success of transposing this broad understanding of a micro-historical approach towards wider generalizations on the appropriation of discourses within besieged Sarajevo remains to be decided, it is mobilized in this text as a tool for addressing the specificities of dichotomous discourse production by the actors that it describes, emphasizing their agency in this process.

Artists, as a group, are both visible and vocal in public spaces as a relatively homogenous group with shared interests and aspirations. They are also particularly adept at producing material, both visual and written, that expresses the most intimate thoughts and feelings that would otherwise be difficult to address within the scope of an academic study. The art produced by the community in question and the way they interacted with it provides insight, as “artists produced works that reflected their state of mind.”¹³⁶ At the same time, the cultural community in question also provides a glimpse into incredibly varied experiences: those of young men inducted to fight on the front lines, mid-generation professionals determined to provide a safe space for their successors, and even of those who gambled their lives to attend a *vernissage*. While the study of wartime art carries with it a certain dimension of frivolity, the reality of conflict cannot be erased from the experiences of those who participated in its production: in Sarajevo, people lived and died for art. While artists as a group tend to belong to an intellectual

¹³⁴ The term “exceptional normal” was coined by Edoardo Grendi in reference to his micro-historical methodology, and serves as inspiration for treating a group of our relatively insular yet heterogeneous community as a mirror for addressing experiences of the greater Sarajevan civilian population. Its members are exceptional insofar as they are defined by an acute interest in a narrow and elite field (the visual arts), their relatively high levels of education, and general public visibility. At the same time, they experienced the siege of Sarajevo in much the same way as ‘normal’ citizens, facing the same shortages, limitations, and trials of everyday life during war. See: Edoardo Grendi, “Micro-Analisi e Storia Sociale,” *Quaderni Storici* 12, no. 35 (2) (1977): 506–20.

¹³⁵ For theoretical literature on micro-historical and biographic historical approaches that have contributed to the methodological basis for this text, see: Ginzburg, Tedeschi, and Tedeschi, “Microhistory,” 33; Jill Lepore, “Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography,” *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 1 (2001): 133; István Szijártó, “Four Arguments for Microhistory,” *Rethinking History* 6, no. 2 (June 1, 2002): 209–15; Francesca Trivellato, “Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?,” *California Italian Studies* 2, no. 1 (2011): Published online, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0z94n9hq>; Zoltán Simon, “Microhistory: In General,” *Journal of Social History* 49 (June 26, 2015): 237–48; Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and István M. Szijártó, *What Is Microhistory?: Theory and Practice*, 1st ed. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2013).

¹³⁶ Evangelische Öffentlichkeitsarbeit Frankfurt am Main, Stadt Frankfurt am Main Deutschland, and Hilfe für Sarajevo Frankfurt am Main, *Art-Rat Sarajevo 1992-1994* (Frankfurt am Main: Adin Hebib, 1994), n.pag. Private collection.

elite, the participants in the arts scene included non-professional artists and a slew of unrelated actors, whose numbers likely went up into the thousands.¹³⁷

This study is primarily based on a systematic process of compilation of archival material across a number of public, semi-public and private archives in Sarajevo, across the European continent as well as the span of the World Wide Web, counting thousands of pages of exhibition catalogues, newspaper and magazine articles, artist monographies, third-party interviews, photo and video sources, official correspondence, and, sometimes, the artworks themselves. In this way, the discourses that are reflected in this text are based on thoughts expressed primarily during the conflict and not in hindsight.¹³⁸ Furthermore, it should be noted that the elements analyzed in this text are not necessarily reflective of their artistic merit: many valuable projects organized during the period in question arguably do not receive the attention they deserve, while some relatively obscure events are analyzed in detail. Any oversights are therefore a result of the methodology employed throughout this dissertation, and apologies are extended to those whose valuable contributions to the Sarajevan cultural scene do not appear in this text.

This extensive documentation is supplemented with original interviews with a series of incidental actors, both integral contributors to arts scene and sporadic participants, but is not based on an oral history approach, instead favoring archival and printed source material. This somewhat unorthodox methodology is a conscious choice made to privilege a systematic review of contemporaneous materials, in part over-riding the difficulties of addressing memory with oral history, proposing a complimentary methodology to the studies being currently conducted on the same period.¹³⁹ At the same time, this choice is informed with the hope of countering a wide-spread belief that the sheer destruction of the prolonged conflict was indeed successful in erasing the cultural achievements of this period. Instead, a five-year treasure hunt lasting from

¹³⁷ Extrapolating from randomized surveys taken by FAMA International media organization in 1997, over 10,000 individuals would have at some point attended an exhibition or art event around the city. For a deeper analysis of this data, see: Ewa Anna Kumelowski, "Seeking Shelter at an Exhibition: The History of the Artists of the Siege of Sarajevo (1992-1996)," 38–42. Surveys available under: FAMA International, "The Siege of Sarajevo 92-96: Survival Questionnaires." (Sarajevo: FAMA International, 1996-1997), accessed online April 2018, currently unavailable: <http://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/fama-original-projects/12/index.htm>

¹³⁸ Through focusing on documentation created during or just after the siege of Sarajevo, this text attempts to recreate the discursive mechanisms that emerged naturally throughout this period while avoiding contemporary recontextualizations. Due to the age of many of the opinions expressed in this text, it is possible that some of the quotes reproduced in this text do not reflect current opinions of the individuals in question.

¹³⁹ For example, a complimentary study on the visual arts scene of Sarajevo currently being conducted by Gabriela Manda Seith. Gabriela Manda Seith, 'Sarajevo's "War Art". About Globalization, Balkanism and Representation', (PhD, Free University of Berlin, upcoming)

2017-2022 has yielded a nearly complete archive of documentation of a cultural scene of besieged Sarajevo. Due to the sensitive nature of some of the material gathered, non-professional artists whose experiences are directly quoted in the text will be anonymized.¹⁴⁰

1.2. CONTEMPORARY HISTORIOGRAPHIES IN INTERTWINING FIELDS. YUGOSLAV CULTURAL HISTORY ON THE CROSSROADS

Firstly, the conclusions of this study are inherently indebted to the precursory work done in the broader field of late-stage Yugoslav history, and the cultural aspects of this history in particular. Touching upon the cultural processes that accompanied and, in some cases, encouraged the proliferation of political dissolution of the socialist state, this text engages with the extensive historiography which has sought to understand and explain its downfall. While the analyses that paint the Yugoslav dissolution as the result of “age-old ethnic hatreds” between the state’s constituent peoples are of little analytical value, they nevertheless help understand the construction of the discourses discussed in this dissertation.¹⁴¹ Conversely, more nuanced studies such as those conducted by JR Lampe, Holm Sundhaussen, Sabrina Petra Ramet or Susan L. Woodward provide a more leveled understanding of the processes that eventually culminated in the siege of Sarajevo, and thus also a theoretical backdrop for this thesis.¹⁴²

While the aim here is not to write a political or military history, the existing studies that discuss developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sarajevo from a variety of angles provide a valuable

¹⁴⁰ The heterogeneity of this thesis’s protagonists calls for a more diversified approach than a typical microhistory would allow. For those artists who contributed to any published material in their capacity as semi-public figures, full names and descriptions will be included, with the justification that there is no reasonable expectation for privacy in this case. However, the experiences of individuals whose involvement with the visual arts does not justify their classification as a public figure will be anonymized to protect their privacy. Furthermore, some analytically useful anecdotes have been consciously omitted from this text, at times at the explicit request of involved actors. Considering the irregular access to archival material as well as the short amount of time that has passed since the events analyzed in this text, it is the responsibility of the historian to discern the interesting from the relevant when taking into account the privacy of those involved.

¹⁴¹ See for example: Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (London: Picador, 2014).

¹⁴² See also: John R. Lampe, *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There Was a Country*, 2 edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia From the Death of Tito the Fall of Milošević*; Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1995); Holm Sundhaussen, *Jugoslawien Und Seine Nachfolgestaaten 1943-2011: Eine Ungewöhnliche Geschichte Des Gewöhnlichen*, 2nd 2., Aktual. (Wien Köln Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2012); Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia: Tito, Communist Leadership and the National Question* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

theoretical context for understanding what type of conflict the city's inhabitants were dealing with.¹⁴³ An attempt is made to include BiH historiographies on the conflict and the siege to serve as a theoretical backdrop for this text, both as sources of local research and as elements that interact with, navigate and/or reproduce existing discourses treated in this text.¹⁴⁴ The rich cultural heritage and its geopolitical specificity have made the city of Sarajevo the object of numerous recent studies, encompassing a variety of disciplines and touching upon the city's 550-year old social, cultural and political history.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, this dissertation hopes to provide significant contributions to the social history of the siege of Sarajevo itself, focusing on the everyday lived experiences of those affected by the war. One of the key texts on which this thesis builds is Ivana Maček's anthropological study of everyday life remains the most robust contribution to the history of the conflict despite its methodological divergence. The emphasized necessity of reproducing a feeling of "normality" in the devastating context of the siege is a crucial element of the theoretical framework of this text, and will continue to inform

¹⁴³ See for example: Xavier Bougarel, *Bosnie, Anatomie d'un Conflit* (Paris: La Découverte, 1996); Xavier Bougarel, Elissa Helms, and Ger Guijzings, eds., *The New Bosnian Mosaic. Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2007); Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999); Nenad Stefanov and Michael Werz, *Bosnien Und Europa: Die Ethnisierung Der Gesellschaft* (Germany: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994); Xavier Bougarel, Hannes Grandits, and Nenad Stefanov, eds., "Did the Wars in Yugoslavia Change the Perception of Societal Conflicts? Debates in France and Germany," *Südosteuropa. Zeitschrift Für Politik Und Gesellschaft* 61, no. 4 (2013); Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999); Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984); Norman M. Naimark, *Yugoslavia and Its Historians: Understanding the Balkan Wars of the 1990s* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004); Marie-Janine Calic, *Krieg und Frieden in Bosnien-Herzegowina* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995); Boris Previšić, Svjetlan Lacko Vidulić, *Traumata der Transition: Erfahrung und Reflexion des jugoslawischen Zerfalls*, 1. edition (Tübingen: Francke, A, 2015); Neven Andjelić, *Bosnia-Herzegovina: The End of a Legacy*, Annotated edition (London ; Portland, Or.: Routledge, 2003).

¹⁴⁴ See, for example: Smail Čekić, *Opsada i odbrana Sarajeva 1992-1995. Referati sa okruglog stola održanog 23. novembra 2005. godine*. (Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2008); Nedžad Ajnadžić, *Opsada Sarajeva u Kontekstu Historijskih Iskustava* (Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2012); Husnija Kamberović and Dubravka Stojanović, *Ratovi 1990-ih u Regionalnim Historiografijama. Kontroverze, Interpretacije, Nasljedje*. (Sarajevo: Udruženje za modernu historiju, 2021); Aleksandar R. Miletić, "Iz svakodnevice života u Sarajevu tokom opsade 1992-95 godine. Prilog gradnji usmene istorije o ratu na prostorima bivše SFRJ," *Tokovi istorije*, no. 3–4 (2005): 283–93.

¹⁴⁵ For literature from the field of anthropology on the city of Sarajevo, both prior, during and after the war, see, for example: Markowitz, *Sarajevo*; Stef Jansen, *Yearnings in the Meantime: "Normal Lives" and the State in a Sarajevo Apartment Complex*, 1st edition (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015). For further discussions of BiH ethnic composition and inter-community integration, see, for example: Tone R. Bringa, "Nationality Categories, National Identification and Identity Formation in 'Multinational' Bosnia," *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 11, no. 1 & 2 (1993): 80–89.

its arguments throughout.¹⁴⁶ While other similar texts delve into the realities of everyday life during the conflict, for example focusing on the specific situations of individual national groups, these lack the methodological rigor necessary to provide a stable historical background, at times reproducing some of the discourses which this dissertation aims to address.¹⁴⁷ Certain key contributions that treat the complicated relationship between the vast corps of international actors present in Sarajevo throughout the conflict and ordinary Sarajevans provide insight into the external aspects that defined artistic production within the besieged city.¹⁴⁸

Although the cultural history of the siege of Sarajevo has not been neglected in any measure, the aim of this study is also to integrate a rigorous historiographical approach which favors archival research that has been underutilized so far, joining the various authors who have considered the cultural developments during and after the siege of Sarajevo, but also to broader cultural histories of the region.¹⁴⁹ These conversations are furthermore enriched by the relatively well-developed study of wartime architecture, whose focus on the renegotiation of space within a conflict society as well as the introduction of theoretical tools such as the notion

¹⁴⁶ Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*; Ivana Maček, “‘Imitation of Life’: Negotiating Normality in Sarajevo under Siege,” in *The New Bosnian Mosaic. Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society*, ed. Xavier Bougarel, Elissa Helms, and Ger Guijzings (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 39–57; Ivana Maček, “Transmission and Transformation: Memories of the Siege of Sarajevo,” in *Civilians Under Siege from Sarajevo to Troy*, ed. Alex Dowdall and John Horne (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018), 15–35, https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-58532-5_2.

¹⁴⁷ See, for example: Vera Katz, “Život Hrvata u opkoljenom Sarajevu,” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 40, no. 1 (June 30, 2008): 269–79; Aleksandar Miletić, “Iz svakodnevice života u Sarajevu tokom opsade 1992-95 godine. Prilog građi usmene istorije o ratu na prostorima bivše SFRJ”; Smail Čekić, *Opsada i odbrana Sarajeva 1992-1995. Referati sa okruglog stola održanog 23. novembra 2005. godine*.

¹⁴⁸ Peter Andreas, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo*; Kenneth Morrison, Paul Lowe, *Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo*.

¹⁴⁹ See, for example: Dragana Obradović, “Aesthetics, Spectacle and Kitsch in Literary Representation of the Sarajevo Siege,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 90, no. 2 (2012): 229–61; Jelena Hadžiosmanović, “How Is Culture Used as a Tool for Dissuasion in Conflict and Consensus: A Case of Sarajevo (1992-1995),” *Epiphany* 7, no. 1 (2014): 22–46; Larisa Kurtović, “Paradoxes of Wartime ‘Freedom’: Alternative Culture during the Siege of Sarajevo”; Lida Hujić, “Learning from Sarajevo: Visual Expression Through the Lens of Yugoslavia’s Countercultural Music Scenes and Their Enduring Legacy (From the 1980s to the Present),” *The Design Journal* 18, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 555–83; Megan Kossiakoff, “The Art of War: The Protection of Cultural Property during the ‘Siege’ of Sarajevo (1992-95),” *DePaul Journal of Art, Technology & Intellectual Property Law* 14, no. 1, Special Section: Art and War (2004): 109–70; Diklić, *Teatar u ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva*; Joanna Zielińska, “Sztuka przeciw kulom. Działalność kulturalna i teatralna w Sarajewie podczas wojny w Bośni i Hercegowinie (1992-1995)”; Gradimir Gojer, “Uloga i značaj kulture u periodu opsade i odbrane Sarajeva,” in *Opsada i Odbrana Sarajeva. 1992 -1995* (Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2008), 286–91; Mirsada Baljić, “Uloga i značaj umjetnika u okviru OS RBiH u periodu opsade i odbrane Sarajeva,” in *Opsada i Odbrana Sarajeva, 1992-1995*, ed. Smail Čekić (Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2008), 313–20; Klara Wyrzykowska, “La redéfinition de l’espace culturel post-yougoslave. Le cas du Festival du film de Sarajevo: 1993-2008” (M.A., Sciences Po Paris, 2009); Megan Robbins, “Intercultural Exchange and Cultural Resistance in Sarajevo’s Classical Music Institutions”; Claudia Bell, “Sarajevska Zima: A Festival Amid War Debris in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina,” *Space and Culture* 12, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 136–42.

of *urbicide* in the context of the siege provide another layer of analysis.¹⁵⁰ Particular emphasis is placed on the specificities of siege warfare in the analysis of civilian wartime experiences, where the “domestication” of violence coupled with the static nature of this type of warfare provides distinct risks and vulnerabilities for non-combatants, considering their role as deliberate targets of violence meant to crush both morale and resistance in both a social and military context.¹⁵¹

Borrowing from anthropologist Stephen Lubkemann’s study on the development within cultural spheres during long-term conflict situations, the siege of Sarajevo is treated not “as an ‘event’ that suspends social processes”, but instead studies the “realization and transformation of social relations and cultural practices throughout conflict, investigating war as a transformative social condition and not simply as a political struggle conducted through organized violence.”¹⁵² As such, particular emphasis is paid to the social roles of Sarajevans, whose lives were governed not by the violence they inhabited, but by a complex web of personal motivations and micropolitical forms of social struggle, in this way avoiding the trappings of losing track of or dismissing “all other potential sources of motive that usually shape social behavior.”¹⁵³

Focusing on artistic production on the cusp of Yugoslav dissolution, this dissertation hopes to provide new insights into the breaks and continuities within the region’s cultural spheres at the end of the 1980s and throughout the 1990s. Informed by previous studies treating the constitution of Yugoslav society, this text considers the wartime artistic community as directly

¹⁵⁰ See, for example: Cynthia Simmons, “Urbicide and the Myth of Sarajevo,” *Partisan Review* 4 (2001): 624–30; Martin Coward, *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction* (London, New York: Routledge, 2008); Asja Mandić, “Exhibitions in Damaged and Destroyed Architectural Objects in Besieged Sarajevo: Spaces of Gathering and Socialization”; Emina Zejnilović, and Erna Husukić, “Culture and Architecture in Distress - Sarajevo Experiment,” *ArchNet-IJAR: International Journal of Architectural Research* 12, no. 1 (March 2018): 11–35; Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War: The Destruction and Reconstruction of Sarajevo*, 1st ed. 2018 (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018); Armina Pilav, “Before the War, War, After the War: Urban Imageries for Urban Resilience,” *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science* 3, no. 1 (March 2012): 23–37; Bogdan Bogdanović, and Klaus Detlef. *Die Stadt Und Der Tod: Essays*. 1. Klagenfurt: Wieser, 1993.

¹⁵¹ Alex Dowdall, “Introduction,” in *Civilians Under Siege from Sarajevo to Troy* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018), 8.

¹⁵² While Lubkemann’s study of the generations-long Mozambican civil war is not entirely comparable to the shorter, but more intensive, Sarajevo experience, his approach towards treating war as a social process and not as a singular event is transferable also to the Bosnian War. Stephen C. Lubkemann, *Culture in Chaos: An Anthropology of the Social Condition in War* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 1.

¹⁵³ Stephen C. Lubkemann, 12.

descendent from pre-war communities.¹⁵⁴ Most importantly, the text relies on an alternative reading of the concept of a Yugoslav common culture. While direct claims of personal identification with the Yugoslav ideal remain nearly impossible to trace, the cultural impacts of this profound socio-political transition are explored in the context of a temporal transition instead of a series of hermetic breaks.¹⁵⁵ Mobilizing art-historical concepts such as Ješa Denegri's artistic *second line*, which refers to the existence of a Yugoslav art movement existing in parallel to state-sponsored aesthetics, this thesis relies heavily on the claim that a Yugoslav cultural space existed as a separate, actor-driven, entity from political structures that nevertheless interacted with the political developments in the decaying state.¹⁵⁶ As such, this text is an attempt at a parallel reading of the *idea* of a Yugoslav community and its practical

¹⁵⁴ For literature on the broader social history of the late Yugoslav state and its historiographical representations, see, for example: Hannes Grandits, "Titoismus. Ein Wandelbares Gesellschaftssystem in Zeiten Des Kalten Kriegs.," *Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte. Begriffe, Methoden Und Debatten Der Zeithistorischen Forschung*. (blog), April 14, 2017, <https://docupedia.de/zg/Titoismus?oldid=100819>; Hannes Grandits, *Yugoslavia's Sunny Side: A History of Tourism in Socialism*, ed. Karin Taylor (Budapest ; New York: Central European University Press, 2010); Hannes Grandits, Vladimir Ivanović, and Branimir Janković, eds., *Reprezentacije socijalističke Jugoslavije: preispitivanja i perspektive*, 1. izd, *Preispitivanja i perspektive* (Sarajevo: Udruženje za modernu historiju, 2019); Predrag Matvejević, *Granice i sudbine : o jugoslavenstvu i prije i poslije Jugoslavije* (Zagreb: VBZ, 2015); Dubravka Stojanović, Božo Repe, and Husnija Kamberović, eds., *Jugoslavija u Historiografskim Ogledalima - Zbornik Radova*, Edicija Zbornici, vol. 6 (Sarajevo: Udruženje za modernu historiju, 2018); Djordje Tomić. "From 'Yugoslavism' to (Post)Yugoslav Nationalisms: Understanding Yugoslav 'Identities'." In *European National Identities: Elements, Transitions, Conflicts*, 271–92, Piscataway, NJ: 2014.

¹⁵⁵ The discussions surrounding the construction and reality of a Yugoslav identity often appear at least partially partisan, and while claims about the success of a Yugoslav national identity-building project remain difficult to uphold, arguments supporting the existence of a practice-based Yugoslav cultural sphere have received recent support. See, for example: Zoran Milutinović, "What Common Yugoslav Culture Was, and How Everybody Benefited from It," *The Cultural Spaces of a Vanished Land*, n.d., 75–87; Duško Sekulić, Garth Massey, and Randy Hodson, "Who Were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia," *American Sociological Review* 59, no. 1 (1994): 83–97. Research on contemporary visual arts in Yugoslavia offers a case-study of an alternative analytical framework that emphasizes the lived experiences of practical cooperation and the construction of networks, in particular the concept of the arts as evidence of a "parallel cultural infrastructure" that remains to be studied more rigorously from a historical perspective. See, for example: Zdenka Badovinac, "Zdenka Badovinac, in Conversation with J. Myers-Szupinska," in *Comradeship. Curating, Art, and Politics in Post-Socialist Europe*, ed. J. Myers-Szupinska (New York: Independent Curators International, 2019), 11–40; Zdenka Badovinac, "Art as a Parallel Cultural Infrastructure / Legacy of Post War Avantgardes from Former Yugoslavia" (Lecture, Haus der Kunst, Munich, January 14, 2016), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2Gr8Rr7swA>.

¹⁵⁶ For a closer inspection of the Ješa Denegri's texts, see for example: Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, eds., *Impossible Histories: Historic Avant-Gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes, and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia 1918-1991* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003). See also: Ješa Denegri, "The Reason for the Other Line," in *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta '89* (Sarajevo: Collegium Artisticum / RO ZOI '84, 1989), 35–38; Ješa Denegri, "The Properties of the New Art Practice of the Seventies in the Yugoslav Art Space," *Treći Program Radio Beograda*, no. 61 (1984), <https://www.avantgarde-museum.com/en/jesa-denegri-the-properties-of-the-new-art-practice-of-the-seventies-in-the-yugoslav-art-space-english~no6583/>.

incorporations.¹⁵⁷ The work of Andrew Wachtel on the construction of Yugoslav culture through literature is perhaps one of the most influential examples of such an approach, making the argument for the consideration of a Yugoslav culture as a set of lived experiences resulting from the practical networks, markets and interactions within the Yugoslav state that resulted in the creation of a specific cultural space and sphere, but which was essentially ineffectual at its core.¹⁵⁸

More specifically, this thesis closely interacts with the history of Bosnian-Herzegovinian artistic and cultural movements, which up until now have largely remained relegated to superficial analyses.¹⁵⁹ The artistic production centered around Sarajevo has historically taken a marginal place in relation to the more visible Zagreb-Belgrade-Ljubljana axis, but has shown a steady increase in interest for the artistic movements developed in the city towards the end of the 1980s.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, the prevalence of art historical texts treating the 1987 and 1989 editions of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* provide a stable foundation for the first chapter of this dissertation, which treats the “last Yugoslav exhibition” as a point of theoretical and practical departure.¹⁶¹ Strikingly, the histories of artistic production in Yugoslavia, as well as wartime production within the ex-Yugoslav sphere at large have been limited to local/national

¹⁵⁷ See, for example: Dejan Djokic, *Yugoslavism: Histories Of A Failed Idea, 1918-1992*, 1 edition (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003).

¹⁵⁸ Andrew Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

¹⁵⁹ Ivan Lovrenović's volume on BiH cultural history is perhaps the only English-language publication available on the subject at this time. Ivan Lovrenović, *Bosnia: A Cultural History*.

¹⁶⁰ The majority of emerging scholarship and interest into Sarajevo art of the 1980s focuses primarily on the emergence of the influential avant-garde group Zvono as well as their precursors. See, for example: Sandra Bradvić, “Exhibition History Beyond Western and Eastern Canon Formation: A Methodological Proposal Based on the Example of the Art Group Zvono,” in *Liminal Spaces of Art Between Europe and the Middle East*, ed. Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić et al. (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), 28–41; Irfan Hošić, “Zvono Prije Zvona.” *Visura Magazine*. (n.d.): 93-9. https://www.academia.edu/38144489/Zvono_prije_zvona.; Zvono - Priča o Umjetnosti. Video. Svjetlana Živanov, and Nihad Lubovac. Sarajevo: Federalna, 2020. <https://federalna.ba/public/zvono-prica-o-umjetnosti-igpou>.

¹⁶¹ See, for example: Zdenka Badovinac, “An Exhibition About an Exhibition. The Heritage of 1989, Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents,” in *The Heritage of 1989. Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition*. (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija Ljubljana, 2017), n.pag.; Bojana Piškur, “Yugoslav Document(s) Exhibitions,” in *The Heritage of 1989. Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition*. (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija Ljubljana, 2017), n.pag.; Muhamed Karamehmedović, ed., *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta '89*. (Sarajevo: Olimpijski Centar “Skenderija,” 1989); Davor Matičević, “A View of the Eighties. The Eighties – The Way to Remember Them,” in *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta '89*, ed. Muhamed Karamehmedović (Sarajevo: Olimpijski Centar “Skenderija,” 1989), 39–45. Private collection.

levels, with little interest paid to any comparative or integrated treatment.¹⁶² While individual analyses provide some information on the state of the late-Yugoslav art sphere, this text treats it as an integrated whole as opposed to a series of individual milieus. The history of artistic production during the siege of Sarajevo also remains marginal, with Asja Mandić's work on the role of art as an element of "critical resistance" to the Bosnian Serb aggression remaining the leading reference in the field.¹⁶³ Further texts that treat this particular community only do so sporadically, mostly using individual exhibitions or artist histories for illustrative purposes in texts treating cultural production in general. Whereas the study of post-Dayton art history finds itself beyond the scope of this text, it should be noted that the introduction of a methodology based on continuity provides a break from traditional treatment of contemporary art in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a temporally isolated phenomenon.¹⁶⁴

Finally, this dissertation touches upon and contributes to a global art history focused on the intersection between art and war. The Sarajevan case is particularly important as it is one of the few armed conflicts in which artists actively worked within a warzone, instead of producing their paintings and sculptures in hindsight or in a geographically removed space. Through better understanding the Sarajevo art scene, advancements can be made in the study of the changes in post-totalitarian settings in turmoil, the processes of development of new discourses and materials in artworks, or even the functioning of an art scene or community in the absence of a market or full institutional matrix.

¹⁶² See, for example: Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, *Impossible Histories: Historic Avant-Gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes, and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia 1918-1991*; Jelena Pašić, "Devedesete: Borba za kontekst," *Časopis za Suvremena Likovna Zbivanja/ Magazine for Contemporary Visual Arts* (2012): 12–21; Seraina Renz, "'Art and Revolution' – The Student Cultural Center in Belgrade as a Place between Affirmation and Critique," *Kunsttexte.de/Ostblick*, no. 3 (2014): Published online, <https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/handle/18452/8216>; Ana Janevski, "Art and Its Institutional Framework in Croatia After '68," in *1968-1989. Political Upheaval and Artistic Change*, ed. Claire Bishop and Marta Dziewańska (Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, 2009), 50–63. Private collection; Davor Matičević, "A View of the Eighties. The Eighties – The Way to Remember Them.," Marko Ilić, "'A Taster of Political Insult.' The Case of Novi Sad's Youth Tribune" *Third Text*, September 7 (2018): 1–16.

¹⁶³ Asja Mandić, "The Formation of a Culture of Critical Resistance in Sarajevo"; Asja Mandić, "Exhibitions in Damaged and Destroyed Architectural Objects in Besieged Sarajevo: Spaces of Gathering and Socialization."

¹⁶⁴ For literature on specifically post-Dayton visual arts in Sarajevo and its social significance, see, for example: Isabelle De le Court, "A Tale of Two Cities: Post-Traumatic Art in Post-War Sarajevo and Beirut in Cross-Cultural Perspectives" (Ph.D., University of Leeds, 2012); Cynthia Simmons, "Women Engaged/Engaged Art in Postwar Bosnia: Reconciliation, Recovery, and Civil Society," *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, no. 2005 (2010): 51; Silvia Maria Carolo, "Narrating Ars Aevi Re-Envisioning and Re-Shaping the Contemporary Art Museum of Sarajevo in the Urban Space" (M.A., Univeristà Ca'Foscari Venezia, 2016); Danijela Dugandžić, "Politics between Art and Space: Sarajevo after 1995" (Research Cluster on Peace, Memory & Cultural Heritage, 2018); Amila Puzić, "Exhibition as Social Intervention: Annual SCCA-Sarajevo Exhibitions: 'Meeting Point' (1997), 'Beyond the Mirror' (1998), 'Under Construction' (1999)," *Peristil : zbornik radova za povijest umjetnosti* 59, no. 1 (2016): 137–45.

The key to artistic production in times of war is that paintings and drawings have the power to generate physical representations of emotional experiences, creating new spaces for expressing and dealing with the psychological burdens of armed conflict that might not be accessible otherwise.¹⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the long-standing acceptance of “war art” as a major artistic current, chiefly used to describe not only “paintings about battle” but “more importantly about how war and art relate”, has been limited mainly to discussing the works of traditional war artists (whose main goal rested in documenting conflicts) or more propagandistic attempts at influencing public opinion (such as Picasso’s *Guernica*).¹⁶⁶ Sarajevan art historian Azra Begić provides a different definition of war art within the context of siege-time production, emphasizing the reappropriation of new materials and wartime experiences over the documentary value traditionally ascribed to it:

*“The most interesting and the most vital part of the Sarajevo art stage throughout this war is the art firmly anchored in our infernal everyday existence obtaining from it not only inspiration for its ideas and creative flights but also the materials for their realization. That is why I have, at one time, labeled it as war art.”*¹⁶⁷

While the memory of the Second World War is particularly influential in Yugoslav artistic heritage, the predominance of typified “partisan art” and propagandistic materials remains somewhat removed from, if not entirely irrelevant, to the Sarajevan case.¹⁶⁸ Some similarities to the subject at hand can be found in situations where artists also found themselves in confinement, for example as prisoners of P.O.W. camps, or as victims of WWII concentration camps and Ghettos. While much remains unknown due to a lack of source material, some insights on the thematic trends and use of materials can be valuable to understanding better how

¹⁶⁵ Although a thorough examination of art historical literature on the subject of art and war exceeds the scope of this text, the historically significant role of art in conflict has been discussed in a variety of geographical and temporal contexts, ranging from the work of post-World War I artists to earlier works depicting war such as Francisco Goya’s well-known *Disasters of War*. Pamela Blotner, “Art out of Rubble,” in *My Neighbor, My Enemy. Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*, ed. Eric Stover and Harvey M. Weinstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 269–86; Jo Tollebeek et al., eds., *Ravages: l’Art et la Culture en Temps de Conflit* (Leuven: Fonds Mercator, Museum Leuven, 2014).

¹⁶⁶ Laura Brandon, *Art and War* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 3.

¹⁶⁷ Nermina Kurspahić, *Svjedoci Postojanja / Witnesses of Existence. Exhibition Catalogue*. (Sarajevo: Obala Art Centar, 1993), n.pag. National and University Library of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

¹⁶⁸ See, for example: Ivan Jelić, Dunja Rihtman-Augustin, and Vice Zaninović, eds., *Kultura i umjetnost u NOB-u i socijalističkoj revoluciji u Hrvatskoj* (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, 1975); Nevenka Božanić-Bezić, “Likovni umjetnici pri oblasnom narodnooslobodilačkom odboru Dalmacije,” in *Kultura i umjetnost u NOB-u i socijalističkoj revoluciji u Hrvatskoj* (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, 1975), 295–300; Gal Kirn, *The Partisan Counter-Archive: Retracing the Ruptures of Art and Memory in the Yugoslav People’s Liberation Struggle* (De Gruyter, 2020).

artists as individuals deal with the traumatic experience of confinement within violence.¹⁶⁹ The blockade of Leningrad is perhaps the closest analogous historical context to the siege of Sarajevo, where the city's cultural actors also experienced the blurring "the boundary between homefront and battlefront" as their lives became transformed by a lasting conflict.¹⁷⁰ For those artists, their newfound reality pushed them to use their art to both treat personal experiences or as a format for engaging political or practical support.¹⁷¹ The ongoing conflict in Syria can provide another parallel to the situation of Sarajevan artists in the late 1990s, where artists in the country-at-war have been living and working in an active warzone for an extensive period of time, which, in spite of temporary relentment in hostilities, remains in a constant state of precarity and danger.¹⁷²

1.3. DISSERTATION OUTLINE

Roughly transposing Sabine Rutar's *pladoyer* for a Yugoslav history written from the beginning of the state than in its ending, this dissertation begins with a discussion of the Sarajevan art scene on the cusp of Yugoslav dissolution, introducing an increasingly active pre-war art scene and the actors that made up this tightly knit but entirely varied community.¹⁷³ The first chapter therefore begins with the "last Yugoslav exhibition", focusing on the 1987 and 1989 edition of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*, and traces the reactions of the Sarajevan art scene to the growing political instability within cultural circles, and eventually, the advent of war. The next chapter

¹⁶⁹ Luba K. Gurdus, "Reconstruction of an Artist's Life: Genia (Gela) Seksztajn-Lichtensztajn," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 2, no. 2 (1987): 277–87; Joanna K.M. Hanson, "Entertainment and Schooling," in *The Civilian Population and the Warsaw Uprising of 1944* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 235–37.

¹⁷⁰ Cynthia Simmons, "The Culture of the Siege of Leningrad" (Havighurst Symposium, Miami University, March 2003).

¹⁷¹ Some artists such as Pavel Schillingovski continued their artistic practice throughout the siege of Leningrad, painting their city as an urban vector for their personal experiences. Others, such as Ostroumova-Lebedeva used their art for concrete political uses, compiling an art-book by commission of the Smol'yi party as a response to the support received from a Scottish women's organization, for which she received a worker's ration, allowing her to survive the siege. Within the greater field of culture, Solomon Volkov notes that Dimitri Shostakovich's famous *Seventh Symphony* was composed and performed in Leningrad, allowing those in the city to channel their traumas, and exported abroad as a means of communicating the city's wartime realities to a foreign public. See: Polina Barskova, "The Spectacle of the Besieged City: Repurposing Cultural Memory in Leningrad, 1941-1944," *Slavic Review* 69, no. 2 (2010): 340–41, 337; Solomon Volkov, *Saint-Petersbourg. Trois Siècles de Culture*. (Editions du Rocher, 2003), 532.

¹⁷² While some works have appeared in the last few years on the subject, such as the volume edited by Halasa, Omareen and Mahfoud, much remains to be known about the practices and processes behind this artistic production in contemporary Syria. See, for example: Malu Halasa, Zaher Omareen, and Nawara Mahfoud, *Syria Speaks: Art and Culture from the Frontline* (London: Saqi Books, 2014).

¹⁷³ Sabine Rutar, "Versponnene Fäden. Kriegsnarrative Im Jugoslawischen Raum.," in *Traumata Der Transition. Erfahrung Und Reflexion Des Jugoslawischen Zerfalls*. (A. Francke Verlag, 2015), 159.

treats this transition and the beginning of the siege through the lens of “civilization” discourses, tying these narratives to the practical processes of adaption to life under war. The third chapter is devoted to the concept of *art as resistance*, which will be approached through the lens of artistic adaptations to the imposition of extreme violence in everyday life, focusing particularly on the different forms of participation by professional artists in the war effort. The fourth and final chapter will treat the international dimensions of the siege through the relationship between local and foreign artists, specifically invoking conceptualizations based on Sarajevan belonging (or not) to the cultural “Europe”. Finally, a conclusion circles back to how the production of these varied examples of wartime narratives can be used to better address the experiences of the Sarajevans who lived them, opening the question of what they might mean for a contemporary understanding of the social and cultural history of the siege of Sarajevo.

CHAPTER II. DISAPPEARING COUNTRIES AND SHIFTING COMMUNITIES. TRACING THE DISINTEGRATION OF A SUPRANATIONAL YUGOSLAV CULTURAL COMMUNITY WITHIN A SUPRANATIONAL STATE

“Zato se, izložba, najpre, prihvata kao značajan jugoslovenski skup ovih stvaralaca, čija se umetnost ne oslanja na tradiciju, niti na lokalne ideje. ‘Dokumenta ‘89’ je najoptimističniji umetnički susret u ovo vreme velike materijalne krize”

“And therefore, the exhibition, primarily, is accepted as an important Yugoslav meeting of creators, whose art is not based on tradition, nor on local ideas – “Dokumenta ‘89” is the most optimistic artistic meeting in this time of great material crisis.”

Author unknown, printed in “Da se pamti!”, Večernje Novine, June 11, 1989

Although the arrival of war came as a shock to many Sarajevo inhabitants who considered their city, and their republic, as a symbol of peaceful national cohabitation, the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was the result of years of a struggle for control by the hands of nationalist leaders throughout the former Yugoslavia, aided by economic crisis. The processes that accompanied the dismantlement of the state were naturally reflected in cultural policies and developments taking place during Yugoslavia’s final hours, with scholars generally agreeing that by the 1980’s, any semblance of cooperation between the socialist state’s republics had been halted if not outright abandoned.¹⁷⁴ However, a closer look into the Sarajevo visual arts community in the immediate pre-war period, delineated here as the years spanning 1987-1992, provides fresh and slightly refined insights into the cultural processes that accompanied this period. Whereas artistic movements are often defined by the spaces they inhabit, the cleavages and

¹⁷⁴ Whereas Yugoslav artistic and cultural production of the 1980s has received limited scholarly interest, many leading academics have accurately pointed out the erosion of public cultural institutions that dominated the 1980s as a mirror of political shifts and a contribution to the dissolution of the state. See, for example: Andrew Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation*.

transformations that take place within a defined time-and-place tend to overshadow transitional periods that might have more influence than presumed. Understanding how these shifts were experienced by actual citizens is crucial to understanding their experiences in the conflict that ensued, providing insight into artistic reactions to the attack on their city but also into the context from which artists conceptualized their roles in the conflict, whether as individuals or as a collective. Addressing the processes of transition that accompanied the cultural shifts brought on by the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the community at the heart of this dissertation is introduced not as a wartime art scene, but as an art scene which had found itself at war. While providing no fixed answers, this approach lends itself to a few crucial questions that must be asked when addressing the 1990's visual arts: how did this specific community continue to navigate a seemingly disintegrating sphere of a common cultural landscape? In what ways did cultural actors interact with contemporary political debates and the rise of nationalist rhetoric? What effects did the dissolution of the dominant one-party system have on artists, and more crucially, how did they adapt to these changed circumstances?

This section does not treat a specific discourse as of itself, but instead discusses how the concept of a unified Yugoslav common culture was invoked, treated, or denigrated by actors within the failing state at the end of the century. Introducing one of the last pan-Yugoslav cultural events, *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta (Yugoslav Documenta)*, first held in Sarajevo in 1987, as a temporal anchor for the pre-war visual arts community active in the city, this chapter focuses on the second edition of the biennale as a vector for discussing curator-led representations of a common Yugoslav culture and comparing them to external reactions. The surprising contrast between stated curatorial intentions and critical reception outside of the Bosnian republic is read in tandem with the socio-political challenges facing Yugoslav society in this period, suggesting that while fatal cracks in the Yugoslav veneer were clearly visible within the fragmentation of cultural communities, that these divisive sentiments were not nearly as inevitable or fatal within the Sarajevo artistic context as might be expected.

The second section of this chapter describes the aftermath of this last great Yugoslav exhibition, following the Sarajevo artistic community in their country's rocky transition into a short-lived democratic process. Sarajevo's shift away from socialism was accompanied by a political polarization along national lines, as the introduction of a multiparty system in a particularly volatile economic climate created unease amongst the city's cultural community. The artists and art-lovers that frequented the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* actively reacted to these changes while simultaneously maintaining the networks that had made the seminal exhibition possible,

almost unilaterally rejecting nationalist rhetoric while remaining relatively neutral in their own until the elections held in November of 1990. Following the decisive victory of nationalist parties in all Yugoslav elections and the subsequent secessions of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991, Sarajevo visual artists that congregated around the *Collegium Artisticum* became more explicit in their pacifist and anti-nationalist rhetoric while continuing active cooperation with colleagues in other cities and republics. As such, the Sarajevo relationship to a common Yugoslav culture provides a theoretical foundation for later analyses of local interactions with external actors, as well as opening a more nuanced discussion on the divergence of experiences between state-sponsored cultural institutions and independent cultural actor-based networks in the last Yugoslav years.

2.1. “ART AS A PARALLEL CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE”¹⁷⁵ : INTRODUCING A YUGOSLAV COMMON CULTURE AS A DISCURSIVE FRAME

Discussing the role, or even the existence, of a common Yugoslav culture is not a particularly straightforward task: as a concept made up of an array of definitions, meanings and points of departures, the favoring of a state-based intellectual history for its discussion has generally defined it as part of an irrelevant Yugo-nostalgic narrative. Considering that current scholarship on the visual arts of the 1990s in Yugoslavia is almost entirely limited to studies focusing on national cultural production, it is easy to overlook the continued existence of informal networks within Yugoslav visual arts that made up a trans-republic ‘parallel cultural infrastructure’ which existed outside of traditional cultural history of the period.¹⁷⁶ Taking the idea of a common Yugoslav culture not as a marker of identity but as a solution to the concrete social and economic problems that preoccupied the region’s artistic centers, this section introduces the notion of a unified, but supranational Yugoslav culture that, despite expectations continued to

¹⁷⁵ Zdenka Badovinac, “Art as a Parallel Cultural Infrastructure / Legacy of Post War Avantgardes from Former Yugoslavia.”

¹⁷⁶ The term ‘parallel cultural infrastructure’ has been coined by Zdenka Badovinac, and is repurposed here to refer to institutional structures that emerged from actor-based interactions, programs, and networks outside of directly state-sponsored projects. See, for example: Jelena Pašić, “Devedesete: Borba za kontekst”; Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, *Impossible Histories: Historic Avant-Gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes, and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia 1918-1991*; Branislava Adelnović, Branislav Dimitrijević, and Dejan Sretenović, eds., *On Normality: Art in Serbia 1989-2001* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, 2005). Bibliothèque Kadinsky, Centre Pompidou; Ana Janevski, “Art and Its Institutional Framework in Croatia After ’68.”

exist while “for all practical purposes (legislative, economic, cultural), Yugoslavia had already ceased to exist.”¹⁷⁷

Predating the establishment of socialist Yugoslavia by nearly a century, the concept of a unified South-Slav culture emerged in intellectual circles who deemed the differences amongst South-Slavic nations (primarily Croat, Serbs, Slovenes and Bulgarians) to be small enough that they could become inessential with time as a result of multi-cultural synthesis, the basis for the short-lived and troubled Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs that replaced the Habsburg Empire after the first World War.¹⁷⁸ Following the Partisan victory in World War II, the newly established socialist state endorsed the idea of a common Yugoslav culture that merged individual national cultures into a cohesive whole, actively involving itself in the writing of cultural policy aimed at minimizing the nationalist influences and emphasizing a common heritage. The protracted shift towards federalization in the country, cemented in the 1963 constitution, was accompanied by a parallel shift away from political support for the construction of an over-arching Yugoslav culture, and “it was decided that political and economic forces (Titoism and the Yugoslav version of socialism) would be sufficient to hold the state together”, meaning that any previous attempts at constructing “a unified national culture of any kind were more or less abandoned.”¹⁷⁹ The combined impacts of urbanization and access to education “were expected to diminish the salience of national identities as intergroup contact increased, as a shared national history developed”, making any targeted cultural policy essentially obsolete.¹⁸⁰ As such, leaders embraced national particularities and as such delegating cultural policies to individual republics, following the guidelines of self-management.¹⁸¹

By the 1970s, Yugoslav politicians had little interest in an “organized attempt to create an integral Yugoslav culture or identity of the kind endeavored in the 1950s.”¹⁸² Andrew Wachtel refers to this period as one where a “multinational policy guaranteeing separate but equal rights

¹⁷⁷ Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia From the Death of Tito the Fall of Milošević*, 27.

¹⁷⁸ Andrew Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation*, 67.

¹⁷⁹ Andrew Wachtel, “Introduction,” in *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation. Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 9.

¹⁸⁰ Duško Sekulić, Garth Massey, and Randy Hodson, “Who Were the Yugoslavs?,” 85.

¹⁸¹ Andrew Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation*, 174.

¹⁸² Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 298.

to all the national cultures” became the preferred way of dealing with the question, and leaving the development of national cultures to themselves.¹⁸³

Whereas attempts at creating a Yugoslav culture that fused the individual cultures of the country’s constituent nations were hereby clearly doomed to failure, the common culture of the 1980s discussed in this text refers to an informal network of structures conceived to replace or support the ineffective state institutions, separate from conceived identities and lived as a practical, “supranational” culture. Even scholars such as Wachtel acknowledge the existence of this type of transnational common culture that existed in tandem with smaller, national ones, even when pointing to the cultural fragmentation of the Yugoslav state as a key aspect of its dissolution:

*“Still, it is my contention that some version of Yugoslavism – some powerfully fostered ideological defense of an overarching culture whose centripetal force would balance the centrifugal force exerted by the many separate local cultures – was both an essential part of what sustained Yugoslavia in the first place and in the end a necessary condition of its survival as a state.”*¹⁸⁴

The existence of overarching, supranational “parallel institutions” that formed to fill the deficiencies of the Yugoslav state-sponsored cultural program was lived and acknowledged by cultural actors until the end of the century. Publishing the monograph *Jugoslovenstvo Danas* in 1984, Predrag Matvejević refers to the idea not as an ideological category, as it had existed previously, nor “an attitude, a characteristic or affiliation, but a state of being, mutual relationships, forms of a common life in Yugoslavia.”¹⁸⁵ Matvejević underlines the existence and institutional support for individual national cultures, but also suggests that their precise existence is what created Yugoslav culture:

“It lasts with differing intensities from one national environment to another: mutual relations remain marked by attitudes towards the past and the very way in which the past is incorporated into the present. Where nations and cultures touch and communicate with another, especially

¹⁸³ Andrew Wachtel, “Introduction,” 10.

¹⁸⁴ Andrew Wachtel, 5.

¹⁸⁵ Author translation: “Podrazumijevao sam da jugoslavenstvo nije samo stav, obilježje ili pripadnost, nego i stanje stvari, međusobni odnosi, oblici zajedničkog života u Jugoslaviji.” Predrag Matvejević, *Jugoslovenstvo danas. Pitanja kulture* (Zagreb: Globus, 1982), 5,9.

*in the common language, some kind of Yugoslav culture emerges sooner and more spontaneously.”*¹⁸⁶

The existence of these semi-formal institutional structures has continued to be acknowledged by scholars following the disintegration of Yugoslavia, as is the case for Zoran Milutinović. For him, the maintenance of a common cultural identity, or rather the feeling of belonging to a common Yugoslav heritage while simultaneously inhabiting national landscapes, was supported by institutional structures active beyond national divides. Differentiating ideological and political categories of Yugoslav identity from shared lived experiences, Milutinović frames a supranational Yugoslav culture as a category that resulted from practical relationships and cooperation within the South-Slav state.¹⁸⁷

*“If the period between 1960 and 1991, including at least fifteen years of economic austerity not conducive to cultural production, was nevertheless the richest era of cultural history for all Yugoslav national cultures, it is at least partially due to the existence of this supra-national cultural layer.”*¹⁸⁸

Milutinović also touches upon one of the most crucial functions of these cultural networks: qualifying the individual national cultures as “cultures poor in resources”, he explains their precarious position within the global market that means they must “resist domination by the richer and stronger (...), and they struggle for recognition in the wider cultural arena”.¹⁸⁹ As such, banding together to form a cohesive network of institutions and actors functioning in parallel to any state-supported initiatives provided an unmistakable advantage to those participating: access to a larger audience, and hereby economic market, and an atmosphere where individual artists could “avoid the political pressure of their respective republican administrations” and simultaneously engage in dialogue and competition, “without running the risk of being dominated and suffocated.”¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁶ Author translation: “S tim se mora i ubuduće računati: razvoj nacija na ovom tlu nije završen u građanskom društvu. On traje s različitim intenzitetima od jedne nacionalne sredine do druge: uzajamni odnosi ostaju obilježeni stavovima prema prošlost i samim načinom na koji se prošlost uključuje u sadašnjost. Tamo gdje se nacije i kulture međusobno dotiču i saobraćaju jedna s drugom, osobito u zajedničkom jeziku, dolazi prije i spontanije do neke vrste jugoslavenske kulture.” Predrag Matvejević, 70.

¹⁸⁷ Predrag Matvejević, 13.

¹⁸⁸ Zoran Milutinović, “What Common Yugoslav Culture Was, and How Everybody Benefited from It,” 6.

¹⁸⁹ Zoran Milutinović, 1.

¹⁹⁰ Zoran Milutinović, 5.

Whereas the practical mobilization of these types of networks in other cultural fields departs from the scope of this text, its existence within the field of visual arts can be observed in the last three decades of socialist rule. Although any political structures for inter-republic cooperation or exchange were entirely absent, visual artists throughout Yugoslavia constructed an informal structure that allowed them to exchange knowledge, create networks of support and offer access to a larger economic market. Artists moved from their home republics to study at the academies of other capitals, created professional networks which supported artistic exchanges and favored cooperating on projects within the Yugoslav context.¹⁹¹ Created by artists and curators using their collectivity to replace the official, but poorly developed, institutions, this type of supranational cultural sphere is referred to by Zdenka Badinovac as a “parallel cultural infrastructure”.¹⁹² This construct has lent itself to contemporary curatorial practice, mobilized for example in the 2017 catalogue for a reconstructive exhibition of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*. Pointing out the importance of considering a common cultural sphere as a key concept in understanding the Sarajevo exhibition, Bojana Piškur hereby draws upon Matvejević’s claim that “Yugoslavism was more of a feeling of commonness than nationality”, introducing it as largely based on individual relationships and cultural networks rather than any sort of political project.¹⁹³ While not entirely divorced from state-sponsored structures such as the various Academies of Fine Arts or Student Cultural Centers that hosted the most innovative artistic practices of the time, the transnational practices of the Yugoslav art scene in the 1970s and 1980s generally support the existence of this structure, even if it was not universally backed.¹⁹⁴ As such, art historian Slavko Timotijević criticized the notion as a

¹⁹¹ As has been noted by Duško Sekulić et. al. in their study on the failed development of Yugoslav identity, increased urbanization and access to education minimized “cultural barriers” supposed by the authors, supporting the idea that a supranational cultural structure could have emerged through processes other than ideological identification. Considering the routine practice of visual artists leaving their republics to study in neighboring universities, the rapid urbanization felt particularly strongly in BiH and the city’s artists’ extensive professional connections abroad also help explain the strength of a supranational cultural structure in Sarajevo circles. See: Duško Sekulić, Garth Massey, and Randy Hodson, “Who Were the Yugoslavs?,” 85.

¹⁹² Zdenka Badinovac, “Art as a Parallel Cultural Infrastructure / Legacy of Post War Avantgardes from Former Yugoslavia.”

¹⁹³ Bojana Piškur, “Yugoslav Document(s) Exhibitions,” n.pag.

¹⁹⁴ The emergence of the Yugoslav *New Art Practice* and its relationship to the socialist ethos of self-management has been discussed in the work of Marko Ilić, whose analysis provides a stable foundation for understanding the fluctuating nature of local, regional and international relationships in Yugoslavia. See: Marko Ilić, *A Slow Burning Fire: The Rise of the New Art Practice in Yugoslavia* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021).

culmination of authoritarian policies imposed from above, and therefore also fundamentally incompatible with innovative artistic production.¹⁹⁵

The position of Sarajevan and BiH artists within this supranational community in the late 1980s remains understudied and perhaps even veers into the realm of the contradictory. Thanks to its relatively ethnically diverse population and its rapid economic growth in the 1950s, Bosnia & Herzegovina still enjoyed its status as a symbol of Yugoslav prosperity driven by “brotherhood and unity” near the end of the 20th Century.¹⁹⁶ At the same time, it was also viewed by the Yugoslav and local cultural milieu as somewhat a provincial and stagnant artistic scene that tended to follow the politically preferred modernist trends, particularly when compared to the controversial and eclectic arts scenes of other regional capitals.¹⁹⁷ The death of Tito in 1980 sufficiently relaxed political interest in artistic developments to allow for a new wave of innovative practices. This was particularly relevant for the cultural scene in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where party control over cultural life was comparatively high up until this point.¹⁹⁸ Its influence within the Yugoslav cultural space was therefore relatively limited until the 1980s, when local movements such as the locally influential *Zvono* collective began its activities, for the first time bringing the visual arts to the public sphere.¹⁹⁹

Nevertheless, the often-emphasized Sarajevan isolation was not absolute – many of those active during the turn of the century had received at least part of their education in Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana (or Prague), and had extensive experiences of artistic exchange beyond the borders

¹⁹⁵ Slavko Timotijević, “Je li bilo jugoslovenskog kulturnog prostora,” *Danas*, 2014, sec. Dnevni list Danas, published online, <https://www.danas.rs/nedelja/je-li-bilo-jugoslovenskog-kulturnog-prostora/>.

¹⁹⁶ Together with the Vojvodina region, Bosnia represented one of the most nationally diverse areas within Yugoslavia, housing “a larger than average proportion of people identifying as Yugoslav”, but whose inhabitants did not necessarily consider themselves ideologically part of a common cultural identity. Duško Sekulić et. al., “Who Were the Yugoslavs?,” 84.

¹⁹⁷ Marko Ilić, “The Miracle of Miracles. Sarajevo and the Last Episode of the ‘Yugoslav’ Contemporary Art Scene,” 252.

¹⁹⁸ Marko Ilić, 254.

¹⁹⁹ The artist collective *Zvono* (*Bell*) is named after the café in which the group of artists first began meeting and later organizing their first exhibitions. The group was particularly noteworthy for their interventions into the public space in the form of performances or happenings, in part reminiscent of the artistic experimentation taking place in other Yugoslav republics while remaining distinctly anchored in Sarajevan spaces and Sarajevan humor. The group appeared at the same time as the *New Primitivism* cultural movement that gained popularity in the city, involving a wide range of cultural workers, from musicians to actors. For more on *Zvono*, see: Irfan Hošić, “Zvono Prije Zvona”; Sandra Bradvić, “Exhibition History Beyond Western and Eastern Canon Formation: A Methodological Proposal Based on the Example of the Art Group Zvono”; *Zvono - Priča o Umjetnosti*.

of the Republic of BiH.²⁰⁰ Sarajevo received transmissions of the popular *TV Galerija* program hosted in Belgrade by Dunja Blažević,²⁰¹ and exhibitions such as the *XII Jesenji Salon* (*XII Autumn Salon*) organized in Banja Luka brought participants from different republics to BiH – the catalogue of the latter specifically stating that geopolitical and economic factors will not be discussed.²⁰² The integration of Sarajevo artists into a larger Yugoslav cultural sphere was hereby not based on specific political projects, but instead the result of quite practical circumstances: as artists traveled, exchanged, and interacted with one another, they simultaneously constructed networks amongst themselves, resulting in overlapping practices and a shared heritage that took the form of collaborative exhibitions, personal connections and a common space of socialization, specifically important for Sarajevo actors due to their marginal economic and cultural position on a regional and global scale. In other words, a Yugoslav supranational common culture was not a product of political will or a question of identity, but resulted from strategies of fulfilling the practical needs of cultural producers that inhabited it. As such, this chapter argues that acknowledgement of this supranational cultural sphere is critical to understanding artistic reactions to the early signs of the Yugoslav state's dissolution, questioning the accepted historical narrative that the strengthening of nationalist rhetoric within individual national cultural spheres automatically represented the physical and cultural decline of the state.

²⁰⁰ Whereas regular travel across republic lines was not necessarily common in Yugoslavia, the majority of Sarajevo artists had spent significant time studying at the other republics' universities. The ALU was only opened in 1972, and until the 1990s, many artists chose to continue their post-graduate education in the other artistic centers. This meant that the artists living in Sarajevo also had an above-average connection to those outside of their own circles compared to fellow citizens, partially reflective of their position within a social elite.

²⁰¹ The *TV Galerija* program was available across Yugoslavia, even being transmitted in Skopje despite the city's similar marginal position. While the actual viewership is difficult to assess and might have been minimal for the Yugoslav republics where the visual arts received less recognition, the presence of this transmission also suggests a conscious effort on the part of Belgrade producers to connect with audiences outside of the major artistic centers. The monography on the subject is also notably published in cooperation with different local organizations in four different artistic centers: Novi Sad, Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb. Dunja Blažević, *TV Galerija 1984-1990...: Političke Prakse (Pos) Jugoslavenske Umjetnosti* (Novi Sad; Belgrade; Sarajevo; Zagreb: kuda.org; Prelom kolektiv; SCCA-pro.ba; Što, kako i za koga -WHW, 1991), n.pag. Bibliothèque Kadinsky, Centre Pompidou.

²⁰² The *XII Jesenji Salon*, organized in 1985, was held under a rather progressive theme favoring new materials and rhythms that would herald a revitalized artistic era. Despite this positive attitude, the exhibition's selector, Irina Subotić, clearly states that she does not speak of "geopolitical and economic factors". This suggests that the organizers were aware of the economic decay and political populism plaguing Yugoslavia already years before the organization of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*, and that the subject was seen as artistically relevant, but simultaneously treated these issues as exterior or irrelevant to their individual curatorial practice. Irina Subotić, *XII Jesenji salon: materijal kao izazov* (Banja Luka: Umjetnička Galerija Banja Luka, 1985), 5. Bibliothèque Kadinsky, Centre Pompidou.

2.2. THE LAST STAND OF A COMMON CULTURE, OR THE *JUGOSLOVENSKA DOKUMENTA* AT THE END OF AN ERA (1987-1989)

Broadly remembered as one of the last extensive attempts at the maintenance of a common Yugoslav cultural sphere, the second edition of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* offers an ideal starting point for understanding the ways in which cultural actors interacted with the political reality they inhabited at the end of the 1980s. The first edition of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* was held in a context of relative peace interspersed with the first signs of increasing insecurity, heralded by the nationalist discourses that began leaking into the Yugoslav and Bosnian public forum.²⁰³ The event itself was not a specific response to any discernable question, but the cumulative result of a series of over eighty individual exhibitions organized by the artists in the same space between 1984-1987, with the hope “that their exhibitions series would create a more lasting platform for dynamic communications between artists, beyond any strictly local framework.”²⁰⁴ With the intention of “introducing the Sarajevan public to the work of fellow artists from across the federation”, the artist-curator trio of Aleksandar Saša Bukvić, Jusuf Hadžifejzović and Radoslav Tadić used their experience and contacts to host the first pan-Yugoslav biennale in the 6,000 square meter halls of the Sarajevan Collegium Artisticum gallery.²⁰⁵ Financing the initiative through their own means, the trio was able to invite 140

²⁰³ For example, the Draft Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) was leaked to the press in 1986, a year before the first *Dokumenta* took place. The document at hand “contained economic critiques tracing the beginnings of decentralization” and introduced the Serbian “national question” into the political arena for the first time. Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 325–26.

²⁰⁴ Zdenka Badovinac, “An Exhibition About an Exhibition. The Heritage of 1989, Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents.” See also: Zorica Vlačić, “Jugoslovenska Dokumenta ’87,” *Oslobodjenje*, December 5, 1987, Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁰⁵ The Collegium Artisticum is a state-owned gallery opened in April 1975, situated in the Skenderija shopping complex in the heart of Sarajevo. The space was named after a short-lived artistic movement of the same name, established in 1939 by prominent left-wing artists including Vojo Dimitrijević, Oskar Danon and Jahiel Finci. The group was promptly banned by the Kingdom of Yugoslavia on political grounds and its proximity to socialist and communist movements. The gallery in question is host of BiH’s three major professional cultural organizations – *Udruženje Likovnih Umjetnika BiH* (Association of Fine Artists of BiH - ULUBIH), *Udruženje Likovnih Umjetnika Primijenjenih Umjetnosti i Dizajnera BiH* (Association of Applied Artists and Designers of BiH – ULUPUBIH), and the *Asocijacija Arhitekata BiH* (Association of Architects of BiH – AABIH). “Collegium Artisticum,” Sarajevo.travel, accessed March 29, 2022, <https://sarajevo.travel/ba/sta-raditi/collegium-artisticum/144>.

artists from all of Yugoslavia, despite a severe lack of funding which was not sufficient to cover the expenses necessary for printing posters and catalogues.²⁰⁶

The critical reception of this first *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* was overwhelmingly positive: heralded to be “one of the biggest Yugoslav exhibitions” to have been organized in the city that had hosted the Winter Olympic Games only a few years prior, it received mostly praise from outside of Bosnian-Herzegovinian borders.²⁰⁷ The organizers spent considerable effort on publicizing the event, placing characteristic bright-yellow posters adorned with large purple spheres across “every available space, every wall, pillar and fence that could be used for advertisement.”²⁰⁸ As such, the Zagreb-based newspaper *Večernji List* assured its readers that all of Sarajevo could “notice that something important was happening in the city, even if it personally did not interest them.”²⁰⁹ The event was significant not so much for its popularity in the city, but rather for what it represented: according to Hadžifejzović, the exhibition was conceived “out of a need of establishing a Sarajevo arts scene, but also, an arts scene on a Yugoslav level that will in this environment, an environment with a relatively short artistic tradition, in some way play an educational role.”²¹⁰ The Sarajevo art scene was reliant on its neighbors in other republics, but also was clearly in the process of positioning itself as an emerging artistic center within the Yugoslav sphere. Therefore, the introduction of a *Yugoslav Documenta* fulfilled the dual role of strengthening the local position within the federal whole, as well as providing an opportunity for professional advancement in an international context. This is also clearly communicated by the press at the time, for example:

“Because the setting up of such a large exhibition in the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, an exhibition of true Yugoslav significance, which should influence the affirmation outside the

²⁰⁶ Marko Ilić, “The Miracle of Miracles. Sarajevo and the Last Episode of the ‘Yugoslav’ Contemporary Art Scene,” 282.

²⁰⁷ Author translation: “(...) jedne od najvećih jugoslovenskih izložbi koja je kod nas ikada organizovana.” Z. Kostović, “Traganje za savremenošću,” *Večernje Novine*, May 5, 1987, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁰⁸ Curiously, the author of the article in question referred to the event as the second Yugoslav Documenta, even though it appears he was indeed writing about the 1987 edition. Author translation: “Žuti plakati s velikim ljubičastim točkama bili su izlijepljeni na svakakvom slobodnom prostoru, svakom zidu, stupu, ogradi koja se mogla upotrijebiti za oglašavanje.” D. Jendrić, “(Ne)Propagandni šok,” *Večernji List*, August 1, 1987, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁰⁹ Author translation: “(...) primijetiti da se u gradu događa nešto važno, makar ga to osobno i ne zanimalo.” D. Jendrić, n.pag.

²¹⁰ Author translation: „ (...) iz potrebe za uspostavljanjem sarajevske likovne scene, ali, scene jugoslavenskoj razini koja će u ovoj sredini, sredini s relativno kratkom likovnom tradicijom, na neki način odigrati i edukativnu ulogu” Ljiljana Domić, “Interventna izložba,” *Vjesnik*, May 31, 1987, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

borders of our country, is significant from the standpoint of recognizing the need for creative unification of our already 'fragmented' cultural milieus."²¹¹

Already at its conception, the *Dokumenta* represented a conscious effort to counteract the lack of resources of individual republics mentioned by Milutinović, affirming the necessity of a unified cultural sphere in the face of global art markets. Not just participating but actively creating a space specifically intended for Yugoslav common culture, organizers did so with truly generalized support even in 1987. Named after the famed Kassel *Documenta*²¹², the event's role as an antidote to the lack of state support to cultural initiatives, and therefore the absence of a true art market within the socialist state coupled with an inaccessibility of global markets can even be surmised from the title of the exhibition.²¹³

²¹¹ Author translation: "Jer, i postavljanje ovako velike izložbe u glavnom gradu Bosne i Hercegovine, izložbe istinskog jugoslovenskog značaja, koja bi morala uticati i na afirmaciju van granica naše zemlje, značajno je sa stanovišta koje priznaje potrebu stvaralačkog sjedinjavanja naših već podosta "razdrobljenih" kulturnih miljea." Z. Kostović, "Traganje Za Savremenošću," n.pag.

²¹² Created at the end of WWII, the *Documenta* exhibition was meant to showcase new and radical art from around the world in reaction to the violent cleansing of contemporary art during the Nazi regime. The exhibition is organized every five years, with the current edition taking place during the summer of 2022. The name *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* is commonly translated into English as *Yugoslav Documents*. However, as the name of the exhibition on which it was inspired is almost never referred to as anything else than *Documenta*, the choice has been made to introduce a new translation of *Yugoslav Documenta*.

²¹³ Zdenka Badovinac, "An Exhibition About an Exhibition. The Heritage of 1989, Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents", n.pag.



Figure 1. Poster advertisements for the 1987 edition of the Jugoslovenska Dokumenta on a walkway next to the Sarajevarian riverside, with the Academy of Fine Arts in the background. These advertisements were apparently visible throughout the city in prominent locations and would have informed the many passersby of the event's existence, even if they themselves were not particularly interested in the visual arts. Image reprinted from "Jugoslovenska Dokumenta. Sarajevo, kristalna sjećanja" by Mustafa Hadžiibrahimpasić-Mujo, Zagreb: *Polet*, May 22, 1987, n.pag. Photographer unknown. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

While documentation of the round-table discussion included in that year's program is unavailable, it garnered at least some interest in the press concerning its focus on the "local-national-universal" dimensions of the gathered works, and more pointedly, the "the relation of domestic art in regards to foreign currents, the question of its identity."²¹⁴ These discussions allegedly touched upon a variety of topics, ranging from Zoran Gavrić's proclamation of an end of an epoch by "Hegelian death of art" to discussions on the Yugoslav quasi-traditional position within the international art sphere, to which the *Yugoslav Documenta* was antithetically

²¹⁴ Zorica Vlačić, "Jugoslovenska Dokumenta '87," *Oslobodjenje*, May 7, 1987, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

situated. However, the emphasis of these conversations seems to have regularly returned to the poor material support for the visual arts in Yugoslavia, resulting in the fields' marginal position in society.²¹⁵

Considering that this first Sarajevoan *Dokumenta* did not take place in a political vacuum, it is imperative to examine the context in which the idea for a pan-Yugoslav biennale was conceived. Opening only months after the breaking of the notorious "Agrokomerc" corruption scandal, where alleged financial mismanagement of a major agricultural company by director Fikret Abdić implicated leading figures of Bosnian politics, contributing to a mounting atmosphere of societal distrust in political leadership.²¹⁶ Only months after the closing of the 1987 *Yugoslav Documenta*, Slobodan Milošević ousted the moderate politician Ivan Stambolić from his post as president of the Serbian Socialist Republic, consolidating his hold over the Serbian Central Committee and paving the way for the rise of Serb nationalist that would eventually dismantle the state.²¹⁷ Even within the field of culture, scandal and infamy accompanied the first edition of a Yugoslav biennale: the notorious "Poster Scandal," featuring a winning entry of the Slovenian *Neue Slowenische Kunst* group in a state-sponsored poster competition that was revealed to have been a Nazi-redesign divided art critics on its implications and meanings.²¹⁸ In Bosnia, the years 1987-1989 were marked in artistic circles by increasing attention to the political fragmentation that had begun to become apparent in the

²¹⁵ N.n., "Od lokalnog do univerzalnog," *Vjesnik*, May 14, 1987, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive; Silva Čeh, "Razstava Jugoslovanski Dokumenti 87," *Delo*, May 14, 1987, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²¹⁶ Xavier Bougarel, *Bosnie, Anatomie d'un Conflit*, 161; Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 341–42.

²¹⁷ Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 330.

²¹⁸ The scandal in question, as well as the *Neue Slowenische Kunst* movement and the associated artistic group IRWIN shocked many Yugoslavs, for whom any use of imagery reminiscent of fascism was not only a political faux pas but a visceral insult to their own political sensitivities. However, claims that the group sympathized with Nazi ideology are as misguided as they are understandable considering the group's chosen aesthetic, which was used primarily to critique the totalitarian nature of the Yugoslav state. This Slovenian movement, as well as its political affiliations, will be briefly discussed in Chapter IV. See, for example: Marko Ilić, "The Miracle of Miracles. Sarajevo and the Last Episode of the 'Yugoslav' Contemporary Art Scene," 387.

federation, but whose problems were seen as far from unsolvable.²¹⁹ The fact that artist-organizers, artist-participants, the critics and the press all participated by taking the first *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* at face value is therefore noteworthy, suggesting that this period was dominated in Yugoslavia by scandals that were more reflections of the socio-political decay rather than the cultural decay.

Whereas the first edition of the *Yugoslav Documenta* was seen as the beginning of a new long-term project with serious potential, the second and final edition of the biennial event was even grander. Showcasing nearly 600 pieces by 189 artists from all corners of the Yugoslav state in the very heart of Sarajevo, the initiative was continued now by only two of the three original organizers, Jusuf Hadžifejzović and Radoslav Tadić. Continuing to profess their aim of creating a platform for Yugoslav artists to showcase their work in a professional framework similar to those available to Western creatives, the organizers maintained a curatorial program that endeavored to encompass all of Yugoslavia's most recognizable and influential trends.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Most catalogues held at the National Gallery of BiH from the period 1987-1989 contain little mention of rising political tensions in the Yugoslav federation. Some, like the text for the 1989 exhibition of the Association of Fine Artists of Banja Luka (*Društvo likovnih umjetnika Banja Luka*) completely omitted any mention of mounting instability - an approach also common in texts for exhibitions taking place in Sarajevo city between 1992-1996. Others, like a show held in Mostar, point to reigning material and cultural scarcity in the period (1989). Ješa Denegri was perhaps the most willing to openly speak about the problems plaguing late-stage Yugoslavia in relation to its artistic scene, directly referring to the "crises of leftist ideologies" and the "rise of irrational currents" and conservative economic and political forces that impact developments in the avant-garde scene. See, for example: Rade Prelević, *Mostarsko Ljeto '89* (Mostar: Ekspozitura Umjetničke Galerije BiH Mostar, 1989). Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina; Ljiljana Ševo, *Izložba - Društvo Likovnih Umjetnika Banja Luka* (Banja Luka: Društvo Likovnih Umjetnika Banja Luka, 1989). Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina; Ješa Denegri, *Susreti Razlika Umjetnosti Pri Kraju Osamdesetih* (Zenica: Muzej Grada Zenice Likovna Galerija, 1989), 1. Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

²²⁰ Zorica Vlačić, "Aktuelni trenutak jugoslovenske likovne umjetnosti," *Prosvjetni list*, May 1987, 12, Opa Foundation, Collegium Artisticum Archive.



Figure 2. Second edition of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*, exhibition view. Visitors mingle as a camera crew films the opening of the event. Whereas the full size of the exhibition is not visible in this picture, one can see that the space is much larger than the section in question. Image reprinted from “The Heritage of 1989. Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition”, Ljubljana: *Moderna Galerija Ljubljana*, 2017, n.pag. Photography by Jane Štravs. Courtesy of Jane Štravs.

Politically unpronounced yet inherently integrated into and reliant on a supranational cultural community, the exhibition in question became a focal point for discussion surrounding not only the quality of its artefacts, but also elicited spirited debate inextricably linked to the socio-political context of a disappearing Yugoslavia. Departing from a strict reading of official discourses, this section will focus on the hosts’ attitudes towards the (non-) employment of culturally political tools, their implicit support for the maintenance of the supranational Yugoslav cultural sphere and the critiques of external reviewers, who overwhelmingly objected to its role despite never truly addressing the core of their objections. In this section, the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* actively plays the role of an artistic proxy to contemporaneous

political developments, mirroring how supranationally-minded cultural elites functioned in an increasingly hostile context.

2.2.1 FRAMINGS OF A YUGOSLAV EVENT. THE *JUGOSLOVENSKA DOKUMENTA* AS UNDERSTOOD BY ITS ORGANIZERS

By the time the Collegium Artisticum opened its doors to welcome the first visitors of the biennale, the dismantling of the socialist one-party communist state had been well on the way. The increasingly hostile political climate fueled by Slobodan Milošević's infamous oratory production at the Kosovo Polje was accompanied by the appearance of formal nationalist parties in the Bosnian political landscape, exacerbating nationalist tensions.²²¹ Further north, growing hostility brewing between Slovenian leadership and the federal government over economic reforms resulted in a blocked budget for 1988.²²² Meanwhile, newly-elected around the same time as Kosovo Polje incident, Croat prime minister Ante Marković did his best to rescue the Yugoslav Federation from collapse through the implementation of drastic economic reforms.²²³

Amidst these shifts, the artistic landscape of Yugoslavia did not remain unaffected. The *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*, as one of the "last Yugoslav exhibitions", was organized in the thick of a crisis whose politics extended into the realm of culture. The exhibition itself was not only a simple showcase: it was organized with the aim of integrating Sarajevo as a regional artistic capital, a position it had long envied of the Belgrade-Ljubljana-Zagreb axis which dominated Yugoslav cultural production up until then. As such, the event addressed one of the fundamental problems that surrounded the cultural sphere at the time. Sarajevo artists, like

²²¹ Taking place only three months before the opening of the Sarajevo biennale, a speech delivered by Slobodan Milošević at the 600 anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo Polje openly expressed his desire for the unity of Serbs and Yugoslavia, as well as a promise of armed conflict if this unity should be threatened. This infamous speech came on the heels of an amendment to the Serbian constitution (1989), which effectively stripped the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina of their autonomy. The measure resulted in a hunger strike and wide-spread protests by miners in Kosovo, which spread to general unrest as the internal struggle in the SKJ continued reshaping the concept of the federation. See, for example: Andrew Wachtel and Christopher Bennett, "The Dissolution of Yugoslavia," in *Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies. A Scholar's Initiative.*, ed. Charles Ingrao and Thomas A. Emmert (West Lafayette, Ind.: United States Institute of Peace Press. Purdue University Press, n.d.), 30–34; Tomić, "From 'Yugoslavism' to (Post)Yugoslav Nationalisms," 278; Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 339–41.

²²² Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 335.

²²³ Hilde Katrine Haug, 340–41.

many of their counterparts, functioned as part of a hybrid Yugoslav cultural community that had steadily developed outside of the political sphere. The creation of a federal system that enshrined the rights of the six south-Slav republics (and later those of the autonomous provinces and regions of Vojvodina and Kosovo-Metohija) centralized political power under the Communist Party but left cultural policies in the hands of national governments. The push towards more expansive federalization, defended particularly in a new 1974 constitution that emphasized the self-management principle and increasing republic autonomy, meant that in practice local cultural institutions retained more power over cultural policies than state-wide projects.²²⁴ As a result, the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo (ALU) only opened in 1972, meaning that previous generations of artists generally received their formal education in Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana or Prague. While many of them would return to the Bosnian capital following their studies, the lack of an institutionalized cultural system in Sarajevo meant that artistic developments lagged behind the innovative movements that had begun to crystalize throughout the federation while also being entirely aware of them.

The Sarajevo biennale is perhaps one of the best case studies through which one can address the characteristics of a common cultural sphere in Yugoslavia, not in the least because of its overt support for such a structure. Emphasizing its existence in spite of, and not because of, political pressure, Slovenian curator Zdenka Badovinac anchors her interpretation on the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* within this context. According to her, “the citizens of Yugoslavia really did construct it from below, as something held in common, and they did this through countless interactions that were encouraged by the existing political order as long as they did not conflict with it.”²²⁵ Even though it took place at a point when political tensions were becoming increasingly visible within regional cultural spheres, the second edition of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* was presented as an entirely cultural and not political event that emphasized the qualities of the works being shown while downplaying any tensions that arose from such a framing. The organizers took special care to avoid references to the changing socio-political landscape in their catalogue, focusing on the artworks themselves, but nevertheless subtly entrenched their initiative as a product of a supranationally organized cultural community.²²⁶ Actively reaffirming the notion of a generational repetition of supranational

²²⁴ Djordje Tomić, “From ‘Yugoslavism’ to (Post)Yugoslav Nationalisms,” 276.

²²⁵ Zdenka Badovinac, “An Exhibition About an Exhibition. The Heritage of 1989, Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents,” n.pag.

²²⁶ Bojana Piškur, “Yugoslav Document(s) Exhibitions,” unknown.

culture, the discourse presented by the organizers of the event was decidedly neutral and almost pacifying in intent: the focus was clearly on art, and not on the politics of the artists.

Thematically, the curatorial selection suggests a direct focus on dominant art movements rather than any selection based on subject matter or orientation. Dominant post-modernist trends of New Painting, New Expressionism, Neo-Geo, the New Informel, New Sculpture and New Constructivism were all represented on the walls of the Skenderija center, while any direct references to ongoing social issues were omitted from the collection.²²⁷ At the same time, the selection does not seem to be uniformly sanitized either. The works of brothers Mladen and Sven Stilinović, featured in the pages of the catalogue, both appeared to mobilize imagery associated with the Yugoslav state in uneasy, unnerving compositions. Hereby, an installation piece by Mladen Stilinović, titled “*Boje smrti*” (“*Colours of death*”) is made up of an arrangement of individual, rectangular supports of varying sizes and includes an assortment of unsettling shapes, crosses, triangles and, specifically, a smattering of red stars. Similarly, Sven Stilinović’s painting, titled “*Zastava*” (“*Flag*”) depicts a deep-red triangle superimposed with an imposing firearm. Neither work engages with politics – in fact, they could be considered as apolitical on the surface. However, the candid combination of symbolic meanings (whether a red star or the concept of a flag) with visual compositions that offer the viewer little comfort create an imagery that has an actively disruptive or alienating effect, suggesting that while the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* was clearly a pan-Yugoslav exhibition, it was also not an entirely uncritical one.²²⁸

²²⁷ Zdenka Badovinac, “An Exhibition About an Exhibition. The Heritage of 1989, Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents,” n.pag.

²²⁸ Muhamed Karamehmedović, *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* '89., 144–45.

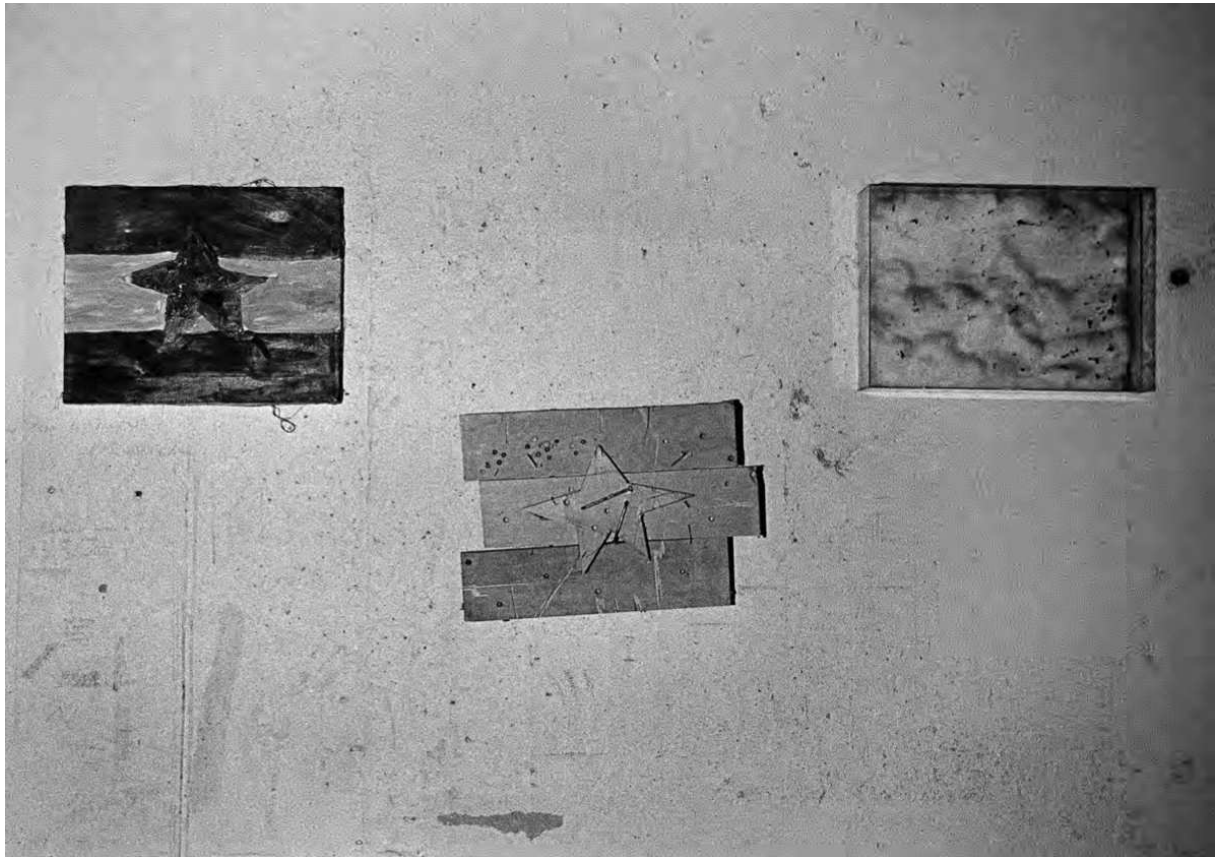


Figure 3. Installation view “Zastava” by Sven Stilinović, 1985. Featuring a triptych of roughly constructed wooden panels, a makeshift Yugoslav flag is given three uneven faces, one of which features a simple empty pane. A recognizable symbol for all Yugoslavs, these new iterations of the country’s flag are uneven and lopsided, suggesting a distorted meaning to the viewer. As such, without explicitly stating dissent, Stilinović produces an alienating effect for a viewer to whom only clear-cut versions of such an image would have been a familiar sight. Image reprinted from “The Heritage of 1989. Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition”, Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija Ljubljana, 2017, n.pag. Photography by Jane Štravs. Courtesy of Jane Štravs.

Similarly, the employ of religious imagery was also not a condition of categorical exclusion, even if traditional religious, or specifically national(ist) art was not present in the catalogue. Works such as “Izgun iz raja” (“Expulsion from paradise”) by Sergej Kapus from Ljubljana or “Raspeće levantiskog troroga” (“The crucifixion of the Levantine three-horn”) Petar Djuza from Priština overtly coopt biblical themes in their practice, but do so in differing ways.²²⁹ Any visual reference to biblical storylines is lost to the viewer in the abstract style of Kapus’s painting, and is recognizable only from the title alone. On the other hand, Djuza’s mystical style

²²⁹ Muhamed Karamehmedović, 169,177.

merging the satanic with the holy, is reminiscent of the metaphysical style of the Serbian Mediala group, which by the 1980s openly engaged with nationalist discourses.²³⁰ While the insistence on Yugoslav unity remained at the core of the exhibition, its organizers did not blindly exclude so-called national art based on religious mythology, but did appear to have a preference for works that approached the subject in an abstract manner.

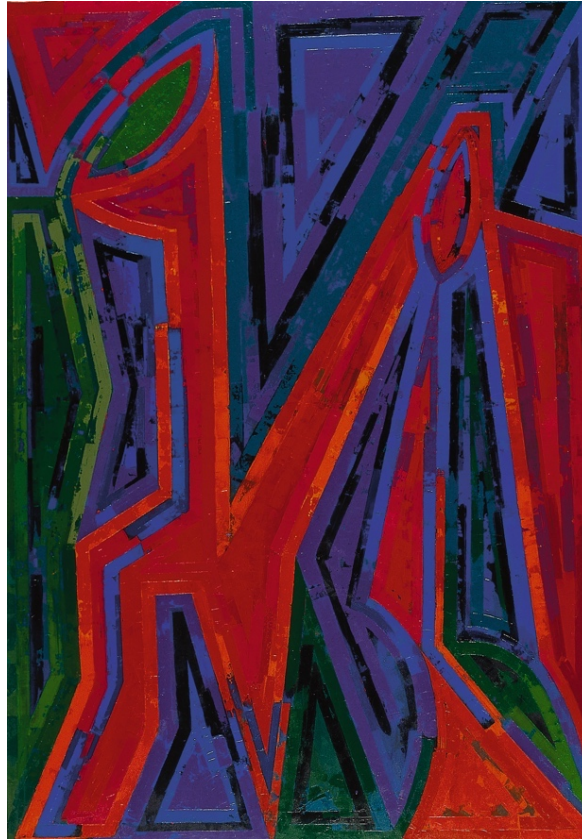


Figure 4. “Izgun iz raja” by Sergej Kapus, 1989. Courtesy of Sergej Kapus.

This delicate balance between political neutrality and practical support for an overarching community can be found most strikingly in the exhibition catalogue. An impressive 270-page volume, the publication featured colored photographs of representative works of all the

²³⁰ While the political leanings of the artist do extend beyond the scope of this text, it appears that Djuza remains politically active and outspoken as a public figure. See: “Petar Djuza, profesor FLU u Zvečanu: Carina i na srpske svetinje,” *Bašta Balkana Magazin* (blog), January 7, 2019, <https://www.bastabalkana.com/2019/01/petar-djuza-profesor-flu-u-zvecanu-carina-i-na-srpske-svetinje/>.

included artists and, according to Jusuf Hadžifejzović himself, was created with the explicit intention to “circulate around the world.”²³¹ The album was unusually expensive for the time, costing 50 million dinars in a market plagued by rising inflation, but appears to have been received as a suitable overview of contemporaneous Yugoslav artistic production. According to Filo Filipović, an artist from Cetinje, “it was worth it to exhibit at ‘*Dokumenta*’ if only to be included in a catalogue such as this one.”²³² Even the critics whose texts featured in the catalogue were representative of the Yugoslav republics, including Muhamed Karamehmedović (BiH), Ješa Denegri, Tomaž Brejc (SR) and Davor Matičević (HR).

The publication was created with serious forethought and curated as carefully as the art-objects which it described, making it an ideal reflection of how those in charge wished to *present* their creative initiative. Printed on high-quality paper with the involvement of numerous international sponsors, it included English-language translations of its text and full-resolution images of the artworks, facilitating international distribution. It is as professional a catalogue as could have been, suggesting not only that the organizer’s ambitiousness, but also supporting the notion that one of the primary goals of the event was truly to provide a showcase of Yugoslav artists that would be able to perform on the Western art-market.

The texts featured in the publication give credence to the idea that while the organizers of the event saw themselves as operating within a common cultural sphere, they were unwilling to openly engage in discussions deemed overly political. Some of these clues appear in the things that are not clearly articulated – all four texts avoid a direct discussion of what Yugoslav art or culture *actually* constitutes, despite also openly reporting on a Yugoslav exhibition. Referring to a selection that is linked as much to local trends as to over-arching developments in the socialist state, the authors avoid openly discussing whether or not this supranational cultural space actually exists while actively operating in it. As was noted by Bojana Piškur, an emphasis on the existence of a “common cultural space” or “Yugoslav tradition” can be found in Muhamed Karamehmedović’s essay, present in his text as an undeniable fact instead of something that must be discussed or argued.²³³ Similarly, both Ješa Denegri and Davor

²³¹ P. Gašparević, “Likovna sinteza,” *Večernje Novine*, June 29, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²³² Author translation: “(…) da se na „Dokumentima” isplatilo izlagati samo zato da bi se čovjek našao u takvom katalogu”. Zlatko Kostović, “Tvrde, Lijepe Stvari,” *AS Sarajevo*, July 7, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²³³ Bojana Piškur, “Yugoslav Document(s) Exhibitions,” n.pag.

Matičević clearly refer to a collective Yugoslav art space, in which “Yugoslav artists” create “Yugoslav art.”²³⁴

Printing Ješa Denegri’s influential “*Razlozi za drugu liniju*” (“Reasons for the second line”), the catalogue also features one of the most prominent art historical texts that conceptualized Yugoslav art on a supranational scale. Denegri introduces the concept of the “second line”, a theoretical framework which not only indicates a separation between the state apparatus and the cultural sphere, but also argues the existence of an over-arching Yugoslav series of tendencies which rejected state-preferred modernist aesthetics in favor of intertwined, if nowhere near identical, Yugoslav artistic trends. Referring to individual artistic collectives, such as EXIT 51 or Gorgona, that functioned primarily in a defined geographical territory, he presents the case that their influence far exceeded the borders of individual republics and instead contributed to the construction of this common, Yugoslav, “other line”. The inclusion of this text demonstrates a growing institutionalization of the artistic *second line* within the public sphere and mobilized the burgeoning infrastructure based on an extensive network of artists, critics, publishers, and galleries that had begun to emerge over the last decades in the Yugoslav space.²³⁵

This is not to say that texts featured in the catalogue only recognized over-arching Yugoslav traditions. Davor Matičević discusses the Sarajevan visual art scene while referring to the “influences of other environments”, mentioning its particular styles while admitting that “Yugoslav art” nevertheless holds specific regional characteristics that make it necessary to speak of “the milieu” as opposed to multiple milieus.²³⁶ As much of the literature dealing with art in the Balkans focuses on the more prominent art scenes, Zagreb-Belgrade-Ljubljana, it is interesting to note a renewed attempt at bringing other cities and capitals into the local art history. The emergence of new artistic centers in places not known for their prestige in the visual arts, such as Macedonia or Montenegro, Dalmatia or the Mediterranean town of Udine, is incorporated into the grander narrative of less provincial artistic scenes. It is interesting to note that the regionality of these emerging spaces is clearly critiqued. This could either be interpreted as a desire to have them harmonized more closely into the over-arching common

²³⁴ Ješa Denegri, “The Reason for the Other Line,” n.pag.; Davor Matičević, “A View of the Eighties. The Eighties – The Way to Remember Them,” n.pag.

²³⁵ Branislava Adelnović, Branislav Dimitrijević, and Dejan Sretenović, *On Normality: Art in Serbia 1989-2001*, 9–10.

²³⁶ Davor Matičević, “A View of the Eighties. The Eighties – The Way to Remember Them.,” 43.

cultural sphere, but alternatively also simply a statement that denounced their provinciality.²³⁷ “Yugoslav art” is shown to contain individual strains and typologies, its artists are also shown to be fundamentally influenced by their neighbors from other republics, linking “cultural heritages and ethnic features”.²³⁸ Neither Tomaž Brejc, Muhamed Karamehmedović or Ješa Denegri explicitly refer to the artistic traditions of individual republics. Instead, they focus their texts on the exhibition as a whole, giving the impression that Yugoslav trends were truly overarching, and supporting the theoretical framework of a supranational culture constructed from individual national cultures whose individual aspects merge into an overarching specificity.

In practice, the catalogue suggests that the organizers of the *Yugoslav Documenta* did not only write about the validity of a common Yugoslav cultural sphere, but were also actively involved in its maintenance. Not only were the four contributors to the catalogue from different republics, the entire premise of the exhibition relied on the expertise of twenty regional selectors who were charged with nominating artists from their respective republics for participation in the biennale. In this way, the exhibition found official support also from a handful of state museums and galleries in Ljubljana, Belgrade, Zagreb, as well as the City Museum of Sarajevo.²³⁹ Furthermore, local Sarajevan galleries and many artists were also involved in supporting the exhibition. Whereas most of the sponsors, as expected, have their headquarters located in the Bosnian capital, a small percentage of advertisements of companies is based outside of Bosnia, such as in Belgrade or Umag, Croatia.²⁴⁰ This detail further suggests that the initiative not only sought out cooperation with other republics’ private and creative sectors, but that these private sectors saw either theoretical or economic value in contributing to the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*. From a purely practical standpoint, the event was entirely Yugoslav.

Whereas a critical analysis of the artistic selection featured in the exhibition remains beyond the scope of this dissertation, the consideration of its form and content nevertheless can help shed light on the nuances of the organizers’ policies. Despite the serious critiques discussed below, the curators in charge were able to include nearly all, if not all, of the most historically relevant names in this period of Yugoslav art history. Between IRWIN, Marina Abramović, Braco Dimitrijević, Raša Todosijević, Aleksandar Saša Bukvić, Sanja Iveković, Mladen

²³⁷ Davor Matičević, 40.

²³⁸ Davor Matičević, 41.

²³⁹ N. Galić, “Datumi budućnosti,” *Večernje Novine*, August 2, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archives.

²⁴⁰ Muhamed Karamehmedović, *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* '89., n.pag.

Stilinoić, or Tomislav Gotovac, the exhibition featured the work of those who would soon be known to be the most influential names in regional avant-garde art. While some of those included in the selection never truly belonged to the “best of the best” of the Yugoslav visual arts, nearly all of those who did exhibited their works at the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*. At the same time, local artists involved with the organization of the exhibition found a place in the rooms of Skenderija for their artworks. While Hadžifejzović and Tadić were often credited with the production, many other artists such as Franjo Likar and Fan Karmon (who would leave the city prior to the beginning of the siege) and Alija Kućukalić, Fikret Libovac and Sanjin Jukić (who would remain in Sarajevo) were credited in the index as having been selected by virtue of their status as organizer, and not through the formal selection process. This detail was clearly stated in the last pages of the catalogue yet remained relatively unpublicized, with the notion of international selector-based inclusion remaining an over-arching and official criteria of selection. While this does not directly discredit their inclusion, particularly considering their position in the Sarajevo art space, it suggests that for those living in Sarajevo, participation in the arrangement of the exhibition could have been motivated by the opportunity to showcase one's work.

The attitudes of the *Dokumenta* organizers are also reflected in press statements they made. Following the end of the exhibition, Fuad Hadžihalilović claimed to be appreciative of the cooperation with local galleries, as well as with the successful mingling of a large amount of influential Yugoslav artists in one single space. He was particularly happy about the attention gained from foreign visitors, particularly those from France, Italy, and Canada. There was even a short-lived plan for the biennale to take place in Milan as well.²⁴¹ This attitude supports the premise that the main intentions of the exhibition were two-fold: uniting all offshoots of contemporary Yugoslav art, and giving it a platform that would appear attractive to external markets. A longer, more in-depth take on the subject can be found in an article published by Muhamed Karamehmedović several months prior to the biennale, abandoning his insistence on neutrality found in the catalogue text in favor of mild political comments, mentioning “increasingly complex socio-economic class relations and national-confessional relations” as part of his discussion of artistic bridging of generations and regions.²⁴² Similarly to Hadžihalilović, he clearly states the intention of the exhibition organizers to use the event to

²⁴¹ N. Galić, “Datumi Budućnosti,” n.pag.

²⁴² Muhamed Karamehmedović, “Vezivni dijelovi umjetničkog vremena,” *Odjek*, May 15, 1989, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

place Sarajevo as a leading Yugoslav cultural center, and away from the fringes of regional cultural developments. Karamehmedović repeatedly referred to a previous major Yugoslav exhibition, *Umjetnost na tlu Jugoslavije od praistorije do danas (Art in Yugoslavia from Prehistory to the Present)*, framing it as a beginning of a new artistic era that the *Dokumenta* would wish to emulate by looking to the past for inspiration.²⁴³ These references also relativize the innovative quality of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*, reminding the reader that pan-Yugoslav cultural events were also not a novel idea created for political purposes by the Sarajevo organizers. While some exhibitions of Yugoslav art received state support as “one of the tools employed by the ideology of brotherhood and unity”, they were not always imposed from above, as Yugoslav artists constructed them from below through creating opportunities for exchange and interaction.²⁴⁴ In spite of this insistence on a Yugoslav similarity, Karamehmedović nevertheless also maintains the importance of a specific duality: the maintenance of Yugoslav traditions as simultaneous with the development of national tendencies.²⁴⁵

On the surface, the catalogue of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* betrays little “evidence of conditions that even then were already obvious and that would lead in the early 1990s to bloody ethnic and political reckonings.”²⁴⁶ In the midst of polemic arguments about the state-imposed nature of a common Yugoslav culture, the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* is perhaps the most poignant illustration of the independent existence of a practically oriented supranational cultural sphere, the result of individual efforts rather than any tangible government support. The authors chosen to contribute to the catalogue all share a language which treats Yugoslav art as part of a unique circle of cultural actors, while simultaneously admitting to regional differences and traditions. However, the organizers of the exhibition simultaneously shy away from political provocation – for them, the practicalities of the art scene overshadowed any polemic value that

²⁴³ The exhibition in question was amongst the first shows curated with the idea of presenting a common Yugoslav artistic heritage in mind. A similarly expansive exhibition, titled *Umjetnost za i protiv (Art For and Against)* is also of note in this case, held in Banja Luka in 1990 and particularly controversial due to its political nature. Beyond the visual arts, historical exhibitions presenting common Yugoslav cultural spheres presented a greater challenge to organizers, mostly historians, who found it difficult to agree on common interpretations of Yugoslav history. For more on historical exhibitions, see, for example, Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 300.

²⁴⁴ Zdenka Badovinac, “An Exhibition About an Exhibition. The Heritage of 1989, Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents,” n.pag.

²⁴⁵ Muhamed Karamehmedović, “Vezivni dijelovi umjetničkog vremena,” n.pag.

²⁴⁶ Zdenka Badovinac, “An Exhibition About an Exhibition. The Heritage of 1989, Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents,” n.pag.

they might have had. At this point, few of the discourses that would emerge during the following years of war were present in the hosts' vocabularies – a view which was not entirely shared by those reviewing the exhibition.

2.2.2. RECEPTIONS OF A YUGOSLAV EVENT. DIFFERING POSITIONS AND REVIEWS BY EXTERNAL CRITICS OF THE SARAJEVAN BIENNALE

While those behind the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* pursued a politically neutral image for their exhibition, the social context in which the event dictated its reception and, eventually, its legacy. As has been shown, the precarious political situation in Yugoslavia had gone largely unacknowledged by the Sarajevan curatorial team, yet those who visited and reviewed the show were much quicker to contextualize the event using a series of discourses that had begun sweeping the public debate. Although by mid-1989 there was still “no attempts to organize ethnic political organizations,”²⁴⁷ the tensions are evident in the rich corpus of documentation created by (sometimes not entirely) professional critics. The analysis of external reactions to the last pan-Yugoslav art show, as well as the ways in which they reacted to it using framings issued from political discourses offers a more nuanced view on the state of the common Yugoslav culture at the time. While outright negative reviews were in the minority, those who wrote about the *Yugoslav Documenta* offered their critical opinions on the curatorial process, deeming it too provincial or lacking professionalism, or showed open disagreement for the veiled support of a Yugoslav cultural space. Through addressing the main points of contention as seen from the outside, this section aims to unveil some of these unsaid discursive positions.

²⁴⁷ Neven Andjelić, *Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 89.



Figure 5. Second edition of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*, exhibition view. Image reprinted from “The Heritage of 1989. Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition,” Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija Ljubljana, 2017, n.pag. Photography by Jane Štravs. Courtesy of Jane Štravs.

Ranging from minor informational notes to full two-page editorial reviews published across the Yugoslav state, the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* received an impressive amount of coverage from regional press. Most likely based off the same press release, most invitations published in advance to the exhibition emphasized its impressive size, (8,000 square meters, 600 works of

200 artists)²⁴⁸, specifying that the exhibition would include installations, video- and performance art, as well as traditional painting and sculpture.²⁴⁹ Many of these also specifically mentioned satellite exhibitions organized in Sarajevan galleries during the *Dokumenta*, hosting the works of those considered to be the forerunners of contemporary Yugoslav movements.²⁵⁰ Regularly using terms such as “common Yugoslav jury” or to “our artists”, information about the Sarajevan event spread from Novo Mesto to Split, Belgrade, Zagreb, Priština and Novi Sad, with some authors going as far as to calling the Sarajevan capital the current “center of contemporary fine arts in Yugoslavia.”²⁵¹ The sheer reach of the exhibition to the different republics and the apparently positive impression created by the scale of the event points to a deep-seated interconnectedness across individual cultural spheres within Yugoslavia.

The *Yugoslav Dokumenta* featured artists who would later be forgotten by history, but also included some of the most radical and groundbreaking practices of 1980’s Yugoslav art. Even the critics seem to agree about the positive general impact of the exhibition:

*“(.), regardless of the possible further hair-splitting, it is clear that it is impossible to seriously question the general content of the Dokumenta, which today most consistently and most accurately represent the living image of the current Yugoslav fine arts.”*²⁵²

While evidence of continued cooperation between curators and art historians from various republics can be found through the impressive amount of press interest, few of these were

²⁴⁸ See, for example: N.n., “Jugoslavenski Dokumenti 89,” *Večernji List*, June 28, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive; N.n., “600 Slika,” *Večernje Novosti*, June 29, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive; S.K., “Jugoslovenska Dokumenta ’89,” *Vjesnik*, June 30, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive; A. Tišma, “Jugoslovenska Dokumenta ’89,” *Publication unknown*, July 1, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive; N.n., “Jugo-Dokumenta 89,” *Politika Ekspres*, July 3, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive; N.n., “Jugoslovenska Dokumenta,” *Večernje Novosti*, July 13, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive; N.n., “Otvoren likovni bijenale,” *Slobodna Dalmacija*, July 3, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive; J.G.C., “Izložba ‘Ju-Dokumenta 89,’” *Politika*, July 5, 1989, n. pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁴⁹ See, for example: N.n., “Jugoslavenski Dokumenti 89”; S.K., “Jugoslovenska Dokumenta ’89”; A. Tišma, “Jugoslovenska Dokumenta ’89.”

²⁵⁰ See, for example: N.n., “600 Slika”; A. Tišma, “Jugoslovenska Dokumenta ’89”; J.G.C., “Izložba ‘Ju-Dokumenta 89.’”

²⁵¹ See, for example: N.n., “Jugoslovenska Dokumenta.”

²⁵² Author translation: “No, bez obzira na moguće daljnje cjepidlačenje, jasno je da je nemoguće ozbiljnije dovesti u pitanje opšti sadržaj Dokumenta, koja danas najdosljednije i najtačnije reprezentuju živu sliku aktuelne Jugoslovenske likovne umetnosti.” Jovan Despotović, “Jugoslovenska Dokumenta ’89,” *Moment*, December 1989, 16 edition, 62. Collegium Artisticum Archives.

entirely uncritical.²⁵³ Some of the positive responses come, however, from unexpected places: two articles published by the Banja-Luka-based daily newspaper *Glas* (tellingly renamed in 2003 to *Glas Srpske*) the day after the exhibition's opening. Publishing both an invitation and a short review of the vernissage, the newspaper actively mirrored the language favored by the curators, referring to "our famous painters" and "creators from all over the country."²⁵⁴ While critical voices found it easy to attack the event for perceived political reasoning, the cultural actors of the future capital of Republika Srpska, currently a separate administrative entity in BiH, were amongst the few to offer complete support outside of Sarajevo.²⁵⁵

Already before the beginning of the event, other journalists appeared more ambivalent about the *Yugoslav Documenta*. One article published in Novo Mesto, Slovenia, only referred to a "biennale exhibition" without actually using the title, instead naming a handful of Slovenian artists who were included in the exhibition – seemingly obscuring the Yugoslav nature of the show.²⁵⁶ Once the exhibition had opened to the public, more critical voices began to appear in the press. Whereas many journalists avoided leaving unilaterally scathing reviews, many felt more comfortable voicing their disappointments, which can broadly be categorized into two categories. Some were unhappy with the professional and curatorial choices that detracted from the exhibition's potential, while others were more unsympathetic to the premise of a common Yugoslav space and the curatorial choices that supported its existence. For some, their antipathy was rooted in both.

One reviewer considered the exhibition badly organized, lamenting how the single security guard present in the gallery complex was unable to produce a copy of the exhibition catalogue, since these were locked in the gallery director's closet. According to the author, the guard was

²⁵³ One exception would be a short text published in Sarajevo-based *Oslobodjenje*, positively reviewing the event's auxiliary exhibitions. See: Z.B., "Preteče i savremenici," *Oslobodjenje*, June 29, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁵⁴ N.n., "Otvorena 'Ju-Dokumenta '89,'" *Glas*, July 8, 1989, n. pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive; n.n., "'Dokumenta' u Milanu," *Glas*, August 2, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁵⁵ Unfortunately, cultural cooperation in the field of the visual arts disintegrated quickly with the onset of war. By the end of the Bosnian War, cities such as Banja Luka were institutionally isolated as "contacts with other institutions outside Republika Srpska have ceased and at present, and show(ed) few signs of being re-established." See N.n., "Tenth Information Report on War Damage to the Cultural Heritage in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina Presented by the Committee on Culture and Education", ADOC7740 (Council of Europe - Parliamentary Assembly, January 23, 1997), Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina..

²⁵⁶ N.n., "Razstava slobodne likovne umetnosti," *Dolenski List*, July 6, 1989, n. pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

unable to provide more information, aside from the low frequency of visitors.²⁵⁷ Another Sarajevan critic, who's article appears to be largely aimed at a non-artistic public, might have summed up this view most concisely:

*"Because, since the selection committee is still criticized that some of the missing names which should have been honored at the Dokumenta, the impression is O.K. There is not one work which would fit a dining room, behind shelving, for the hallway. It seems as if the artists were creating to decorate, redesign the huge, cold spaces of Skenderija."*²⁵⁸

Whereas the curators behind the initiative seem to have done everything in their powers to avoid discussing politics, art critics and journalists were not necessarily equally avoidant of current events. One way in which the taboo-topic appeared in public discourse surrounding the *Yugoslav Documenta* can be found in the open discussion of economics in relation to the biennale. Considering that the exhibition had originally been conceived as a unitary platform which could provide an alternative to Western capitalist markets that Yugoslav artists had little access to, critics like Nermina Kurspahić's questioned whether this goal had been fulfilled. Arguing that the market mechanisms present in the West had encouraged the proliferation of contemporary arts in a way that was difficult to achieve in Yugoslavia, she acknowledges that "all the drama of capitalist art markets with its canons and logic is completely unknown and foreign to the relaxed, if not always benevolent socialist, socially protected and ideologically controlled artistic creation and production in our place and in similar places."²⁵⁹ In comparison, the relationship between Yugoslav and 'Western' artistic circles is presented as having always been somewhat tenuous, with cultural workers continuing to discuss their secondary position as "southern" artists vis-à-vis their "northern" neighbors both in texts and in exhibitions themselves.²⁶⁰ Remaining ideologically critical, she nevertheless praises the organizers' ability to secure financial and political support necessary to facilitate the presence of contemporary art

²⁵⁷ Branko Sosič, "Velika zbirka likovnih dogodivščin," *Publication Unknown*, July 15, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁵⁸ Author translation: „Jer, iako na račun selekcije i dalje stoji zamjerka da tu nema nekih imena kojima bi i Dokumenta morala biti čast, utisak je O.K. Nema tu nijedno djelo koje je za trpezarije, iza regala, za hodnik. Kao da su umjetnici stvarali samo zato da bi oplemenili, osmislili ogromne, hladne prostore Skenderije.” Zlatko Kostović, "Tvrde, Lijepe Stvari," n.pag.

²⁵⁹ Nermina Kurspahić, "Panorama vrijednosti," *Odjek*, August 1, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archives.

²⁶⁰ See for example Aleksandar Adamović's critique of an exhibition curated by Sarajevan Nermina Zildžo: Aleksandar Adamović, "U Duhu Definiranja Kontinuiteta - Likovni Život '86," *Oslobodjenje*, June 1, 1987, Collegium Artisticum Archive.

in the Yugoslav socio-economic context.²⁶¹ The interest in the economic benefits of a common art market were most likely motivated by the mounting economic crisis, which, as has been noted, by the 1980s had become impossible to “conceal from the general public.”²⁶² The financial implications of a pan-Yugoslav exhibition are also brought up in a more complicated context, where journalists question the rentability of the project in light of its high costs and the rampant inflation that had begun sweeping Yugoslavia.²⁶³

Beyond logistic and practical disagreements, the *Yugoslav Documenta* found criticism also for the concept on which it was based: that of a unified supranational cultural tradition that connects local tradition into a multilateral but collective whole.²⁶⁴ Differing in tone and severity, a handful of articles repeatedly referred to the perceived political motivations of the organizing artists, basing their critique on a curatorial approach that did not segregate artworks by republic and instead arranged them according to movement and generation.²⁶⁵ While the importance of actual national requirements in the selection criteria remains debatable, the placement of artworks appears to have been caught between aesthetic provisions and the theoretical framework on which the exhibition depended. For Antun Maračić,

²⁶¹ Nermina Kurspahić, “Panorama Vrijednosti,” n.pag.

²⁶² Already in 1982, shop prices had begun rising as government subsidies disappeared, while unemployment became a growing problem. Bosnia was additionally shaken by the aforementioned Agrokomerc scandal, implicating Bosnian leadership and heavily impacting public opinion and trust. See: Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 308; 341–42.

²⁶³ Zlatko Kostović, “Tvrde, Lijepe Stvari,” n.pag.

²⁶⁴ In contrast, it is interesting to note that the few critical press articles that appeared on the 1987 edition of the exhibition were limited to a commentary on the artistic value of the event rather than political jabs. As such, until 1989, it appears that art critics throughout Yugoslavia were less willing to directly attack the unitarian concept of the exhibition. See, for example: V. Rozman, “Sumnjiva autentičnost,” *Una*, May 25, 1987, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive; Ljiljana Domić, “Interventna Izložba,” n.pag. One anonymous reviewer, writing under the pseudonym “Art Lover”, critiqued the lack of representativity in the exhibition, while acknowledging that the concept of a large-scale Yugoslav event remains significant for the regional arts scene, and noting that Sarajevo is particularly well-suited for such a task. Art Lover, “Čip je već ubačen,” *Glas Omladine*, May 28, 1987, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁶⁵ Due to the current archival situation, documentation of branches of the League of Communists active in Bosnia remains inaccessible to researchers, making it difficult to assess claims of political pandering. The vernissage did elicit some interest from local politicians, considering it was opened by Prof. Dr. Milenko Brkić of the Republic Committee for Reflection, Science and Culture and visited by Sarajevo’s mayor, who was remarked to have even driven his golf to the opening. However, there is no evidence that the organization of the event was in any way linked to party support, making arguments for party control rather unlikely. See: n.n., “Jugoslovenska Dokumenta,” n.pag.; Zlatko Kostović, “Tvrde, Lijepe Stvari,” n.pag.

*“ (...) the pursuit of non-artistic effects, insistence on a spectacle based on some other motives, dictated by the alignment of a republican key, has made this exhibition a difficult to survey fair, in which the more valuable achievements become lost in the pile of ‘populist’ material.”*²⁶⁶

Some critics were not as ruthless, arguing that “the postmodern artistic scene is more concerned with defining a stable whole, than with inspecting its contemporaneity”, negatively influencing the curatorial *niveau* of the exhibition - but not irreparably so.²⁶⁷ The strong stance against the politics of the show is conspicuous when contrasted with the exhibition catalogue, which features very little in the way of open political language. This did little to stop art critics such as the Croatian Željko Kipke, whose in-depth review shows equal disagreement with the curators’ pan-Yugoslav concept and the curatorial choices which resulted from it – and refers to the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* as the “climax of fairground politics.”²⁶⁸

Dismissing the art-show as nothing more than a political stunt, Kipke argues that the message of a functional Yugoslav cultural plurality is not reflected in the quality of the artworks, and is particularly unamused by the inclusion of Neo-Geo and Neo Informel currents. In his text, Kipke reduces the efforts of the organizers nearly entirely to political subservience:

*“In the panorama of Skenderija’s exhibition spaces, the exhibitors found themselves in the function of supporting pillars of political megalomania, as is usually the case here. While on the one hand there is talk of pluralism of classical speech, on the other hand, at the level of representation, this language is one-dimensional and is tuned to the frequency of a fairground ghetto which generally corresponds to the shallow social idea of a multilingual being of Yugoslav art production.”*²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Author translation: “ (...) Težnja za izvanumjetničkim efektima, inzistiranje na spektaklu čije je porijeklo u nekim drugim motivima, a koji diktiraju uravnilovku republičkog ključa, učinila je od ove izložbe teško pregledni vašar, u kome su vrednija ostvarenja, zakrčena gomilom ‘populističkog’ materijala, teško uočljiva.” Antun Maračić, “Druga Linija,” *Vjesnik*, July 29, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁶⁷ Author translation: “ (...) postmoderna umjetnička scena u nas više je okrenuta prema definiranju stabilne cjeline, nego prema provjeravanju njezine suvremenosti.” Marijan Špoljar, “Vladavina monologa,” *OKO*, July 27, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁶⁸ Željko Kipke, “Klimaks sajmišne politike,” *OKO*, August 10, 1989, 454 edition, 16, Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁶⁹ Author translation: „U panorami izložbenih terminala Skenderije izlagači su se našli u funkciji potpornih stupova političke megalomanije, kako tu uglavnom i biva. Dok se s jedne strane priča o pluralizmu klasičnog govora, s druge strane, na razini reprezentacije, taj jezik jednodimenzionalan te je podešen na frekvenciju sajmišnog getta koje općim dojmom odgovara plitkoj društvenoj ideji o mnogojezičnom biću jugoslavenske likovne produkcije.” Željko Kipke, 16.

Somewhat surprisingly, Kipke fails to mention his involvement in the event, for which he served as one of the selectors responsible choosing Croatian participants. As the accusations of political subservience came at a time of rampant unemployment and increasing resentment of party influence and clientelism, presumably making the argument easy to transpose into the context of the visual arts.²⁷⁰ In hindsight, it is difficult to identify the roots of Kipke's antagonism: after all, he had agreed to be part of the selectorial committee. Whether a result of personal or professional disagreements experienced while working for the exhibition, or an increasing distrust for the concept of a unified Yugoslav artistic sphere, his words are also evidence of the cracks that had begun to show in the unity of a common arts scene in 1989.

Serbian critic Jovan Despotović's review similarly hinges on the decline in quality caused by perceived political criteria, which would detract from the original curatorial goals of such a showcase:

*"Thus, the desire for the Dokumenta to reach its intended goal - a distinct contemporaneity, was in this case betrayed precisely from the point of view of its fundamental parameters. Conversely, if we follow the scope of the highest criterion of contemporaneity (without paying attention to the content in a work), the justification of the presence of numerous artists in this exhibition could be seriously questioned."*²⁷¹

These reviews, while differing in severity, highlight the emerging cultural schisms that had begun mirroring Yugoslavia's political discourses in a way that deeply affected the perception of any cultural event. Not all art historians and critics saw the qualitative shortcomings of the *Dokumenta* as inevitably linked to the desire to create a pan-Yugoslav exhibition, but many texts proliferated the notion that the fragmentation of the Yugoslav cultural sphere into distinct and fundamentally incompatible (national) sectors was both inevitable and qualitatively desirable.

²⁷⁰ Susan L. Woodward, *Socialist Unemployment. The Political Economy of Yugoslavia 1945-1990* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 353.

²⁷¹ Author translation: "Dakle, želja da Dokumenta dostignu životnu nameru – izrazitu aktuelnost, izneverena je u ovom slučaju upravo sa stanovišta fundamentalnih parametara. Obratno, ako bismo sledili domete najviših kriterijuma aktuelnosti (ne obazirući se na sadržaj u nekom delu) ozbiljno bi se mogla dovesti u pitanje opravdanost prisustva brojnih umetnika na ovoj izložbi." Jovan Despotović, "Jugoslovenska Dokumenta '89," 62.

Despotović's review also actively pointed to a lack of impartiality within the selection jury, carefully suggesting that the jury's criteria were swayed by political considerations when mentioning the omission of Serb Kosovar sculptor Svetomir Aršić Basara's work, based on medieval themes, from the exhibition program.²⁷² Considering the rising tensions in the province of Kosovo, where enforced resignations of key Kosovar-Albanian political actors from their posts orchestrated by Slobodan Milošević and amendments to the Serbian constitution threatened Kosovar autonomy, it would not be entirely inconceivable that the sculptor's exclusion could be read as a response to current political events.²⁷³ Furthermore, Despotović saw the incident as part of a lack of "critical courage" of the organizers to include certain artists, but does not elaborate who specifically he was referring to.²⁷⁴

An article by Mirko Žarić, published in the Belgrade-based newspaper *Politika*, was a lot more explicit in its argument. Deeply condemning the decision to replace Aršić Basara with Fan Ferija, a graphic artist who had been living in Germany for the past 20 years, Žarić points out that the assigned regional selector, Zoran Furinović, did not at all consider Ferija amongst the best of Kosovar artists.²⁷⁵ In his text, Žarić openly criticizes organizers' exclusion of the sculptor in question:

*"Many in Kosovo are ready to conclude that the academic artist Svetomir Aršić Basara was eliminated from the exhibition due to his activist work in the last years, because he raised his voice against the pressure for the emigration of Serbian and Montenegrin nations from Kosovo and Metohija. Svetomir spoke at rallies in Titograd and Belgrade about the unacceptable indifference of others to the mindless violence and pogroms against the Serbian and Montenegrin people and their exodus that has no comparison or use in the civilized world."*²⁷⁶

Aršić Basara himself claims that he had never been against the Albanian nation, but against their "outcasts from below, separatists and nationalists," presenting himself a champion of

²⁷² Jovan Despotović, "Jugoslovenska Dokumenta '89."

²⁷³ Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 336–40.

²⁷⁴ Jovan Despotović, "Jugoslovenska Dokumenta '89," 62.

²⁷⁵ Mirko Žarić, "Akademik nepodoban!," *Politika*, July 16, 1989, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁷⁶ Author translation: „Mnogi na Kosovu spremni su da zaključe da je akademik Svetomir Aršić Bašara eliminisan sa izložbe zbog društvenog angažmana poslednjih godina, jer je digao svoj glas protiv pritisaka za iseljavanje srpskog i crnogorskog naroda sa Kosova i Metohije. Svetomir je na mitinzima u Titogradu i Beogradu govorio o nedopustivoj ravnodušnosti drugih povodom bezočnih nasilja i pogroma nad srpskim i crnogorskim narodom i njegovog egzodusa bez poredbe i primena u civilizovanom svetu.” Mirko Žarić, "Akademik nepodoban!"

philanthropy, humanism and truth.²⁷⁷ Referring to a newly-introduced cultural policy in Kosovo that would undermine Serb and Montenegrin artists in the province, on which little information has been found, the author claims that the choice to exclude the Serb-Kosovar artist stemmed from a blind following of party directives.²⁷⁸ While the articles do not necessarily go into details about the artist's political activism, there is little doubt that the artist favored the integration of the autonomous Kosovo republic into Serbia.²⁷⁹

The minor scandal elicited by this curatorial decision illustrates how the increased political animosity in Yugoslavia spilled over into the critique of the exhibition's premise. It is difficult to say to what exact extent the exhibition's organizers regularly interfered with regional selectors, and it would be equally difficult to say that the selection committee was entirely "politically blind". Despotović's argument points towards the rise of popularity of nationally-oriented art in the late 1980s scene which has been almost entirely omitted from the *Dokumenta* selection, which suggests that the criteria for the exhibition were exclusionary of at least some artistic currents of the time. The omission of explicitly nationalist artists, directly countering chosen regional selectors, cannot be taken as anything but a political statement on the part of the organizers. However, the alleged meddling into the choices of selectors has also been framed within the context of professional inexperience and not of malicious intent, for example by Nermina Kurspahić, for whom the regional selectors had "acted inconsistently and that their decisions and ideas were changed" by the organizing committee.²⁸⁰

Nevertheless, the refusal of Aršić Basara does not necessarily mean that the entire curatorial concept behind the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* was artistically faulty. While the collection remained politically neutral as a whole, it also did not entirely exclude pieces moderately critical of the Yugoslav system or artworks based on religious themes, as has been noted earlier. Additionally, a rejection of nationalism should similarly not be seen as a political stunt, but can equally be interpreted as a simple moral positioning in a hostile socio-economic climate,

²⁷⁷ Mirko Žarić.

²⁷⁸ Mirko Žarić.

²⁷⁹ Over thirty years after the fact, Aršić Basara continues to include his exclusion from the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* as part of his artistic chronology featured on his professional website. At this time, the sculptor holds openly nationalist views and has proclaimed that "Kosovo is Serbian and will remain Serbian". See: Miljana Kralj, "Svetomir Aršić Basara: Moj zavičaj Kosovo nije tuđa država," *Novosti*, 2018. Published online: [https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/politika/aktuelno.289.html:713526-Svetomir-Arsic-Basara-Moj-zavicaj-Kosovo-nije-tudja-drzava; Svetomir-Arsic-Basara. "Hronologija – Basara | Svetomir Aršić | Sculptor | Storyteller | Artist | SANU," accessed February 28, 2021, https://basara.rs/basara-biografija/hronologija/](https://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/politika/aktuelno.289.html:713526-Svetomir-Arsic-Basara-Moj-zavicaj-Kosovo-nije-tudja-drzava; Svetomir-Arsic-Basara. 'Hronologija – Basara | Svetomir Aršić | Sculptor | Storyteller | Artist | SANU,' accessed February 28, 2021, https://basara.rs/basara-biografija/hronologija/).

²⁸⁰ Nermina Kurspahić, "Panorama vrijednosti," n.pag.

especially considering that no evidence of the organizers' alleged political subservience can be found.

Those behind the exhibition were clearly aware of the politically delicate climate in which they were working and attempted to circumvent political tensions through a conspicuous avoidance of socio-economic critique within their curatorial conception. However, the concept of a pan-Yugoslav exhibition held in the federation's most diverse capital sent signals that supported not only the existing supranational cultural space, but also its economic integrity in opposition to Western markets. While reviews admitted to the potential of this exhibition format, they also revealed increasing fragmentation that had begun seeping into the cultural community. At the same time, it is clear that the organizers of the *Yugoslav Documenta* were unfavorable to unhampered political chauvinism, an attitude credited either to their reliance on a common cultural sphere or their personal political motivations. By hosting such an exhibition just months before the XIV Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia that effectively signaled the dissolution of the Party in 1990, the Sarajevan artistic elite contributed to a common Yugoslav sphere precisely at a moment in which its unity was being questioned and undermined, paving the way for new discussions in the local visual arts scene on the eve of Yugoslav disintegration.²⁸¹

2.3. A COMMON ARTISTIC SPACE WITHOUT A COMMON PARTY. THE SARAJEVAN VISUAL ARTS FOLLOWING THE END OF THE 1989 *JUGOSLOVENSKA DOKUMENTA* (1989-1992)

The controversies surrounding the *Yugoslav Documenta* outlined in the previous sections continued to gain traction in the years following the second edition, as the Yugoslav political climate became increasingly hostile to the idea of supranational collaboration. The cultural momentum that had been expected from the show in 1989 did not materialize, and while the halls of the Skenderija complex remained open to visitors over the month of July, the exhibition

²⁸¹ Half a year after the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*, the SKJ was effectively disbanded following the special Fourteenth Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, called as an attempt to tackle questions surrounding the constitutional system and economic reform. The Slovenian delegation staged a walkout after their proposals were shot down, followed shortly by their Croatian counterparts and "the Congress was temporarily suspended – for good as it turned out." The dissolution of the Party encouraged BiH, and the remaining republics, to follow Croatia and Slovenia to stage multiparty elections over the course of 1990. See: Hilde Katrine Haug, *Creating a Socialist Yugoslavia*, 344–45.

appears to have been quickly forgotten in local circles. According to one journalist, the summertime tourists moved to visit Sarajevo following the 1984 Winter Olympics were met with closed doors as Sarajevans artists continued with the local custom of vacating the city in the month of August.²⁸² The failure to capitalize on the success of the biennale appears to have been a disappointment for many who saw the lacking professionalism of its organizers as an easily fixable problem, and by 1991, the increasingly hostile political climate decisively discouraged its initiators pursuing a third edition of the pan-Yugoslav biennale.

The escalation of nationalist violence throughout Yugoslavia that had at first omitted the Sarajevan community had become palpable by 1989, as the first “violent incidents based on ethnic feelings or attitudes took place in Sarajevo”.²⁸³ Direct political critiques or discussions remained rare, if not non-existent until 1988-1989 in Sarajevan cultural circles, but the unease caused by rising inflation and the political gridlocks that blocked funding for public institutions was already palpable in the beginning of 1987.²⁸⁴ It appears that the city’s professional organizations were in dire straits at this point, with a number of signs pointing to their unsustainability due to mismanagement and empty pocketbooks.²⁸⁵ Although these discussions appear to have been taking place parallel to the organization of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta* exhibition, the financial difficulties of local artist organizations were so severe as to hinder the Bosnian artists’ association (*Udruženje Likovnih umjetnika BiH – ULUBiH*) from holding its annual review, plagued by debts reaching nearly 150 million dinars.²⁸⁶ However, these problems did not entirely keep inter-republic networks from functioning between 1989 and 1992, which continued to be mobilized to organize collaborative exhibitions.

²⁸² Zlatko Kostović, “Olimpijski ukrasi,” *Večernje Novine*, August 14, 1989, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁸³ Neven Andjelić, *Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 114.

²⁸⁴ The most visible effect of economic uncertainty was felt by local artist organizations and guilds, such as ULUBiH and Artist Union (*Savez Umjetnika*) whose pocketbooks were severely affected by the crisis. These organizations also experienced what appeared to be a crisis of faith, as their lack of democratic self-management was critiqued by the communist members of the ULUBiH and their functioning affected the ability of younger artists to integrate into their structures due to their irregular meetings. See, for example: Tatjana Alvadj, “Umjetnici na ‘listi čekanja,’” *Oslobodjenje*, April 4, 1989, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive ; Z. Kostović, “Poslovni za dobrovolju,” *Večernje Novine*, April 25, 1987, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive; Zorica Vlačić, “Kritika, ali i samokritika,” *Oslobodjenje*, February 26, 1987, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁸⁵ Several articles, noted above, appeared detailing the struggles of local institutions, including a harsh critique of the ULUBiH exhibition held in 1986 in Belgrade. However, it should be noted that the author’s dismissal of New Primitivism and the consideration of the 1970s as Sarajevo’s artistic “golden hour” might suggest his opinions could be classified as controversial. See: Aleksandar Adamović, “U duhu definiranja kontinuiteta - likovni život ’86,” n.pag.

²⁸⁶ Zlatko Kostović, “I ne samo novac,” *Večernje Novine*, October 28, 1987, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

The polarization of politics following the dissolution of the Yugoslav League of Communists, culminating in the electoral victories of nationalist parties in most republics, climaxed with the secession of Slovenia and Croatia in 1991. Even before legislation authorized the formation of a truly multiparty system, political pluralism flourished in Bosnia, and as the country's first free elections loomed nearer, three nationalist-minded parties were created to counteract those of the communist reformists and social democrats ready to take over power. The *Stranka demokratske akcije* (SDA – Party of Democratic Action), led by the influential dissident Alija Izetbegović, represented Muslim interests, while the Serb Democratic Party (SDS - *Srpska demokratska stranka*) and Croat Democratic Union (HDZ – *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*) represented the two remaining main constituent nations. The overwhelming victory of these three parties in all municipalities of Bosnia-Herzegovina, barring Tuzla, in the first multiparty elections held in November of 1990 heralded a systematic dismantlement of the Bosnian and Sarajevo political system.²⁸⁷

By fall of 1991, as the war in Croatia continued to escalate, four Serb autonomous oblasts were formed in Serb-majority areas throughout Bosnia. In response, two Croat autonomous oblasts were formed in November of the same year, for the Sava Valley and for Herzeg-Bosna.²⁸⁸ Alija Izetbegović, leader of the SDA and Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia following the introduction of a multiparty system in the country, had already made it clear in 1990 that remaining part of a rump-Yugoslavia without the two other republics would not be an acceptable option, meaning that Bosnia should also declare its independence if the maintenance of a united Yugoslavia ceased to be an option.²⁸⁹ While little evidence of the ongoing militarization of Bosnia can be found in the archives of cultural institutions such as the *Collegium Artisticum*, by 1991 all three factions had begun arming themselves in preparation for combat.²⁹⁰ Meanwhile, the visual artists active in Sarajevo continued to produce their work

²⁸⁷ Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 262.

²⁸⁸ Steven Burg, and Paul Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 73.

²⁸⁹ Steven Burg, and Paul Shoup, 70.

²⁹⁰ Steven Burg, and Paul Shoup, 74.

in the midst of almost complete economic degeneration and rising political tensions that had begun to expand inside the country.²⁹¹

Following 1989, the discourses and tone through which the Sarajevo visual arts community communicated became more openly militant and willing to discuss political problems. Open public support calling for further cultural integration faltered, but remained active through initiatives such as reciprocal exhibitions in times of political unrest. Dividing the period into two temporal contexts, this section focuses on how visual artists interacted with the introduction of a multiparty system in the aftermath of free elections, and how these same actors organized within their field in response to outbreak of war in what was previously a united country. For the sake of continuity, this section retains the focus on the activities of the *Collegium Artisticum* gallery, painting a picture of the discursive developments within local circles that struggled with the erosion of transnational channels. As the political crisis deepened, the muted practical preference for transnational networks morphed into vocal opposition to nationalist rhetoric, following trends found both in the arts and in civil society. The outbreak of war in Slovenia and Croatia left Sarajevo artists scrambling to understand their own increasingly precarious position, for the first time openly revisiting the importance of a common Yugoslav cultural sphere and focusing on condemning any nationalist rhetoric that would deny it. Unlike the visual arts produced in the preceding years, a general trend emerged in Sarajevo: most exhibitions held in the years leading up to the siege of Sarajevo supported the idea of a common (although differently defined) Yugoslavia, maintaining a common cultural sphere far after any state-backed policy had ceased to exist.

²⁹¹ Due to space constraints, the complicated timeline that preceded the outbreak of the Bosnian War will not be discussed in full in this chapter. For a more accurate and detailed analysis of the political and economic developments that led to the breakdown within the Yugoslav and Bosnian systems, see, for example: Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, "The Descent Into War," in *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 62–128; Robert Donia, "From Socialist Decline to Sarajevo's National Division," in *Sarajevo: A Biography* (London: Hurst & Company, 2006), 249–87.

2.3.1. MAINTAINING NETWORKS ON THE BRINK OF WAR: SARAJEVAN CULTURAL CIRCLES REACTING TO A MULTIPARTY SYSTEM (1989-1990)

The somewhat transitional period that followed the opening of the second *Yugoslav Documenta*, lasting from 1989-1990, represents a historically significant element of Bosnian cultural history that has largely been omitted from further study. Although a detailed analysis of these three years extends beyond the scope of this dissertation, a brief overview of key developments and continuities within the cultural community can help understand how individuals and groups of actors responded to the rising instability in the country, one in which the hope of saving a Yugoslav state still seemed like a possibility. Events continued to be organized in Sarajevan galleries, but the seemingly smaller quantity of available archival materials suggest that curators and artists had begun running out of steam as most of the city's attention was reserved for the newly introduced electoral process. Framing curatorial and artistic shifts as a trajectory and not as hermetic occurrences, a cursory overview of Sarajevan exhibitions and cultural events during this period can help conceptualize the subsequent and outright responses to violence that characterized the breakoff of Croatia from a dissolving Yugoslavia. As such, the activities centered around the *Collegium Artisticum*, devoid of major projects, reflected both a willingness to remain connected to other Yugoslav republics while simultaneously also becoming a forum for new political discussions and ideas.

Throughout the early 1990s, the curatorial team of the *Collegium Artisticum* took special care to develop and maintain a professional relationship with other Yugoslav artistic institutions, a practice not particularly aligned with mounting nationalist rhetoric in Bosnia and in Yugoslavia as a whole. These types of artistic exchanges, where one exhibition included the works or the curatorial efforts of nationals of multiple republics and available for viewing for multiple audiences, represented the practical maintenance of a supranational cultural sphere that functioned outside of political structures. Between 1987 and 1991, a series of reciprocal exhibitions were organized across the federation despite a lack of a formal or institutional framework that would have supported it. Instead, individual groups of cultural actors, such as museum curators or directors, would promote artists from one republic in another, increasing the prestige of those participating and supporting existing networks on a practical instead of ideological level. Some of these exhibitions were the results of long-term cooperation, curated over larger periods of time, such as a group show curated by the *Collegium Artisticum* and

Ljubljana's *Mesna Galerija* in the spring of 1991. Titled *Views on Slovenian painting in the early 1990s (Pogled na slovenačko slikarstvo na početku devedesetih)*, the exhibition of Slovenian art in the Bosnian capital as part of the *Sarajevska Zima* festival was organized in response to an earlier exhibition of Sarajevo artists, hosted in Ljubljana two years earlier.²⁹² A similar event took place a few months later in Priština, Kosovo, where a group of Sarajevo artists were invited to show their work as a reciprocal gesture to an earlier exhibition of Kosovar artists in the Bosnian capital.²⁹³ Exhibitions continued to travel across the dissolving state up until the last possible moment, as was the case for a group exhibition of Croatian art from the 1980s that had been welcomed in 1989 in Sarajevo and the following year in Skopje, before being opened in Zagreb in June 1991. These shows took place in an incredibly volatile climate: indeed, it is unlikely that the next planned stops - in Ljubljana and in Graz – were actually carried out, considering the Slovenian declaration of independence and ensuing conflict that coincided with the artworks' presence in Zagreb.²⁹⁴ It should also be noted that it is likely that such initiatives had been planned far in advance, as larger cultural institutions tend to organize their agendas ahead of time.

Other exhibitions traveled even greater distances, such as in the case of the annual show of the Association of Fine Artists of Sarajevo (*Izložba društva likovnih umjetnika Sarajeva*), whose itinerary is addressed in the exhibition catalogue as part of an established series of exchanges that pre-dated the escalating tensions. The catalogue, notably translated into English for a non-Yugoslav audience, openly claimed that "such panoramic exhibitions exchanged within the cooperation of republics and towns" were an integral part of the richness and diversity of Yugoslav artistic production. Detailing the individual exhibitions which initiated contacts between the *Umjetnička Galerija* in Dubrovnik, the *Umjetnički Paviljon* in Titograd (now Podgorica) and the *Collegium Artisticum*, all taking place in 1989, the exhibition text openly states how the event "represents the continuity of contacts, exchange of exhibitions, experience

²⁹² N.n., "Slovenski Slikarji v Sarajevu," *Dnevnik Ljubljana*, April 2, 1991, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive; Se. Kurtović, "Slovenačko slikarstvo devedesetih," *Oslobodjenje*, March 20, 1991, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive; Zorica Beus, "Metaforički obojeno slikarstvo," *Oslobodjenje*, April 5, 1991, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁹³ K.R., "Liveno umetnost Sarajeva u Prištini," *Borba*, June 2, 1991, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive; Zorica Beus, "Savremena umjetnost Kosova," *Oslobodjenje*, June 20, 1991, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁹⁴ This was the case, for example, for an exhibition titled *Hrvatska Umjetnost u Osamdesetim Godinama* (Croatian Art in the Eighties), which was opened in Zagreb in June 1991. The same exhibition had been welcomed earlier that year in Sarajevo and in Skopje, and was planned to also take place in Ljubljana and Graz. See for example: M. Dj., "Dr. Žarko Domljan otvara izložbu," *Zapad*, June 15, 1991, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive; Mirjana Šigir, "Kritički pogled na umjetnost osamdesetih," *Vjesnik*, June 5, 1991, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

and achievements” inherent to an existing, if troubled, cultural sphere.²⁹⁵ In fact, the exhibition text positions Sarajevo as a location full of new talent, innovation and quality of artistic production – effectively also encouraging rather than discouraging connections within the Yugoslav context.²⁹⁶ The continued organization of these artistic exchanges in spite of an almost complete breakdown of cooperation within political structures, is perhaps the most simple representation of a common Yugoslav culture in action. Most likely encouraged by a mixture of habit and economic factors, the maintenance of established patterns of interaction despite the active political dismantlement of the state suggests the importance and value of such events for artists even in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Locally, cultural critics continued to review exhibitions throughout Bosnia, acknowledging the interconnected nature of various independent art scenes while also introducing a new vocabulary that seemed to introduce political themes without directly engaging with them. This was the case in an article by Zorica Beus, who discussed a series of group shows that took place in April 1990 in the industrial towns Zenica and Sarajevo. Unlike the majority of pre-1989 reviews, Beus directly interacts with discourses acknowledging escalating social and economic divisions. Reverting back to references of all-encompassing crises “that appear in the intervals of generational changes”, she offers little political commentary beyond one shrouded in a curatorial language.²⁹⁷ However, her glowing review of the new talent appearing in Sarajevo in particular seems to point to a hopeful and optimistic stance towards the future of art in the region – an attitude that is surprising considering how optimism for future was becoming an increasingly rare commodity.

Following the first Bosnian elections in 1990, the visual arts scene engaged in an open debate surrounding the role of culture and the state’s responsibilities towards it that took place in a series of state-sponsored public meetings. Covered in a string of newspaper articles, a first forum took place in a shroud of uncertainty, as cultural actors appeared nervous about the financial consequences of a shift towards a free market and retained a certain mistrust for the political capabilities of the new leadership. On the 20th of March 1990, an open meeting was organized by the Cultural-Educational Association of BiH (*Kulturno-prosvjetna zajednica*

²⁹⁵ Brankica Peršić, *Izložba Društva Likovnih Umjetnika Sarajeva*, trans. Gordana Durić (Sarajevo: Društvo Likovnih Umjetnika Sarajeva, 1989), 3. Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

²⁹⁶ Brankica Peršić, 4.

²⁹⁷ Zorica Beus, “Slika zrelog trenutka,” *Oslobodjenje*, April 18, 1990, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

BiH), aimed at facilitating a dialogue between cultural workers and the new government on the future of the field in a new, democratic, and market-oriented, context. Focusing on broader cultural concerns and “the organization of cultural life in new conditions”, an emphasis is placed on the integration of non-state actors into cultural policymaking.²⁹⁸ An invitation to the event offers some insight into the most pressing questions of the time, generally centered around financial changes and the role of artists in the formation of a new system:

*“How will culture be financed in the future? What is good and what is bad about market orientation? How to define the existential issues of cultural workers? Could they also live more dignified in later years? Can new laws on culture be passed without consulting the most interested and competent? To what extent is copyright law a dead letter on paper?”*²⁹⁹

This meeting was the first of a series organized by the Cultural and Educational Association of BiH, an organ which appears to have been formed with the new government. Whereas the discussions that took place during these meetings remain difficult to trace, and it is unclear how many meetings actually took place, the few recovered traces of these events give some insight into shifts in public policy during this period. An article by Zlatko Kostović, which touches upon on the discussions at hand, suggest that the Bosnian elections and the resulting nationalist-dominated rule unsettled local cultural actors. Emphasizing the need for state-sponsored exhibition spaces, giving the example of the *Roman Petrović* and the necessity of maintaining galleries where the country’s artistic heritage can be displayed, Kostović is clearly suspicious of the efforts of the new government. Furthermore, the re-introduction of national cultural institutions that focused on the preservation of the cultural and historical heritage of individual national groups into the Sarajevan landscapes is presented as an ambivalent change that does not address the city’s actual problems. As such, national cultural centers and associations that were supposedly founded at this time, such as the Croat *Napredak* or Jewish *La Benevolencija*, were judged to be insufficient replacements for structured state-sponsored institutions. Furthermore, Kostović also accurately points out the extensive Bosnian holdings of art by German, English, Hungarian or Czech artists that feature heavily in Bosnian collections, forming part of the country’s cultural and historical heritage.³⁰⁰ The apparent disinterest of the

²⁹⁸ V. Št., “Budućnost kulture,” *Oslobodjenje*, March 19, 1990, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

²⁹⁹ Author translation: “Kako će se kultura ubuduće finansirati? Šta dobro, a šta loše donosi tržišna orijentacija? Kako definisati egzistencijalna pitanja radnika u kulturi? Da li bi i oni u poznijim godinama mogli živjeti dostojanstvenije? Mogu li se donositi novi zakoni o kulturi bez konsultovanja najzainteresovanijih i kompetentnih? Koliko je zakon o autorskom pravu mrtvo slovo na papiru?” V. Št., n.pag.

³⁰⁰ Zlatko Kostović, “Otvori care bisage,” *AS Sarajevo*, July 14, 1990, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

new government to support a common Bosnian, and especially Yugoslav, cultural policy is hereby seen as a blow to the country's artistic field and presented as such.

Similarly structured meetings continued taking place throughout the year, with an event titled “*Pošto umjetnost?*” (“How much for art?”) organized in December in the *Collegium Artisticum*. Unlike the general questions that guided the previous meeting, economic concerns dominated this particular discussion. Sarajevan citizens wishing to attend this debate were to focus on questions focusing on market adaptation, featured in an announcement for the event:

*“What are the relations between the market in the economy and the market in culture and art? What are the real conditions in the current social situation in which the market value in culture becomes a measure of work and creation? What are the obstacles to making the market really work? Which segments of culture and art are having a hard time entering market competition?”*³⁰¹

Whereas the actual impact of these meetings remains uncertain, the short public invitations offer some insight into artistic reactions to the introduction of a new regime. On the one hand, a public call for participation in policymaking can be deduced from the very beginning, but the stubborn persistence of economic questions within these discussion suggest a lack of interest in the construction of institutional structures for artists within a new, nationally-minded government. This uncertainty is quickly transformed into economic concerns, appearing to suggest that local artists were increasingly concerned about their financial stability in a new system. Cultural workers were not alone in fearing for their livelihoods: the two meetings coincided with a period of intensive strikes led by miners and factory workers who rallied in Sarajevo to protest low wages, sub-standard working conditions, and factory shutdowns.³⁰² This lack of faith might also be extrapolated from the low attendance of this second meeting: out of 190 invitees, only 20 actually showed up to the public event.³⁰³

The change in government did not appear to have a significant impact on artistic programming: whereas exhibitions created in tandem with other Yugoslav artists continued to take place,

³⁰¹ Author translation: “Koje su relacije između tržišta u privredi i tržišta u kulturi i umjetnosti? Kakvi su stvarni uslovi u sadašnjoj društvenoj situaciji u kojoj tržišna vrijednost u kulturi postaje mjerilo rada i stvaranja? Šta su prepreke da bi tržište u ovoj oblasti stvarno funkcionisalo? Koji segmenti kulture i umjetnosti teško ulaze u tržišnu utakmicu?” B. C., “Pošto Umjetnost?,” *Oslobodjenje*, December 26, 1990, n.pag, Collegium Artisticum Archive.

³⁰² Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 250.

³⁰³ B. C., “Pošto Umjetnost?,” n.pag.

limitations on the type of art shown did not seem to have been very present in the context of the *Collegium Artisticum*. One exhibition, slated to take place in May 1990, might represent an exception. Originally planned for 1988, a major show of Islamic art and decorative objects was to be opened with great delay due to the poor condition of the art-objects and a pressing need to consolidate and restore them.³⁰⁴ Religious themes were never actually taboo for state-sponsored artistic institutions in Sarajevo – although it is not inconceivable that private disputes could have taken place, archival documentation points to the organization of multiple exhibitions featuring works with direct religious links in the *Collegium* space.³⁰⁵ In this light, an event celebrating Islamic artefacts is not necessarily a calculated political move, yet opens an opportunity for further study for the place of religious art in the years leading up to the outbreak of the Bosnian War, and possible political spillover into curatorial patterns.

When viewed from above, the dominant tone of artistic events organized during this transitional period appears to center around a cautious neutrality that acknowledged the systemic shift from a socialist to a democratic political system, but which simultaneously shied away from overt statements of opinion. The conscious, nearly complete detachment of social commentary from the artistic scene present in the late 1980s had slowly begun to break down following the regime change, as practical questions surrounding government support for culture and the arts began emerging from artists concerned about their future. The visual arts scene in Sarajevo clearly reacted to the change in both political system and national independence, but at the same time did not radically distance itself from its formerly held patterns and habits. Whereas the concept of “Yugoslav art” and associated vocabularies became comparatively rare in art-critical and auto-descriptive narratives, Sarajevo cultural producers maintained their links to other republics through active participation in the common cultural sphere they inhabited.

Therefore, the maintenance of reciprocal exhibitions in the months preceding the Yugoslav dissolution suggests that systemic changes, including the rise of nationalist rhetoric that accompanied it, might have been either partially or entirely absent from the circles of the *Collegium Artisticum*. As such, even at this time, there is evidence to suggest that an imagined

³⁰⁴ Ž. Bratić Čohadžić, “Kultura Islama,” *Večernje Novine*, May 13, 1990, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

³⁰⁵ Exhibitions of Jewish art and of objects from Franciscan monasteries were also held in the Collegium Artisticum in the preceding years, the latter mentioned as well in the article on Islamic cultural artefacts. See, for example: T.A., “Jevreji na tlu Jugoslavije,” *Oslobodjenje*, July 11, 1988, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive; N.n., “Blago Franjevačkih samostana,” *Slobodna Dalmacija*, March 17, 1988, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

Yugoslav cultural community was more resilient than has been supposed at the time. Admittedly, the scarcity of sources available on this period make it difficult to draw any outright conclusions, but further study could be beneficial to understanding how cultural milieus reacted to these radical changes.

2.3.2. THE END OF THE YUGOSLAVS: ARTISTIC PROTESTS TO THE DISMANTLING OF THE STATE AND THE BEGINNING OF WAR IN YUGOSLAVIA (1990-1992)

On the surface, cultural producers in Sarajevo displayed little public interest in the political developments which were taking place in Bosnia & Herzegovina and Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, focusing their attention on their economic survival. While talks of a common Yugoslav cultural sphere became less present, the increasing nationalist-led instability that culminated with Slovenian and Croat independence, and ensuing wars, became the catalyst for open political calls emanating from within the Sarajevan visual arts scene. Most of these positions were reflected in a militant pacifism, and whereas the wish to maintain a unified Yugoslav state was not always at the core of these artistic protests, their organizers formulated stances that were openly opposed to the nationalist politics that had swept the region and the country as early as the summer of 1991. Therefore, the outbreak of full-scale war in Croatia and Slovenia deeply affected the Sarajevan artistic community, even as the city's population continued to believe that the violence would not spread to Bosnia, and later, their city.³⁰⁶

The public discussions organized by the Cultural and Educational Association of BiH continued to take place following the elections, with Sarajevan newspapers regularly printing evidence of the meetings, and were accompanied by a broader introduction of polemics centered around the state's shifting relationship to its neighbors that steadily increased in urgency. Combining the re-introduction of antifascist vocabularies into a cultural scene which had spent the past few years actively avoiding any political language, these debates were discursively placed in the context of a supranational Yugoslav sphere and space. Local press printed articles written by cultural actors who appeared favorable to the maintenance of a common cultural space, seeing the attacks on Slovenia and Croatia as attacks on themselves, or at the very least unfavorable to

³⁰⁶ Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography* (London: Hurst & Company, 2006), 274.

nationalist rhetoric. For some, the encroachment of violence on Bosnian soil began to appear as a possibility – even as they themselves continued to view their country as an oasis of peace.³⁰⁷ The *Yugoslav Documenta* also received an unexpected public rehabilitation, discussed in an emotive article published in August 1991. Centered around the success of a Yugoslav biennale and lamenting the loss of artistic momentum in the Bosnian capital, the author of the text deems the current climate as lackluster and almost entirely ineffective. Most tellingly, the author positions Sarajevo visual artists and their contemporaries as strangely mute “as a counterpart to the domestic general insanity.”³⁰⁸ Only a month later, in September 1991, would the formation of Serb autonomous regions throughout Bosnia be announced, heralding the further dismantlement of the country’s civic and political institutions.³⁰⁹

As one of the first Sarajevo voices in the field of culture openly discussing and condemning the rising nationalism across Yugoslavia, the text moves away from the previous tendency of veiled critiques and symbolic gestures. Praising the *Yugoslav Documenta* as an artistically and politically valuable project that had transformed the city of Sarajevo into an “artistic oasis”, the author also presents the Bosnian capital as a reasonable element in an increasingly tempestuous context.³¹⁰ The comparison, whether made consciously or not, suggests the existence of a common problem to which only Sarajevo artists are insufficiently reacting. While not particularly long, the half-page article positions the Bosnian capital and its creative community as a remnant of peace, which had become increasingly sparse over the Yugoslav space by the time of its publication:

*“Only one comparison is sufficient: namely, Sarajevo was compared to an artistic oasis at the time of the ‘Yugoslav Documents’; two years later it is also compared to an oasis but an oasis of peace, as one journalist writes, in the domestic general madness, disintegration, and literal democracy. It is superfluous to mention that all this was reflected in the fine arts as well.”*³¹¹

³⁰⁷ Rašid Durić, “Kako izbjeći zaboravu,” *Oslobodjenje*, February 22, 1992, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

³⁰⁸ N. Trebić, “Umjesto grandiozne smotre mrtvilo,” *Oslobodjenje*, August 4, 1991, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

³⁰⁹ Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 267.

³¹⁰ N. Trebić, “Umjesto grandiozne smotre mrtvilo,” n.pag.

³¹¹ Author translation: “Dovoljno je samo jedno poredjenje: naime, Sarajevo je u vrijeme ‘Jugoslovenskih Dokumenta’ upoređivano s umjetničkom oazom; dvije godine kasnije ono je također upoređeno s oazom ali oazom mira, kao reče jedan strani novinar, u domaćem sveopštim ludilu, rasulu, i bukvalnoj demokratiji. Da se sve to odrazilo i na likovnu umjetnost, suvišno je i napominjati.” N. Trebić, n.pag.

An in-depth study to what degree the Sarajevan fine arts actually encompassed a calming presence antithetic to the general mindset in the region once again exceeds the limits of this study, but the fact that contemporaneous cultural actors had remarked upon its existence provides valuable context for the future development of the local wartime arts scene.

As has been noted, the meetings organized by the Cultural-educational association of BiH continued to take place beyond 1990, but their tone radically changed with the beginning of JNA advance on a post-referendum Croatia as the discussion re-appropriated familiar vocabularies and shifted away from economic issues. In this way, a two-day forum organized in the *Collegium's* Skenderija premises in September 1991 on the subject of "Totalitarianism today" is an example of the more openly political stance of Sarajevan artists that emerged during this last pre-war period. Although the previous editions of these forum rallies were almost exclusively preoccupied with the Bosnian transition to a market-based economy, this meeting included discussion points such as "Religion and fascism", "Stalinism and language", "Contributions of media to totalitarian consciousness".³¹² While none of these topics directly referred to war per-se, the implied necessity of discussing them was clearly a response to the violence inflicted by nationalist politicians in the disappearing Yugoslav state. The meeting in question did not receive more interest than its previous editions, as about thirty participants had been recorded, but nevertheless appears to have reached a wider audience: the event counted "intellectuals from the whole of Yugoslavia" and a small handful from Europe amongst the participants.³¹³ While such open discussions would have been unlikely only a few years prior, open condemnation of the political changes in the region now came to the forefront of Sarajevo's cultural scene's preoccupations.

The public position of the local artists is further cemented in September 1991, when, months after the beginning of the Croatian War and only just before fighting in Dubrovnik began, an open "appeal to artists" was published in at least two major Sarajevan newspapers. The short announcement, issued by the directors of *Collegium Artisticum*, urged their peers to advocate against the violence that now threatened to spill over into BiH. While actively taking an anti-militarist stance and speaking of the "madness" and "evil" that was spreading throughout the region, the authors were also careful to avoid any direct accusations or denunciations of any

³¹² N.n., "Intelektualci i totalitarizam danas," *Oslobodjenje*, September 12, 1991, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

³¹³ N.n., "Intelektualci i Totalitarizam Danas", n.n., n.pag.

parties in particular. It is uncertain whether this particular text was only one out of many public calls of peace issued by various Sarajevan milieus, but remains a powerful statement against the violence of authoritarian ideology:

“Let us all stand up

*In our country, a completely senseless civil war is being waged in which Bosnia and Herzegovina is getting drawn into. Innocent people are dying, cultural-historical and natural treasures are being destroyed. Sacred buildings, hospitals, libraries and factories were also bombed in the country. All economic, social, cultural and political ties have been torn. During this time, the government and the opposition are sitting abroad. These are all games without end and order, without hope. We invite you, in the name of your human artistic mission, to speak out publicly against madness in these most difficult moments and to raise your voice of protest against the evil that is spreading like a plague. Peace is possible if we all stand up against war. It is horrible to know that many stay silent, and when they speak, they are looking for an excuse for hatred.”*³¹⁴

While perhaps exaggerating the lack of cultural voices speaking out against nationalist hatreds, the text rightfully points to the temporary paralysis of the visual arts scene in Sarajevo in the preceding years. While the text’s actual reception is difficult to gauge in hindsight, one exhibition in the northern Bosnian city of Doboj has been documented to have responded to the gallery’s call to action.³¹⁵ Appropriately titled “Art of Doboj for Peace”, the event was conceived as a direct reply to the Sarajevan text and is evidence of a recurring pacifist rhetoric that traveled across factional lines within the visual arts community. While not nearly enough to definitely argue that the connections forged in a functioning Yugoslav cultural space were fully functioning even on the brink of war, these public interactions suggest that, at the very least, artists still tried to maintain some sort of communication within their own networks.

³¹⁴ Author translation: “Ustanimo svi u našoj zemlji vodi se potpuno bezuman građanski rat u koji se uvlači Bosna i Hercegovina. Ginu nevini ljudi, uništavaju se kulturno-istorijska i prirodna blaga. U zemlji su bombardovani i sakralni objekti, bolnice, biblioteke, tvornice. Pokidane su sve ekonomske, socijalne, kulturne i političke veze. Za to vrijeme vlast i opozicija zasjedaju u inostranstvu. Svi su u igri bez kraja i reda, bez nade. Pozivamo vas da u ime vaše ljudske umjetničke misije u ovim najtežim trenucima istupite javno protiv ludila i da dignete svoj glas protesta protiv zla koje se kao kuga širi. Mir je moguć ako svi ustanemo protiv rata. Užasno je saznanje da mnogi čute, a kada govore, traže opravdanje za mržnju.” The piece published in *Večernje Novine* was an abridged version of the entire text. Collegium Artisticum, “Javno protiv ludila,” *Oslobodjenje*, September 24, 1991, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive; Collegium Artisticum, “Ustanimo svi,” *Večernje Novine*, September 24, 1991, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

³¹⁵ N.n., “Umjetnost Doboja za mir,” *Glas Komune*, October 16, 1991, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

While artists joined cultural actors in expressing their political opposition on paper, the exhibitions that were organized during these last years also offer some insight into the atmosphere in the local community. One notable show, held in July 1991, featured a retrospective of works belonging to the short-lived Collegium Artisticum movement for which the gallery is named. Considering the political climate in the previous months, the choice to highlight a historically radical left-wing and antifascist group appears to be a conscious statement even if no direct references to antinationalist or anti-war content.³¹⁶ Surprisingly, no evidence of negative reviews for this show have been located, suggesting that the city's curators and critics had become more favorable towards direct political messaging. Considering the backlash seen for the perceived political pandering of the 1989 *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*, the way in which this event was discussed in the press seems to suggest that Sarajevan cultural circles were intellectually distancing themselves from these sorts of polemics in light of the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

The siege of Dubrovnik, lasting between October 1991 and May 1992, was met with shock in the Sarajevan artistic community. The sheer and indiscriminate destruction of the port city's historical heritage in response to Croatian independence was seen as entirely senseless, and the unease produced by the involvement of a nominally Yugoslav army that supported Serb nationalist interests was clearly felt in Sarajevo. Sarajevan artists responded to the escalation of war in the region with a group show dedicated to the besieged town, curated by the renowned Azra Begić and opened in December 1991, bearing the title: "*Zašto Dubrovnik?*" – "*Why Dubrovnik?*". First opened in the Museum of the XIV Olympic Games, the show consisted of about forty works that were to be donated to cultural institutions in the coastal city, with the aim of reconstructing the cultural capital destroyed in the attack.³¹⁷ While military developments on the Croatian front had begun threatening to spill over into Bosnian territories, Sarajevan artists organized a collective show of solidarity that discursively tied the fate of Dubrovnik to its own, responding to the "senseless war" that raged in the region but avoiding direct blame.

During this period, the collection was transported by bus, together with some of the exhibiting artists and relevant art critics, to be exhibited in the Art Gallery of Dubrovnik through the

³¹⁶ Nedjo Šipovac, "Tako blizu i tako daleko," *Nedjelja Sarajevo*, July 21, 1991, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

³¹⁷ Ibrahim Spahić, "Why? Zašto?," *Nedjelja Sarajevo*, December 8, 1991, 46, Collegium Artisticum Archive.

initiative of Ibrahim Spahić and the International Peace Center (*Medjunarodni Centar za Mir – IPC*) that organized the yearly Sarajevo Winter Festival.³¹⁸ Exhibited under the title *Kistom za Dubrovnik (By Paintbrush for Dubrovnik)* as a gesture meant to “express their compassion and support” to the city, the continued artistic support for the besieged city seems to indicate a lasting feeling of a common destiny.³¹⁹ As such, while the idea of a common Yugoslavia was being steadily dismantled to the point of practical irrelevance, artists in Sarajevo still saw themselves as part of the same community that was being attacked as a result of nationalist rhetoric.

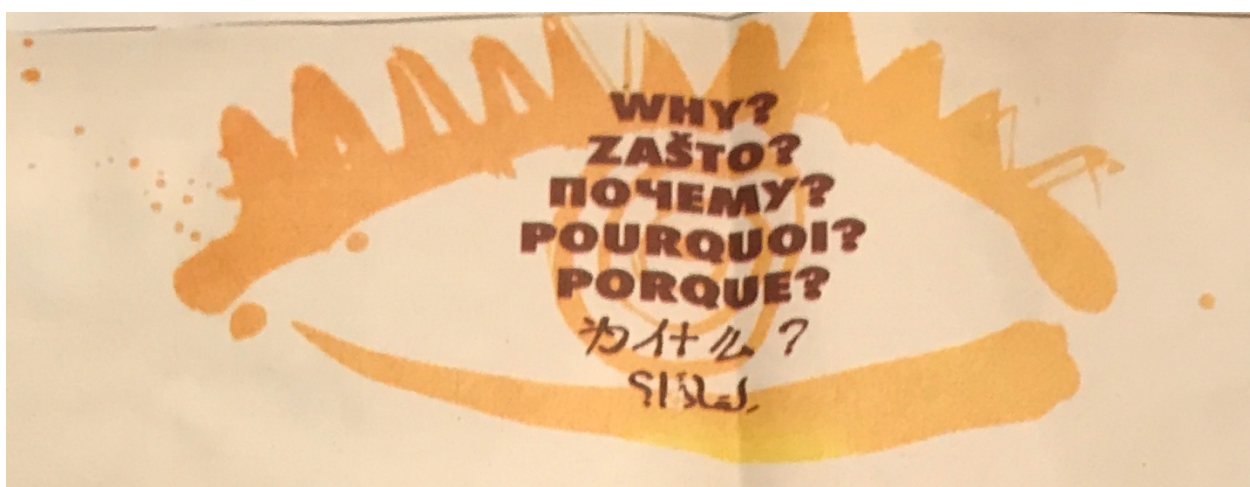


Figure 6. Excerpt from a press article promoting the *Zašto Dubrovnik?* exhibition. Featuring the word “why?” reprinted in multiple languages, suggesting that the exhibition was conceptualized with an international context in mind. Image reprinted from “Why? Zašto?” by Ibrahim Spahić, Sarajevo: *Nedjelja Sarajevo*, August 12, 1994, 46. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

The Sarajevo artistic community, like many of their compatriots, were appalled by the unexpected savagery of the attack, but were far from being able to admit that similar violence was also possible at home. At the same time, the nearly visceral reaction to the destruction of the Croatian port cannot be divorced entirely from a shared common history. As has been previously noted, Sarajevo cultural actors had built up relationships with their colleagues from Dubrovnik within a Yugoslav framework, and most likely retained personal affinity for the town. As such, a similar response for the destruction of a non-Yugoslav city would have been

³¹⁸ Azra Begić, “U Znakui Kairosa,” in *Dvadeset godina Internacionalni Festival Sarajevo - Sarajevska Zima 1984-2004* (Sarajevo: Medjunarodni Centar za Mir, 2005), 33.

³¹⁹ N.n., “Sarajlije ‘Kistom za Dubrovnik,’” *Oslobodjenje*, February 5, 1992, n.pag. Collegium Artisticum Archive.

unlikely, particularly when considering the shared history and trade relationships of the two cities.

The few sources available at this time that refer to artistic production in the two years preceding the outbreak of the siege of Sarajevo reflect two major sentiments: a steady disappointment with domestic politics and a response of absolute rejection of the violence inflicted upon their Slovene and Croatian neighbors in response to their declarations of independence. While war remained inconceivable in the Bosnian capital until the very end, local artists clearly identified with the attacked and organized amongst themselves to express their solidarity. The idea of a common Yugoslav culture was not entirely abandoned at this time, and the maintenance of regional institutional networks cultivated in the previous decades reflected a practical insertion of Sarajevan actors into a trans-republic framework that functioned separately from political structures. As such, Sarajevan artists faced the outbreak of war in their city as members of a Yugoslav cultural community that had become increasingly vocally opposed to any nationalist rhetoric in the region, but at the same time showed no signs of sympathy for *any* formal political structures.

2.4. YUGOSLAV ARTISTS WITHOUT A YUGOSLAV STATE: THE HERITAGE OF A COMMON YUGOSLAV CULTURAL SPHERE

On the surface, the visual arts scene of pre-war Sarajevo offers little insight into the state of a Yugoslav common culture at the end of the 1980s and beginning of 1990s. Hardly a global artistic center, the Bosnian capital existed simultaneously in the center and periphery of regional developments yet constructed and maintained productive relationships with their colleagues in Zagreb, Belgrade, Ljubljana, or even with more provincial cities. The first free elections that took place in Bosnia, heralding a shift to a market economy, were hereby received by cultural actors as both part of a Sarajevan context as well as part of a larger regional community whose political developments had an impact on local attitudes. As such, the wars associated with Slovenian and Croatian declarations of independence, as well as increased state repression centered around Belgrade, were received not as external conflicts, but as integral issues that affected Bosnian cultural affairs. Nevertheless, the stubborn refusal to conceive an escalation of violence first on Bosnian soil and later in the Sarajevan hills also suggests some degree of separation, supporting the idea of a fluctuating regional community.

Underlining again that the argument being made here is not in favor of the existence of a common Yugoslav culture as a political project or conscious plan, this chapter explores the ways through which the particularities of Yugoslav cultural production created a common sphere of action that helped artists in the region produce, curate and exhibit their works in a sustainable context. As the understanding of attitudes and practices that emerged in socialist Yugoslavia cannot be entirely disconnected from the reaction of artistic circles to the siege of Sarajevo, their relationship to the imagined Yugoslav sphere they inhabited is imperative to treating continuities in local art. Concurrently, claims that the cultural elements upheld by the Yugoslav socialist system were entirely irrelevant by the onset 1990s should be revisited with a critical lens, qualifying how and why these divisions would manifest.³²⁰

The day on which Bosnian Serb forces began shelling Sarajevo, a major exhibition organized by the city's three creative professional unions was meant to open in the halls of the *Collegium Artisticum*. Having the opening deterred by the attack on the city, the show was postponed for fifteen days before taking place as planned, and in spite of falling shells and sniper bullets – attracting crowds to the vernissage.³²¹ Even for this exhibition, the catalogue holds little in the way of open political language, instead focusing again on the economic pressures reflected in a lack of funding for culture and the closing of gallery spaces: even on the very eve of war, Sarajevo cultural producers continued to defend their community from destruction.³²² The party itself was a success. Local sources recalled that those present stayed longer than usual, not wanting to part with the surprisingly euphoric atmosphere generated by the visitors and a liberal consumption of alcohol. At the same time, the devastation and loss imposed upon the city's population by the Bosnian Serb army, while not breaking spirits, constituted a true trauma also for artists, as recounted by the venue's director Fuad Hadžihalilović:

³²⁰ Such a view is taken, for example, by Sabrina Petra Ramet, who claims that Milošević's policies "destroyed what remained of any consensus in the system, and by late 1989, for all practical purposes (legislative, economic, cultural), Yugoslavia had already ceased to exist." Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia From the Death of Tito the Fall of Milošević*, 27.

³²¹ The collective exhibition in question featured works of artists from the cities three main artist guilds: ULUBiH, ULUPUBiH and SABiH.

³²² Author translation: "(...) pogotovo u ovom akutnom trenutku kada se zatvaraju postojeće galerije, sve "tanjeg" kulturnog dinara zbog čega se gase (da li?) značajne manifestacije kao što su na primjer jugoslovenska dokumenta" Brankica Perišić, "Collegium Artisticum '92," in *Collegium Artisticum '92* (Sarajevo: Collegium Artisticum, 1992), n.pag. Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

*“We remember that 6th of April, when nobody could imagine speaking about any exhibition, we remember the first bloodshed on the Vrbanja bridge, the national assemblies, the sniper from the ‘Holiday Inn.’”*³²³

The shock of the first civilian deaths by the hand of Bosnian Serb snipers, and the ensuing barrage of shelling from the hillside heralded the beginning of four years of siege for the inhabitants of Sarajevo. While many artists were able to leave the city at the beginning of the war, many others stayed behind amid the chaos. The exhibition that had been hung on the walls of the *Collegium Artisticum* with much ado remained suspended, the gallery having found itself on the front line of the conflict, abandoned, until 1993.³²⁴ However, the beginning of the siege did not mean a halt in artistic production or the organization of cultural events. The following chapters delve into the history of this highly specific community, whose members mobilized themselves and others despite impossible circumstances to continue creating art within the city they inhabited. While not entirely central to wartime artistic production, it is nevertheless imperative to remember the continuities that these communities inhabited - as part of an existing, well-connected, diverse and above all ambitious cultural community that adapted to the brutal attack on their city.

³²³ Author translation: “Sjećamo se tog 6. aprila, kada nije moglo biti govora ni o kakvoj izložbi, sjećamo se i prve prolivene krvi na Vrbanja mostu, Svenarodne skupštine, snajpera sa ‘Holiday Inna.’” Divna Pervan, “Trajanje u slikama,” *Oslobodjenje*, May 23, 1995, 12, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

³²⁴ Divna Pervan, 12.

CHAPTER III. “A MULTIETHNIC, MULTICULTURAL CITY”: THE CONCEPT OF CIVILIZATION IN BESIEGED SARAJEVO AND IN THE SARAJEVAN VISUAL ARTS

„We work in the dark, we do what we can, we give what we can. Our doubt is our passion, and our passion is our task. The rest is the madness of art.” - Henry James,

Reprinted in “Ostatak je ludilo umjetnosti” by Nada Salom, Oslobodjenje, December 26, 1994, 7.

For a number of reasons, the siege of Sarajevo was as unthinkable as it was unlikely. The return of siege warfare in 20th Century Europe seemed irrational and unexpected, and many believed that the overwhelming military imbalance between attacker and attacked would mean a swift capitulation of the Sarajevo government. Others were convinced that pressure from the international community would lead to foreign intervention.³²⁵ Instead, none of these scenarios transpired. Those unable to leave the city after the beginning of hostilities were left to survive amidst destruction for the 1,425 days of the siege: the longest such conflict in modern history.³²⁶ As many as 240,000 inhabitants are said to have left the city during this period, while some 90,000 internally displaced persons settled in the capital after being forced out of their homes, often as the result of policies of ethnic cleansing.³²⁷ Those that remained within the unremitting destruction and death of war were forced to negotiate the disintegration of commonly held values and beliefs, coming to terms with the physical, but also emotional disintegration of the world in which they lived.

Conditions throughout the siege were constantly shifting in reaction to the prevailing military situation, available goods, and a host of other, somewhat confounding sets of circumstances. The formally established humanitarian relief efforts, directed by the UN, allowed food and other household goods to enter the city, keeping the population from starving. Having wrestled

³²⁵ Peter Andreas, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo*, 2.

³²⁶ Holm Sundhaussen, *Jugoslawien Und Seine Nachfolgestaaten 1943-2011*, 320.

³²⁷ Anders Stefansson, “Urban Exile,” in *The New Bosnian Mosaic. Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 59.

control of the airport from the Bosnian Serb army early in the conflict, UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force) hereby oversaw and managed one of the key entry and exit points for the city.³²⁸ The supply itself was liberally skimmed by the opposing armies, and much of it became the target of smugglers, who would resell the goods on the black market for a higher price.³²⁹ At the same time, the continued and consequent destruction of the city also heavily crippled its infrastructure, meaning that many ordinary citizens lived in damaged or even destroyed flats that had been targeted by mortars, or joined their neighbors in underground shelters and basements. Windows that had been shattered by nearby explosions were covered by unmistakable plastic foil, courtesy of the UNHCR, access to electricity was spotty at best, and running water became a rarity in homes where washing machines had been a key staple of the household for years.³³⁰ Issues with waste and garbage disposal, the effects of prolonged exposure to cold and malnutrition, limited mobility together with a near complete lack of public transportation, inadequate access to basic healthcare and the struggle to communicate with loved ones outside of the city all became problems regular people were suddenly confronted with.³³¹

Despite the city's resilience, the extreme deterioration of living conditions had a profound effect on the morale of its inhabitants. Many had become used to the modern amenities of electric stoves, washing machines and computers, all of which became practically unusable almost overnight. Often glossed over in contemporary texts on the conflict, the scale of destruction led many to exist in a "limit situation", in which "the scale of destruction makes life conditions unrecognizable and incomprehensible", eradicating norms and normativity.³³² Whereas "wartime conditions do not facilitate creativity," those living in warzones must re-create cultural meanings, reshaping knowledge and forms of expression – all the while dealing with the profound existential issues that accompany unrelenting proximity to death.³³³ The visual artists that remained in the besieged city therefore found themselves in a situation that required

³²⁸ Steven Burg, and Paul Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 131–32.

³²⁹ Peter Andreas, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo*, 43.

³³⁰ Armina Pilav, "Before the War, War, After the War," 17–18.

³³¹ Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 318–21.

³³² Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 35.

³³³ Ivana Maček, 35.

the simultaneous development of physical and psychological coping mechanisms and strategies.

Given these extreme circumstances, the need for identifying a logic behind the upheaval of their lives resulted in the typification of divisions between the warring sides, ones which were also openly morally codified, and often were expressed through a binary framework. In this way, such classifications allowed ordinary citizens to orient themselves in an increasingly hostile world.³³⁴ Throughout the siege of Sarajevo, one of the most commonly used lexicons used to delineate, describe and discuss this cleavage came in the form of the term “civilization”, a term accompanied by a series of vocabularies that were easily adapted to the Sarajevan wartime situation.³³⁵ Popular amongst locals and foreigners alike, the concept of civilization appeared in a variety of settings as a tool of denoting innocence and placing blame, giving actors a vocabulary in which to express the moral delineations throughout the conflict.

When analyzed more closely, it becomes apparent that there was no accepted definition of the concept of civilization amongst Sarajevan artists. Whereas some employed the idea of civilization as a reflection of their own personal experiences and reactions to the onset of war, others consciously instrumentalized such vocabularies as a way of directly addressing the international community through familiar lexicons. Furthermore, some Sarajevans also spoke of civilization in a manner that diverged from commonly accepted definitions, shaping, and molding a familiar framework to reflect indescribable experiences. The aim here is not to place the Sarajevan artist in rigid ideological categories, but to explore how the repeated mobilization of civilization narratives was understood, used, and changed by the city’s cultural actors – as a lexical tool that allowed Sarajevans to conceptualize, process and communicate the wartime situation in which they found themselves. Therefore, this chapter also offers insight into one of the central questions of Sarajevan siege-time art: why did artists continue to produce art during the siege of Sarajevo? What did this artistic production mean to them? And, furthermore, what can be learned about everyday experiences of life under siege from these artists?

³³⁴ Ivana Maček, 4.

³³⁵ As will hopefully become apparent from the discussion below, the term ‘civilization’ is not in any way an accurate descriptive concept. Whether due to the shifting and unstable definitions or its historically problematic mobilization in a wide variety of contexts, ‘civilization’ as an idea should generally be considered as an ideologically weighed term. However, due to its recurrence throughout this text, it will be referenced without quotation marks that would otherwise denote this fluctuating status of the idea at hand.

This chapter focuses on the ways in which Sarajevan artists used, discussed, mobilized, or rejected vocabularies based on the dichotomous and morally charged narrative that established Sarajevo as a civilized city enduring violence from uncivilized attackers. The first section will focus on artistic and conceptual developments within local practice that mobilized “civilization discourse” as a tool to delineate and negotiate lived experiences under the siege. On the one hand, the reciprocal conversation between international, mostly Western, cultural actors and local Sarajevan artists using a language based on concepts of civilization will be addressed in detail as a conscious appropriation as opposed to mindless reproduction. Furthermore, the ways in which individual Bosnian actors use the term to refer to their experiences that diverges from an accepted external definition of the concept of civilization offer an unconventional avenue for understanding the effects of the siege on the everyday experiences of regular civilians. The second part of this chapter will focus on the practical impact of the discursive relationship between urban lives and civilized lives, particularly through the lens of shifting curatorial practices and their spillover into public space as an attempt at reconstructing the destroyed landscape. Finally, the proliferation of urban and non-traditional exhibition spaces as a form of reproducing normality will be addressed through tying together the civilian experience of the siege of Sarajevo with the way it is expressed.

3.1. THE CIVILIZED CITY AND THE BARBARIC COUNTRYSIDE: DICHOTOMOUS DISCOURSES AND THEIR ROLE WITHIN SARAJEVAN CULTURAL AND ART HISTORY

The concept of “civilization” is perhaps the broadest and the most common meaning-carrying narrative that exists in the discursive landscape of besieged Sarajevo, basing itself on a recognizable vocabulary that denotes the moral, technological and cultural superiority of a distinct group over the uncivilized “Other”. While sufficiently impactful on its own, the concept of civilization is also built on an amalgam of related ideas that combine to form an accepted collection of meanings in one over-arching, yet flexible, concept. Juxtaposing interlocking ideas fixated on notions of “Europeanness”, modernity, culture, urban exceptionalism and contesting historical identities as inherent elements of a civilized society, their meanings remain context-specific and perpetually fluid in practice. In a way, these smaller narratives provide the building blocks for what is meant to be civilized: through mobilizing the vocabulary used to

define civilization and adopting the imagery on which it is built, artists were able to use recognizable tropes to communicate with or influence a chosen audience. However, these narratives are also not linear nor fixed in meaning – while commonly recognizable in discursive constellations, these individual concepts as well as the sum of their parts are molded by those who mobilize them. For these reasons, the interplay between the many conceptual images of the dichotomies that make up the basis for contrasting the “civilized” from the “barbaric” do not always appear in the same places, configurations, or even carrying the same definitions.³³⁶ Whereas they do appear occasionally in the form of stereotypical reproductions that aim to manipulate public opinion, civilization lexicons are also used to denote blame and express condemnation, and provide an avenue for actors to express complex and complicated experiences.

Generally speaking, the concept of civilization denotes a series of evolutionary characteristics within a society. Referring to a conglomeration of physical conditions, such as the level of technology, the type of manners, scientific progress or religious ideas and customs, there is “nothing which cannot be done in a ‘civilized’ or an ‘uncivilized’ way”.³³⁷ These ideas are deeply ingrained specifically in the “self-consciousness of the West” and, to a certain extent and in certain contexts, have been used to provide a discursive explanation for its superiority over ‘primitive’ societies.³³⁸ The construction hinges on the accumulation of certain characteristics, such as its ‘modernity’ or progressiveness, which directly receives its power from the characteristics which it is judged against: ‘non-modern’, ‘backward’ or ‘barbarian’ behavior.³³⁹ European identities also provide a key building block in the foundation of civilization discourse, often appearing as a stand-in for the ‘West’ as a whole and used as a marker of opposition to the uncivilized.³⁴⁰ As a result, what was to be considered civilized or uncivilized during the siege of Sarajevo was built up on a dichotomous system of opposed meanings: the city versus the countryside, the European versus the oriental non-European, the

³³⁶ Whereas the texts that mobilize civilization discourse within the context of the Yugoslav Wars are too many to point out individually, some authors have already included discussions of this framework within their analyses of the conflicts of Yugoslav dissolution. See, for example: Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State and War*, 62–65.

³³⁷ Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilization*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Reprint edition (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 3.

³³⁸ Norbert Elias, 3.

³³⁹ Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State and War*, 66.

³⁴⁰ Although its role within the context of civilization discourses is non-negligible, the concept of European belonging and associated identifications will be treated more extensively in Chapter V of this text.

cultured and the *uncultured*, the peaceful urban citizen and the barbaric, violent Other. Although existing independently of the siege of Sarajevo, the active use of civilization discourse has also permeated current Bosnian historiography, reproducing its rhetoric to denote moral legitimacy and to frame the experiences of regular Sarajevans.³⁴¹

The civilization discourse discussed is based on a constellation of idealized concepts that make up a fixed vocabulary of meanings. One of the central aspects of this discourse can be found in the role of the city and its urban culture as a dichotomous analogue to the uncivilized countryside. Within Yugoslav society, the division between urban and rural centers was visible long before the dissolution of the state, a social structure that would go on to deeply inform the way in which local (and external) actors spoke of the war.³⁴² The socialist legacy that placed such importance on the urbanization and modernization of Yugoslav society, considering them to be foundational in the state's existence, played into the role of the city within public narratives that discussed its disappearance.³⁴³ Within the Yugoslav sphere, intellectuals such as Bogdan Bogdanović had written extensively about the precarious division between rural and urban realities.³⁴⁴ As such, during the Bosnian War, "many urban dwellers of all national allegiances perceive the conflict as one in which primitive peasants are seeking to destroy urban

³⁴¹ The presence of civilization narratives in BiH literature is rather extensive and often appears as a framework for addressing Sarajevo victimhood. For example, a monograph on the siege of Sarajevo includes a section titled "Sarajevo's defense with culture and civilization", while another characterizes the city as a "tolerant urban space built on civilized modernity" that opposes itself to the conglomeration of "Machiavellism, Jesuitism, fascism, Stalinist bolshevism and contemporary Četnik nationalism." Similarly, a contemporary history textbook directly implicated "Serbian orientalists" as the leading force behind the campaign against Islam and Muslims (who, in turn, were presented by others as a threat to modern civilization.) Such discursive frameworks appear also in the context of contemporary literature, as was the case for, for example, the monograph by architect Ivan Štraus titled "Architects and Barbarians." See also, for example: Smail Ćekić, *Opsada i odbrana Sarajeva 1992-1995. Referati sa okruglog stola održanog 23. novembra 2005. godine.*; Mesud Šadinlija, ed., "Politički i vojni značaj odbrane Sarajeva 1992.-1995. Zbornik radova sa Međunarodne naučne konferencije održane 29. februara i 1. marta 2012 u Sarajevu." (Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2014), 211, 535; Zijad Šehić et al., *Nastavni materijali za izučavanje opsade Sarajeva i zločina genocida počinjenog u Bosni i Hercegovini u periodu od 1992. do 1995. godine u osnovnim i srednjim školama u kantonu Sarajevo* (Sarajevo: Ministarstvo za obrazovanje, nauku i mlade Kantona Sarajevo, 2018), 87.

³⁴² For literature on urban-rural divisions in 1980s Yugoslavia and BiH, see, for example: John B. Allcock, "Rural-Urban Differences and the Break-up of Yugoslavia." *Balkanologie. Revue d'études Pluridisciplinaires*, no. Vol. VI, n° 1-2 (December 1, 2002): 101-25.; Xavier Bougarel, "Yugoslav Wars"; Sabrina Petra Ramet, "Nationalism and the 'Idiocy' of the Countryside: The Case of Serbia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19, no. 1 (January 1, 1996): 70-87.

³⁴³ Dalibor Mišina. *Shake, Rattle and Roll: Yugoslav Rock Music and the Poetics of Social Critique*. London ; New York: Routledge, 30.

³⁴⁴ See, for example: Bogdan Bogdanović, "The City and Death," in *Balkan Blues: Writing out of Yugoslavia*, ed. Joanna Labon (Illinois, USA: Northwestern University Press, 1995), 37-74.

civilization in Bosnia.”³⁴⁵ Merging conceptions based on orientalist rhetoric, perceived primitiveness of the countryside and the understood superiority of urban culture, many of those living in the region understood and spoke of the Wars of Yugoslav dissolution through this specific binary lens.³⁴⁶ This view is echoed by intellectuals such as Gojko Berić, who understands the conflict as an assault by Serbian peasants on the cultural spheres of Sarajevo, disgruntled at their inaccessibility.³⁴⁷

Similarly, the role of culture within a society is not directly interchangeable with the idea of civilization, but instead appears more often as a tool for denoting a hierarchy between societies: the more culture one possesses, the more civilized one is. For some scholars like Ruan Wei, civilization and culture function as distinct concepts, overlapping only when encountering the urban landscape: civilization as culture of the city.³⁴⁸ As such, it is unsurprising that historians associated with Sarajevo such as Ivan Lovrenović framed the continued cultural life of the besieged city in opposition to the de-urbanization and urban societal collapse associated with the outbreak of war.³⁴⁹ The popularity of civilization discourse in reference to the siege of Sarajevo can be explained in part by popular classifications of the capital as a place of “high” culture, obtained thanks to its relative wealth, high levels of education, cosmopolitanism and “Europeanness” – and, by extension, classifying its inhabitants as cultured or *kulturni*.³⁵⁰ The site-specific concepts of the *sarajevski duh* (*the Sarajevo spirit*) or the *raja* feed into these systems of meanings, creating additional attachments for a Sarajevo civilization discourse.³⁵¹

³⁴⁵ Robert Donia and John V.A. Fine, Jr., *Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Tradition Betrayed* (London: Hurst & Company, 1994), 187.

³⁴⁶ See, for example: Stef Jansen, *Antinacionalizam. Etnografija otpora u Beogradu i Zagrebu.*, trans. Aleksandra Bajazetov-Vučen (Belgrade: Biblioteka XX Vek, 2005), 109–63.

³⁴⁷ Gojko Berić in Cynthia Simmons, “A Multicultural, Multiethnic, and Multiconfessional Bosnia and Herzegovina: Myth and Reality,” *Nationalities Papers* 30, no. 4 (December 2002): 623–24.

³⁴⁸ Ruan Wei, “‘Civilization’ and ‘Culture,’” SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, November 29, 2012), 7–8, <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2182608>.

³⁴⁹ Ivan Lovrenović, *Bosnia: A Cultural History*, 211–13.

³⁵⁰ Anders Stefansson, “Urban Exile,” 60–61.

³⁵¹ The concept of *raja* is based on the idea of neighborly coexistence and support specific to the heterogeneous communities in BiH and particularly connected to Sarajevo. The term has its roots in the Ottoman term for individuals paying taxes regardless of religious affiliation. Argued to be “an overarching strategy of everyday life in urban areas”, it functions as a term of belonging to a multinational imagined community based on core values such as basic human decency and the adoption of a sense of humor in everyday life. It is closely related to the idea of the *Sarajevski duh* (Sarajevo spirit) and the “myth” of Sarajevo that places the city as “a haven of interethnic peaceful coexistence”. See: Nebojša Šavija-Valha, “Raja. The Ironic Subject of Everyday Life in Sarajevo,” in *Negotiating Social Relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Semiperipheral Entanglements.*, ed. Stef Jansen, Čarna Brković, and Vanja Čelebić (United Kingdom: Routledge, 2017), 163–78; Cynthia Simmons, “Urbicide and the Myth of Sarajevo,” 625.

The importance of a multinational or multiethnic historical legacy of Bosnia hereby becomes a discursive tool within these dichotomous systems, a characteristic used to denote cultural openness and acceptance. The idea of Sarajevo as a city that was „not multicultural or multiethnic, but rather, interlaced and interlocked” was part of the global imagination of the city, and was presented as the target of destruction in the Bosnian War.³⁵² For this reason, scholars such as Cynthia Simmons have argued that the capital was targeted precisely due to its role of “Bosnian cosmopolitanism and “advanced civilization.”³⁵³

However, culture is not only an *object* of attack, but also exists as a *subject*, “refracting political messages, reflecting on the war, and sometimes serving simply to raise spirits.”³⁵⁴ One of the reasons for the pervasiveness of narratives that link Sarajevoan cultural production to the city’s civilized status can be found in the rhetorical role of the arts as an expression of civilized emotions. Whereas civility on an individual level is more closely associated with practices of courtesy and etiquette, the emotions that uphold it are often molded by aesthetics, where artistic production and its appropriate consumption are ascribed an ethical quality. Historically, these civilized expressions of emotions, whether in the form of a poem or a painting, are hereby given a moral value “with a claim to universality and as criteria for the creation of social hierarchy.”³⁵⁵

As such, visual artists take on at least a partial role as *producers* responsible for the protection of “civilized” culture, targeted in theory and in practice by the Bosnian Serb Army. Throughout the siege of Sarajevo, artists became increasingly identified by their role as an opposition to the mass-scale destruction of cultural heritage objects, belonging to all national groups, framed through a lens of culture-producers in opposition to culture-destroyers.³⁵⁶ Participation in the wartime cultural scene is often framed within a structure that recognizes the importance of “maintaining normality” in wartime circumstances, where the collective participation of artists

³⁵² Fran Markowitz, *Sarajevo*, 151.

³⁵³ Cynthia Simmons, “A Multicultural, Multiethnic, and Multiconfessional Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 632.

³⁵⁴ Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia From the Death of Tito the Fall of Milošević*, 265.

³⁵⁵ Margrit Pernau et al., *Civilizing Emotions: Concepts in Nineteenth Century Asia and Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2.

³⁵⁶ The destruction of objects of cultural heritage has been found to have been committed by all warring parties, but in the case of Sarajevo are generally limited to the Bosnian Serb Army attacks. Relatively well-documented, the conscious targeting of buildings containing invaluable Ottoman-era manuscripts, such as the Oriental Institute or the National and University library, or the destruction of multiple sites of worship irrespective of religious affiliation have been noted to also have been a conscious tactic on the hand of the Bosnian Serb Army. See, for example: Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War*, 73–101.

and audiences in cultural manifestations forged a “sense of communal identity that cut across ethnic lines” and allowed them to participate in a shared ritual that promoted civic, urban, values. Hereby, they qualify participation in cultural life as an act of resistance – and one which, in practice also reproduced the image of a civilized, modern city.³⁵⁷ In this way, civilization-adjacent concepts such as the “spirit of Sarajevo” were recognized as being reproduced through culture and art, actively promoted by cultural workers as much as journalists that covered the “European Jerusalem.”³⁵⁸ This image of the city is performed through a variety of practices that sustained interaction with the city landscape and their symbolic understanding built on a melding of authentic experiences and preconceived notions.³⁵⁹

This manifestation of civilizational discourse extended not only to those who experienced the siege, but can also be found in contemporary scholarship that treats artistic production under the siege. For Irfan Hošić, who addresses cultural production during the siege with a focus on design artefacts, the need for upholding morale “in extremely uncivilized circumstances” is tied to the production of innovative objects as a direct “manifestation of the crash of technology and progress of a once sophisticated, progressive and developed society,” addressing one possible reading of what it meant to be civilized.³⁶⁰ More directly, Elena Dell’Agnese treats the production of the city’s image along lines of dichotomous opposition of the good and evil, in a way reproducing imagery invoked by Sarajevan cultural actors while explaining their origin:

*“It was as if the city had decided to respond to the —armed, toothless and ill-washed primitives on the hills (as the Sarajevan architect Ivan Štraus described the Serbian fighters besieging the town) by becoming more of a —city (in the sense of civitas) than ever (...)”*³⁶¹

It also cannot be forgotten that the self-attributed notion of a “civilized world” holds specific, historically defined meanings within the Balkan sphere. Indirectly defining itself in opposition to imagined Others, a “civilized” Western society has long been contrasted with the “backwardness” of Eastern Europe and the “violence” of the Balkans in the public imagination, producing a series of superimposed moral valuations. Based on Edward Said’s notion of

³⁵⁷ Kenneth Morrison, and Paul Lowe, *Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo*, 140.

³⁵⁸ Kenneth Morrison, and Paul Lowe, 139.

³⁵⁹ Also referred to as “embodiments” and “imaginaries” by Silvija Jestrović. Silvija Jestrović, *Performance, Space, Utopia. Cities of War, Cities of Exile*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2013), 113–14.

³⁶⁰ Irfan Hošić, “Mapping the ‘Image of Crisis’. Art and Design in Besieged Sarajevo,” 49,60.

³⁶¹ Elena Dell’Agnese, “Making and Remaking Sarajevo’s Image,” n.pag.

“Orientalism”, Maria Todorova has coined the term “Balkanism” to refer to regionally distinct reductionist depictions of the Balkans that discursively define the region and its inhabitants as naturally prone to industrial backwardness, a lack of functioning institutions, irrationality, superstition, and violence.³⁶² The presence of orientalist rhetoric in the Balkan sphere, and particularly in Yugoslavia, as one which permitted the stratification of independent *narodi*, in part on the basis of religious belonging, introducing symbolic terms (Balkan primitivism, etc.) that are used by a variety of actors, even those to whom these terms could be “applied”.³⁶³ Relying on a series of familiar hierarchical binaries, the impact of region-specific images on the development of a civilization discourse during the Bosnian War is not negligible. As has been noted by Bakić-Hayden, the mobilization of dichotomous rhetoric during this time took on an “intellectual and emotional force” that created opposition categories: peaceful Europe vs. violent Balkans - or Christian vs. Muslim.³⁶⁴ These dichotomies take on further dimensions when considering the recurrent tropes of a Muslim terrorist threat against European Christian values, popular amongst Serb nationalist propaganda.³⁶⁵

Despite its clearly Western-dominated character, the civilization discourse should also not be considered as directly linear, produced in an external context and reappropriated by Bosnian audiences to discuss the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The idea of “the Balkans” as an independent sphere played a crucial part in “local narratives of collective cultural and social identity”, ruled by an independent internal logic that defined the region itself as much as it defined a relationship with the imagined ‘Europe’.³⁶⁶ As such, familiar vocabularies were manifested by Yugoslav academics, intertwining ideas of European identity, modernity and progress to propose

³⁶² While a full discussion of the impact and function of Balkanism-based discourse and the process of “nesting orientalisms” developed by Maria Todorova and Milica Bakić-Hayden, respectively, exceeds the scope of this study, their work offers a valuable lens through which the notion of “civilization” is produced within the Balkan, and Sarajevan context. See: Marija N. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*; Bakić-Hayden, “Nesting Orientalisms.”

³⁶³ See: Milica Bakić-Hayden, and Robert M. Hayden, “Orientalist Variations on the Theme ‘Balkans’”; Bakić-Hayden, “Nesting Orientalisms.”

³⁶⁴ Milica Bakić-Hayden, “Nesting Orientalisms,” 926.

³⁶⁵ Jasmina Gavrankapetanović-Redžić, “Enjoy Sara-Jevo,” 89.

³⁶⁶ Wendy Bracewell, and Alex Drace-Francis, *Balkan Departures: Travel Writing from Southeastern Europe* (Berghahn Books, 2009), 10.

essentially moral questions.³⁶⁷ Integrated into regional lexicons, the use of these dichotomous notions within a local context manifested itself, for example, in national groups that emphasized their superiority through the rejection of Balkan identities and the embracing of European ones.³⁶⁸ Specifically within the Balkan Wars, the equation of European identities with “civilized” and “progressive” societies was in this way reappropriated as a “nesting division” that permitted the various groups to judge themselves and their neighbors.³⁶⁹ Furthermore, the heritage of Yugoslav socialism and its policies of relative openness particularly towards Western nations cannot be discounted as influential in Sarajevan wartime narratives. As such, the social and cultural history of the siege of Sarajevo has reflected an active appropriation of these concepts by local actors and historians, manifesting for example in recurring emphasis of “normality” through the maintenance of everyday, pre-war, routines – ones which were based on the functioning of a “modern” city with “modern” amenities such as running water, electricity, and a public transportation system.³⁷⁰ Conversely, the dangers of self-essentialization of the “West” as a homogenous sphere can also lead to over-generalizations and limit an understanding of the diversity of foreign and local reactions to the outbreak of the Bosnian War.³⁷¹

Offering a broad overview of how the concept of ‘civilization’ has been integral to the construction of multiple narratives that exist within primarily dichotomous structure, this introduction into its entanglement in the context of the Bosnian War aims to provide a backbone for addressing how artists externalized their views on the siege. The diversity of associated meanings, coupled with their relative elasticity, that are built on narratives of the civilized have made them useful as a way of understanding and expressing limit experiences associated with the constant destruction of the besieged city. In this way, visual artists within besieged Sarajevo,

³⁶⁷ One example can be found in the work of Predrag Matvejević, who discussed the dissolution of Yugoslavia within the framework of a civilization discourse. Questioning the role of the Balkan state on the world stage, he offers the following insight through a construction of values: “The first country of the third world in Europe or again the first European country in the third world – it is difficult to say whether Yugoslavia is more one or the other.” Author translation: “Prva zemlja trećeg svijeta u Evropi ili pak prva evropska zemlja u trećem svijetu – teško je reći je li Jugoslavija više jedno ili drugo.” Matvejević, *Granice i sudbine*, 17.

³⁶⁸ This attitude of rejection of Balkan identification can be found particularly in Bosnian, Slovenian or Croatian historiographies, the latter of which is briefly problematized by Wilmer. Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State and War*, 100.

³⁶⁹ Milica Bakić-Hayden, “Nesting Orientalisms,” 930.

³⁷⁰ See for example: Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*; Ivana Maček, “‘Imitation of Life’: Negotiating Normality in Sarajevo under Siege”; Stef Jansen, *Yearnings in the Meantime*, 100.

³⁷¹ Marija N. Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 10.

together with their reviewers, regularly grasped for this particular vocabulary in order to communicate their experiences, but also to understand, explain and adapt practical processes of wartime adaptations.

3.2. PAINTING THE “MODERN WESTERN CITY”. SARAJEVAN ARTISTS AND THE NEGOTIATION OF CIVILIZED VICTIMHOOD

As has been noted, the appearance of ‘civilization’ motifs within the public sphere that surrounded the siege of Sarajevo were not limited to external commentators or contemporary academics, but were also an integral part of local vocabularies used to internally frame the conflict. The popularity of such narratives in the Sarajevan cultural community can be traced through exhibition catalogues, contemporaneous artist interviews, art-show reviews and even through the artworks themselves, making it an appropriate point of reference when discussing how lived experiences of war were understood and exteriorized. The ways in which the notion of civilization was mobilized within this community extends beyond a simple dichotomous opposition of moral values. The artists active during the siege of Sarajevo were generally dependent on a lexicon that affirmed their status as ‘civilized’ victims, and therefore worthy of protection that ‘uncivilized’ victims are not afforded, but interacted with it in a variety of ways. Whereas some artists naturally picked up (or reused) traditional understandings of the civilized to understand and externalize the nearly inexpressible personal experience of life under siege, others consciously mobilized it as a tool of communication with the hope of encouraging international intervention. Others yet adapted accepted definitions to their own needs, for example ignoring associated dichotomous moral meanings to simply speak of the physical effects of destruction on their lives. In this way, Sarajevan artists mobilized civilizational narratives both as a form of understanding and expressing deeply personal emotions, and as a practical tool that reaffirmed their agency in a context in which little could be found.

The following section aims to demonstrate how visual artists in Sarajevo responded to and interacted with a civilization discourse within their artistic practice, exploring the multi-faceted and site-specific interpretations of this universally used narrative. Focusing first on the appropriation of civilizational discourse as an internal and external signifier, the role of adjacent concepts in framing and positioning a moral position within the conflict will be discussed. In

this sense, both internal meaning-producing narratives will be considered, as well as their conscious mobilization as a tool of communication with external actors. The second part of this section will primarily discuss how Sarajevan artists used civilization discourses as a vocabulary to understand and process the destruction that they were subjected to. In this way, diverging meanings and definitions are also identified: not every person who speaks of civilization is referencing identical ideas.

3.2.1. SHIFTING NARRATIVES AND UNSTABLE DEFINITIONS. THE EMERGENCE OF “CIVILIZATION” DISCOURSE AS AN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SIGNIFIER

As a whole, the visual arts scene of besieged Sarajevo visibly incorporated the ideas behind civilization narratives into their exhibitions and artworks, adopting vocabularies that placed their city as a civilized urban center that was victimized by the uncivilized aggressor. The lexicons used within the Sarajevan visual arts scene often followed dichotomous divisions, which used “to show in the darkness the horrors of war, and through paintings and light the indestructibility of art.”³⁷² References to the civilized, or in this case, multiethnic heritage of the city would occasionally appear in exhibition reviews or other art-centric texts, for example in a review of Tuzlan painted Zdravko Novak, who’s *vernissage* was described as “an evening representative of Bosnian culture – that is, a manifestation of its multiculturalism.”³⁷³ The popularity of these frameworks was most likely encouraged in, part, by local SDA leaders, as official government agents have been noted to favor presenting the interconnected ideas of “Bosniak nationalism and BiH multiculturalism, and of heroic armed struggle and ‘barehanded’ civilian resilience-as-resistance” to the public.³⁷⁴ This approach was also based in real strategic awareness of the attacking army’s policies, which were highly attuned to the responses of the international community to violence committed in the former Yugoslavia. As such, in order to avoid intervention on the Iraqi model, the Bosnian Serb army and its key allies regularly

³⁷² Author translation: „(...) kako bi u tami pokazali strahote rata, a slikom i svjetlošću neuništivost umjetnosti”. H. Arifagić, “Odgovor na destrukciju,” *Oslobodjenje*, April 25, 1993, 5, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

³⁷³ Author translation: “U svemu bilo je to reprezentativno veće bosanske kulture – odnosno manifestacije njene multikulturalnosti.” Ibrahim Prohić, “Tišina minulih vremena,” *Oslobodjenje*, November 2, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

³⁷⁴ Stef Jansen, *Yearnings in the Meantime*, 99.

escalated their operations when “the international community was preoccupied and retreating or waiting when they found themselves in the spotlight of the international media.”³⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the Sarajevo arts scene cannot be seen as directly mirroring official government policies, which were appropriated only when the artist themselves chose to employ them: the popularity and role of a civilization narrative cannot be entirely explained by the simple fact that ruling forces spoke in the same registers. Similarly, although it would be convenient to position the emergence of the concept of civilization within the Sarajevo sphere as a direct response to the siege of the city, Sarajevo and Yugoslav actors had already begun mobilizing it within the context of war long before the siege of the Bosnian capital.³⁷⁶ The use of the dichotomous vocabularies of civilizational discourses in response to ethnic violence is therefore neither a specifically siege-time nor a localized phenomenon, but one which found root in the Sarajevo context.

As one of the most influential exhibitions to have taken place in Sarajevo since the ill-fated *Yugoslav Documenta*, the critically acclaimed group show featured under the name *Svjedoci Postojanja (Witnesses of Existence)* offers explicit insight into how local actors molded civilization discourses to suit their own needs.³⁷⁷ The exhibition was organized by the Obala Art Centar, one of the city’s major private institutions popular for its activities in a variety of

³⁷⁵ Robert Donia and John V.A. Fine, Jr., *Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Tradition Betrayed*, 221–22.

³⁷⁶ With the outbreak of war in Croatia, covered primarily in Chapter II, Sarajevo artists were already using language that reproduced discourses of civilization. Although artistic reactions to war within other former Yugoslav republics escapes the scope of this text, evidence can be found in regional exhibition catalogues that points to similar reactions amongst other cultural actors in reaction to similar instances of violence, such as the siege of Dubrovnik, using similar language. Ivan Kožarić et al., *Mjesto i Sudbina* (Dubrovnik: Art radionica Lazareti & Galerija SESAME, 1993). Bibliothèque Kadinsky, Centre Pompidou.

³⁷⁷ For more details on the exhibition, see: Jamey Gambrell, “Sarajevo: Art in Extremis,” *Art in America*, May 1994, 100-105. *Witnesses of Existence* Carton, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina; Karim Zaimović, “Svjedoci ne kao drugi,” *Dani*, December 29, 1993, 60-61. *Witnesses of Existence* Carton, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina; Razija Lagumdžija, “Svjedoci postojanja,” *Oslobodjenje*, May 11, 1993, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo; Nermina Kurspahić. *Svjedoci Postojanja / Witnesses of Existence. Exhibition Catalogue*. Sarajevo: Obala Art Centar, 1993, National and University Library of Bosnia-Herzegovina; N.n. *Witnesses of Existence*. Sarajevo: Obala Art Centar, 1993, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina; André Glucksmann, “Per Chi Suona Sarajevo?,” in *Sarajevo - La Biennale Di Venezia* (Koper: Obalne Galerije Piran, 1993), n.pag. Institut National de l’Histoire de l’Art, Paris.; Milan Cvijanović, “Mi smo dio svjetske kulture,” *Dani*, May 1, 1994, 54–55, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

cultural sectors, and active since 1984.³⁷⁸ Lacking permanent offices for much of its existence, the organization had planned the inauguration of its new space on the 20th of April 1992, after spending a year renovating the failing Sutjeska cinema in the center of the city.³⁷⁹ Unfortunately, the building was destroyed in the first days of the war, turning the highly anticipated artistic space into a deserted ruin. Centrally located, the remnants of the structure were reclaimed for its original use already in the summer of 1992, as the works of eight artists were successively exhibited amongst ruins: solo shows by Nusret Pašić, Ante Jurić, Zoran Bogdanović, Mustafa Skopljak, Petar Waldegg, Edin Numankadić, Sanjin Jukić and Radoslav Tadić. These individual and ephemeral events culminated in a collective exhibition in the same space, which had become a popular passage for Sarajevans who used it as a shelter from the sniper fire coming from across the nearby intersection. Receiving global recognition and popular locally, the cumulative *Svjedoci Postojanja* was perhaps the first major wartime exhibition that commanded major audiences, particularly amongst the city's youth.³⁸⁰

Intended as the first entry of an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina for the prestigious Venice Biennale, an event made up of a series of national pavilions, the initiative earned great popularity amongst the local cultural community, who saw the artistic exchange as a welcome sign of possible re-integration into the international community following a year of shelling and sniper fire.³⁸¹ Unfortunately, the works were unable to leave the city due to a lack of cooperation from the UNPROFOR, and were ultimately replaced with a video recording that attempted to capture the atmosphere of the show.³⁸² In spite of this minor setback, a special catalogue was printed for the Venice event, and foreign benefactors began taking an increasing interest in the *Witnesses*. Over the course of the siege, the exhibition was exhibited in the New York Kunsthalle, in the swiss town of Biel-Bienne, during the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, as well as

³⁷⁸ FAMA International, "OBALA ART CENTER," *Cultural Survival Newsletter*, 1993-1995, Summer 1994. Accessed October 12, 2020, <https://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/fama-original-projects/05/index.html>; Srdjan Vuletić, interview by Ewa Anna Kumelowski, August 22, 2017.

³⁷⁹ Svjetlana Mustafić, "Izložbe bez galerije," *Oslobodjenje*, June 26, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

³⁸⁰ H. Arifagić, "Odgovor na destrukciju," 5.

³⁸¹ H. Arifagić, 5.

³⁸² Nada Salom, "Snažan otpor varvarizmu," *Oslobodjenje*, May 12, 1994, 5, Mediacentar Sarajevo; Jamey Gambrell, "Sarajevo: Art in Extremis," 100.

in Innsbruck, Zagreb, and Prague, as part of the “Month of BiH in the Czech Republic.”³⁸³ Beyond its immense impact on the Sarajevan cultural landscape, this exhibition provides an excellent example of the intertwined nature of discourse production within siege-time art: conceived as a direct artistic response to the trauma of life under siege, both the artworks and the exhibition as a whole created space for healing and community-building amidst destruction. At the same time, it actively cooperated with international actors, exporting the works and the stories they told to an external ‘West’, at times engaging also with discussions of international intervention.

³⁸³ See, for example: Nada Salom, “Izmedju odabira i zbira,” *Oslobodjenje*, August 10, 1995, 12, Mediacentar Sarajevo; Nada Salom, “Snažan otpor varvarizmu,” 5; Jasna Bastic, “Stein zu Brot, Abfall zu Kunst : ‘Witnesses of Existence’ - ‘Zeugen der Existenz’ : Künstler aus Sarajevo stellen in Biel aus,” *WoZ*, June 3, 1993, 22 edition, Witnesses of Existence Carton, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina; Giles Sutherland, “Art from the Dark Side,” *The Scotsman*, n.d. Witnesses of Existence Carton, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina; Elizabeth Hess, “Warcabulary,” *Voice*, March 15, 1994, n.pag, Witnesses of Existence Carton, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina; Zvonko Marković, “Planetarna slava ‘Galerije Obala,’” *Vjesnik*, June 13, 1994, 13, Witnesses of Existence Carton, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina; Niklaus Baschung, “Wenn Ironie zur Überlebensstrategie wird,” *Bieler Tagblatt*, May 27, 1994, Witnesses of Existence Carton, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina; Ursula Philadelphia, “Die Überlebens-Kunst der Augenzeugen,” *publication unknown*, March 2, 1995, 51 edition, sec. Kultur, n.pag., Witnesses of Existence Carton, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.



Figure 1. Exhibition opening of *Witnesses of Existence* in the former Sutjeska cinema. The *vernissage* was an extremely popular event, as can be seen from the crowd gathered for the occasion and socializing. Image reprinted from “Obala Art Centar”, Gallery Catalogue, ed. Izeta Gradjević, Sarajevo: *Obala Art Centar*, 1996. Photography by Predrag Čančar. Archives of the Historical Museum of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The popularity of *Svjedoci Postojanja* has resulted in a wealth of documentation that transcends most cultural events held during the siege of Sarajevo. The resulting collection of catalogues, reviews and press articles shed light on the curatorial concept of its organizers, but also the ways in which they hoped to present their work to a local and external public. The original exhibition catalogue, created in the blockaded capital, is printed bilingually in Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian and in English, and uses explicitly political language: the show is meant as a constructive answer to the “drunk maniacs who fire” at their homes, and the “hatred of the city,

urbicide, culturocide, genocide” that they represent.³⁸⁴ This explicit engagement of language dealing with urban destruction is juxtaposed by short, diary-like chronicles that accompany the artist pages in the catalogue and narrate a range of everyday Sarajevan struggles, tying them to the individual exhibitions that made up the group show. Weather reports, diplomatic developments such as the establishment of relations with Italy or the inauguration of Bill Clinton as president of the United States are interspersed with more intimate experiences: a couple in love embrace amongst mortars and a birthday is celebrated amongst oil lamps, with humanitarian aid cookies served as refreshments. A donation of 50 million dollars for democratization projects by the Soros Foundation is referred to with approval: “Nice act and concrete help.”³⁸⁵ Through intertwining personal experiences with political events, the short notices serve to humanize the victims of the siege, presenting their experiences in relatable ways while simultaneously framing them as part of a struggle for the city. Whereas any direct references to civilization are absent in this text, the linguistic framework in which the authors operate allows them to straightforwardly induce moral judgement in a way that is acceptable and understood by all types of consumers and audiences.

Similarly, the term *civilization* is also absent from a collective wartime catalogue published by the Obala Art Centar in 1996, yet is present in the form of associated vocabularies used to denote moral meanings. A text by art historian Nermina Kurspahić directly describes the siege as an assault by “wild Balkan Nazis and fascists”, whose actions are countered by the creative answer of their victims, their ethical advantage is reflected in the “superiority of human creation over destruction.”³⁸⁶ The role of artists as producers of culture, whose professional activity provides a concrete answer to the targeted destruction by the mindless attacker, is reaffirmed by art historians who interpret the *Witnesses of Existence*’s curatorial concepts within a civilization discourse. The resurgence of a typified lexicon that opposes the Balkan savagery to Western or European civilization is found also in critical receptions of the exhibition, for example in a review by literary critic Karim Zaimović. Offering a generally positive overview of the show, Zaimović’s analyses of individual works are also framed within the context of Balkanist themes. As such, Sanjin Jukić’s “Sarajevo-Hollywood” installation, in which the

³⁸⁴ Muhamed Dželilović, “Sarajevo OP. ’92/93,” in *Witnesses of Existence / Svjedoci Postojanja* (Sarajevo: Obala Art Centar, 1993), n.pag.

³⁸⁵ Muhamed Dželilović, n.pag.

³⁸⁶ Nermina Kurspahić, “Art...In Spite of Everything,” in *Svjedoci Postojanja / Witnesses of Existence. Exhibition Catalogue*. (Sarajevo, 1993), n.pag.

artist replaced a previously exhibited logotype of the famous *Hollywood* sign with the word *Sarajevo*, encasing it by bright red lights, is referred to through the contrast of American symbols of glamour and the ruined theater in which it was placed:

*“This is perhaps what we get from Jukić’s installation derived from the Hollywood logotype to write the word Sarajevo, which places this city, unlike the American factory of dreams, as a Balkan melting pot of dreams.”*³⁸⁷

This interpretation is unsurprising giving the deeply embedded feeling of irony that made up Jukić’s practice, and which would have read to the viewer as a comparison of the idealized nature of the unattainable American dream with the destruction of Sarajevan reality. The use of “Balkan” as a signifier for the unruly, violent uncivilized by both Kurspahić and Zaimović hereby is clearly part of existing dichotomies – yet exhibit singularities, as the latter does not openly deny his own belonging to the Balkan. Sanjin Jukić’s transformed symbol of Western decadence is accompanied by a video installation, which features seven minutes of news footage alternated with singular phrases projected on a blank screen, accompanied by a strangely ominous soundtrack that merges upbeat pop with Wagner’s *Ride of the Valkyries*. As such, foreign news coverage of Sarajevan suffering is juxtaposed with a collection of poignant phrases: “United Nations Solutions”, “World Community”, “West”, “East”, “Washington-Moscow Axis?”. The video ends with one final demand: “Break the Siege of Sarajevo”.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁷ Author translation: “Takav možda kakav dobijemo pred Jukićevom instalacijom izvedenom od hollywoodskog logotipa kojim ispisuje riječ Sarajevo, čime se ovaj grad, za razliku od američke tvornice snova, postavlja kao balkanska rastakaonica snova.” Karim Zaimović, “Svjedoci ne kao drugi,” 61.

³⁸⁸ Sanjin Jukić, 1993. *Sarajevo Ghetto Spectacle*. Video installation. Sarajevo: Obala Art Centar. Witnesses of Existence Carton, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The artworks that made up the *Witnesses of Existence*, despite their shared platform, also functioned as individual objects of meaning: whereas the discursive lexicons that made up ideas of civilization were never far off, they were not used in exactly the same ways. Although some of the pieces, such as Edin Numankadić's "Ratni Tragovi", a continuation of pre-war 'traces series', had been conceived before the onset of hostilities, the works themselves remained a clear reflection of the individual experiences of the artists. A performance by Ante Jurić, known under the title "Sarajevski Pucanj" (The Sarajevo Shot)", features the artist discharging a small firearm into a series of mirrors mounted on a pile of sandbags before him. Quite literally hinging on the artist shooting at his own reflection, the intense depth of the piece is disquieting, angry and veering on aggressive – but simultaneously recognizable, comprehensible not as an act of violence but one of self-reckoning. Referring to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in 1914, the work is part of a performance triptych that ties the past with the present, inspired in part by the bullet wound carried by Jurić since the first days of the war.³⁸⁹ Collectively, the artworks combined to present an intimate glimpse into the personal, emotional responses to the constant violence inflicted upon them under the siege. When viewed under this lens, individual reactions can be discerned from the group: as such, whereas Mustafa Skopljak and Jurić exteriorize their grief through intimate metaphors, others such as Zoran Bogdanović chose more overt means of expressions.

The reception of the exhibition and the works included in it functioned in a similar system of associated meanings, as art critics from the besieged city joined their foreign colleagues in praising the innovative show. Sarajevan press coverage of the show's international exploits often employed civilization narratives, as was the case for one local review of the *vernissage* in the New York Kunsthal, which featured under the striking headline: "a powerful resistance to barbarity."³⁹⁰ This phrase is identified in the article as originating with Achille Bonito Oliva, the artistic director of the 1993 Venice Biennale, who had previously referred to the show as a reflection of "spiritual strength" and "inner richness" of its artists, the results of their resistance against barbarity.³⁹¹ Other international actors used similar language to describe the wartime art emerging from Sarajevo, such as André Glücksmann, who penned the introduction of the show's catalogue for the Venice Biennale. Anchored in this popular narrative framework, he

³⁸⁹ An. Šimić, "Pretvorba u umjetnički čin," *Oslobodjenje*, September 7, 1994, 12, Mediacentar Sarajevo; Ante Jurić, "Pucanj ili zaustavljeni trag," *Oslobodjenje*, September 7, 1994, 12, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

³⁹⁰ Nada Salom, "Snažan otpor varvarizmu," 5.

³⁹¹ Nada Salom, 5.

describes the siege in relation to previous global conflicts, referencing the division of the city and the countryside as analogous to the “civilized” nature of European culture. However, the author also appears to disregard Alija Izetbegović’s comparisons of Sarajevo suffering to the Warsaw Ghetto or the Republican resistance movement in Spain.³⁹² Another foreign journalist covered the *Witnesses*’ presence in Innsbruck (this time, in the Kunsthalle II) by boldly referring to Sarajevo as a “center of art and culture”, whose “multicultural life” was cut short by the onset of the siege, but whose artists were able to develop “cultural understanding” that permitted them to work together only months after the outbreak of the conflict.³⁹³ This characterization, broadly fitting a familiar discourse mobilizing notions of civilization, used recognizable terms and concepts to frame Sarajevo as a civilized, multicultural urban center that naturally seeks to cultivate inter-community dialogue through cultural production. In this case, the use of the civilization discourse betrays the author’s ignorance of the conflict, in which multi-ethnic artistic cooperation was never actually halted in a place that never truly functioned as an artistic center. As such, it appears that foreign actors also willingly appropriated the same language that Sarajevo cultural actors were using in order to bring across their point, but did not do so in identical ways – sometimes even using it as a recognizable moral judgement for a conflict they knew little about.

The overlap between spontaneous use and conscious appropriation was clearly understood by both Sarajevo cultural actors and foreign media workers who covered artistic events emerging in the besieged city. For example, reactions to a review featuring the Obala artists published in *Art in America*, one of the most prestigious professional publications for the visual arts, was accompanied by a detailed account of the accompanying press conference, attended by some 70 accredited journalists – the exhibition itself was visited by some 40 more journalists and critics.³⁹⁴ The text in question appears to have placed a dual emphasis on foreign interest in the exhibition: on the one hand, praising the show itself, and on the other hand, pointing out the importance of media interest. Simultaneously, the review reprinted excerpts of speeches offered by foreign cultural critics which, like one offered by Kunsthalle curator Martin Koons, that referred to the exhibition as an act of “witnessing of multiethnic cultural life and traditions” of

³⁹² In his text for the catalogue published in Italy for the Venice Biennale, Glucksmann references a slew of conflicts and instances of specifically fascist oppression, including the horrors of the Warsaw Ghetto, life in Franco’s Madrid, the Second World War, and further removed, the war in Vietnam. André Glucksmann, “Per Chi Suona Sarajevo?”

³⁹³ Ursula Philadelphia, “Die Überlebens-Kunst der Augenzeugen,” n.pag.

³⁹⁴ Nada Salom, “Snažan otpor varvarizmu,” 5.

the suffocating city.³⁹⁵ The importance of public opinion in providing pressure for foreign intervention meant that cultural events also functioned as diplomatic tools, which in turn was also obvious to the international community. As such, when *Svjedoci Postojanja* was shown in Edinburgh as part of the well-known *Fringe* theater festival, a reviewer passively remarked how “the exhibition also plays an important role in keeping the plight of Bosnia in the public eye as media attention wanders to more “newsworthy” conflicts.”³⁹⁶



Figure 2. Performance view “Sarajevski Pucanj” by Ante Jurić. Jurić is seen pointing a small firearm at a series of mirrors attached to stacked black bags. Film still from *Witnesses of Existence* video, Dubravko Brigić, Srdjan Vuletić, Sarajevo: *Obala Art Centar*, 1993, 11:37. *Witnesses of Existence* Carton, Courtesy of Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Artwork rights to Ante Jurić.

Mape grafika '92, '93, '94 (Promotivna izložba originalnih grafičkih listova. Devedesetdruge, Devedesettreće, Devedesetčetvrtre), an exhibition of graphic prints by professors and students

³⁹⁵ Nada Salom, 5.

³⁹⁶ Giles Sutherland, “Art from the Dark Side,” n.pag.

of the Academy of Arts, was another excellent example of a major exhibition that included civilization-based narratives within a curatorial concept. Like *Svjedoci Postojanja*, this second major show merged three individual exhibitions of graphic prints (created in 1992 and 1994) and woodcuts (1993), into a common collection and catalogue, resulting in a great wealth of texts that discussed the artworks individually and the project as a whole. As was the case for the *Witnesses of Existence*, the catalogue in question was published bilingually, indicating a conscious orientation towards a foreign public: a fact directly addressed by Muhamed Karamehmedović, who remarks upon the exhibition's ability to "succeed in informing the world of events and horrors of these war times."³⁹⁷ The numerous texts printed in this collection feature overt references to the dichotomous ideals of civilization and barbarity, discussed by prominent cultural, political and artistic figures. Ibrahim Spahić, head of the influential International Peace Center, describes the exhibition as "the result of the expression of resistance and of creative power of the artist, whose work showed to be, in many exhibitions around the world, a message of hope, freedom and tolerance in the struggle of civilization against barbarism."³⁹⁸ It is clear that, as a document, the catalogue that memorialized the exhibition series was intended to be read abroad by a foreign audience as much as it was promoted internally of the siege.

The various art-historical texts that accompany the collection clearly outline the context in which it was created. As such, Prof. Mehmed Akšamija explains not only the presence of artistic production but also its value to an unknown audience in a touching text written for the first *Sarajevo '92* exhibition:

*"The Academy, its students and professors have become the victims of aggression upon Bosnia and Herzegovina, - where life itself turned into a tragedy. So much pain and suffering, so much violence and crime, so much destruction and so many dead, such a genocide and such a cruel inhumanity had but one aim: to annihilate a particular civilization and its heritage. Students and professors, those still alive, have sublimed the tragedy and horror of this moment into the art of the tragic, represented by eighteen works of art of the Sarajevo '92 exhibition."*³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ N.n., *Sarajevo Devedesetdruge Devedesettreće Devedesetčetvrtre* (Sarajevo: Akademija Likovnih Umjetnosti, Međunarodni centar za mir, BiH Press, 1995), 5, 65. Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

³⁹⁸ N.n., *Sarajevo Devedesetdruge Devedesettreće Devedesetčetvrtre*, 4.

³⁹⁹ N.n., *Sarajevo Devedesetdruge Devedesettreće Devedesetčetvrtre*, 9.

Similarly, the opening speech offered by the Bosnian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Irfan Ljubijankić, does not directly engage with the idea of civilization, but nevertheless, whether consciously or subconsciously, reproduces the image of Sarajevo, and in particular the city's artists, as a "lighthouse amidst an indifferent contemporary world of consumption and production" through "the struggle of Bosnia and Herzegovina against fascism".⁴⁰⁰

The other texts which accompanied the exhibition employ similar language, reinforcing the dichotomous idea of barbaric fascists attacking civilized urbanites, which is achieved through direct references to anti-fascist rhetoric that held particular importance within European and Yugoslav cultural memory⁴⁰¹, and the mobilization of ideas of Sarajevo as a multi-cultural or multinational city.⁴⁰² Local press seems to have upheld similar narratives, seen for example in a review of the 1993 edition of the *Graphic Maps*, featuring woodcuts. Employing overt biblical imagery, the author positions artists as champions in an epic battle between good and evil. In this way, civilization narratives also appeared in the form of reproductions of understood dichotomies, giving artistic production an inherent moral quality. This notion can also be found in the writings of Muhamed Karamehmedović, who refers to the previous depersonalization of Yugoslav art currents in the 1960s as a contrasting agent for current "artistic subjectivity", remarking how graphic arts can break through technological barriers and promote international communication.⁴⁰³

Sarajevan journalists and cultural actors often engaged with civilization discourse, using it both as a conscious tool for shaping public opinion as well as a natural form of engaging with external actors that might otherwise lack the vocabularies to understand the scale of suffering imposed on the Bosnian capital.⁴⁰⁴ In the foreword for a Sarajevo-based report on the state of cultural institutions and monuments in Sarajevo published in March 1995, Nermina Kurspahić leans heavily on a civilization-based discourse that reproduces nearly all of the familiar vocabularies: regularly invoking dichotomous divisions, such as between the "civilized" and

⁴⁰⁰ The same speech appears in the catalogue, partially reprinted in the daily *Oslobodjenje*. An. Šimić, "Umjetnikov glas otpora," *Oslobodjenje*, January 27, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁰¹ N.n., *Sarajevo Devedesetdruge Devedesettreće Devedesetčetvrte*, 5, 68.

⁴⁰² N.n., *Sarajevo Devedesetdruge Devedesettreće Devedesetčetvrte*, 8, 15.

⁴⁰³ Muhamed Karamehmedović, "Sugestivno i autentično," *Oslobodjenje*, May 30, 1994, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁰⁴ Sadudin Musabegović, "Rasap povijesti," *Oslobodjenje*, March 2, 1995, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo; An. Šimić, "Umjetnikov glas otpora," 7; Svjetlana Mustafić, "Festival života i otpora," *Oslobodjenje*, February 7, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

“barbarian”, Kurspahić speaks of the Balkans and of Europe, positioning herself within this dialectic universe. Referring broadly to the “undisciplined and uncivilized instincts in man” as a cause for conflict, she classifies populations in the Balkans as having either “sobered up”, or begun to resemble irrational animals, “murdering, destroying and hating” under a system authored by “authentic madmen or mentally disturbed murderers.”⁴⁰⁵ In her rendition, the term Balkan is not necessarily equal to barbarian: a choice can be made between a civilized lifestyle and barbarian destruction. Comparing the siege of Sarajevo to the destruction of Troy, she acknowledges that “the new world feels contempt for these new-age Barbarians who have ruined the harmony and order of a civilization destined for progress and construction.”⁴⁰⁶ The text itself, aimed directly at UNESCO staff as well as other international organizations that would have the authority to allocate resources to the reconstruction of Bosnian cultural heritage, is meant to convince, and as such uses dramatic language in a higher density than is usually common in texts written for local consumption. Kurspahić was not the only one that employed such vocabularies: in a bid for UNESCO support for the *Graphic Maps* project, Ibrahim Spahić argued that the organization’s support would help local populations that believed that “barbarism cannot prevail over civilization.”⁴⁰⁷ Conversely, the prevalence of such language in such a document suggests that Sarajevan actors considered the civilization lexicon as the best way of reaching and connecting with foreign audiences capable of providing aid.

Although the relationship between foreign and domestic cultural actors will be discussed in more depth in the following chapters, the way in which civilization vocabularies circulate amongst a variety of actors is particularly well-illustrated by texts treating the *Sarajevo '92, '93, '94* event. In honor of the exhibition’s promotion, the daily Sarajevan *Oslobodjenje* re-printed reviews by Slovenian critic Zoran Kržišnik and Maria Luisa Borrás from Barcelona, in a way closing the circle of intellectual exchange that produced and reproduced specific meanings. As such, Kržišnik’s specific reference to the conflict as having “turned a new leaf in the history of civilized humanity”, is representative of circular exchanges amongst cultural actors involved in the Sarajevan arts scene: narratives of civilization were neither externally

⁴⁰⁵ Nermina Kurspahić, “Cultural Institutions and Monuments in Sarajevo” (Open Society Institute, March 1995), 4, B2ST06.3-51, AG 8 CI, INF, Carton 30, UNESCO Archives.

⁴⁰⁶ Nermina Kurspahić, 4.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibrahim Spahić, Sarajevo Winter Festival to Federico Mayor, Director General UNESCO, “42073,” December 13, 1993, B2ST06.3-51, AG 8 CI, INF, Carton 31, UNESCO Archives.

imposed, nor exclusively emerging from a Sarajevan context, but was influenced by this reciprocal conversation.⁴⁰⁸

Crudely put, the choice of using art as a means of influencing foreign opinions was in no way a universal phenomenon in the wartime arts scene, but remains a discernable element of art created during the siege. While the above analyzed projects engaged with ideas of civilization through considerably abstract means, the work of the design group TRIO provides a more straightforward example of the mobilization of European civilizational ideals during this period. Having gained popularity in the late 1980s thanks to their activities in television advertisement and rock-band album cover designs, the de-facto duo made up of Bojan and Dalida Hadžihalilović continued to produce high-quality designs following the outbreak of the siege of Sarajevo. While the group was involved in a variety of projects during this period, their main contribution to Sarajevan artistic production came in the form of a series of redesigned posters and postcards based on familiar designs from Western popular culture and history. From an artistic point of view, the imagery included here is openly intertwined with themes ranging from European experiences of the Second World War (and hereby also the experience of the Holocaust), references to Western rock music, pop art and film, as well as familiar advertising slogans which unambiguously tie the Sarajevan wartime experience to the Western European cultural sphere. Instead of specific vocabularies, Bojan and Dalida Hadžihalilović created a pictorial language through which they could communicate the collective suffering of their city, one that was equally their own.

⁴⁰⁸ Zoran Kržišnik, "Poruke," *Oslobodjenje*, September 8, 1995, 10, Mediacentar; Marija Luisa Boras, "Gluhoća nije spriječila Betovena," *Oslobodjenje*, September 8, 1995, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.



Figure 3. Greetings from Sarajevo postcard series, TRIO Sarajevo, 1992-1995. Reappropriating well-known designs, ranging from historical imagery to references to popular culture, TRIO's postcards and posters often directly interacted visual references familiar cultural associations. Greetings from Sarajevo postcard series, TRIO Sarajevo, 1992-1995. Courtesy of TRIO.

Figure 4. Greetings from Sarajevo postcard series, TRIO Sarajevo, 1992-1995. Courtesy of Bojan Hadžihalilović and Dalida Hadžihalilović. Greetings from Sarajevo postcard series, TRIO Sarajevo, 1992-1995. Courtesy of TRIO.

While the imagery and formats chosen by the design group are straightforward and recognizable in their allusions to globally understood images, the artists also vocally contextualized their artistic production within a practical framework in a variety of interviews. TRIO remained relatively open about their intentions to use their works to influence foreign public opinion.⁴⁰⁹ An article published in the LA Times features an explanation of the artists' credo to this end:

*"Because of completely siege of concentration camp called Sarajevo and because of no possibility of any communication with Outside World, we decided to print our postcards and in that way to reach The World. It would be our way of lifting a multiple blockade in which we are living."*⁴¹⁰

Bojan Hadžihalilović also directly discussed the need for the maintenance of "civilized norms" even during the war in order to counteract the "Četnik backwardness."⁴¹¹ While TRIO's approach was perhaps more openly militant than that of their fine-arts counterparts, a similar use of familiar imagery based on the ideal of the city, the civilized culture and barbaric backwardness can be found also in more academically minded artworks and exhibitions produced during this period.

⁴⁰⁹ To some extent, it can be argued that even the formats chosen by TRIO were specifically conducive to the proliferation of their artworks in a foreign market, contributing to their success. See: Ewa Anna Kumelowski, "Between Art and Object: Reflections on the Shifting Character of the Greetings from Sarajevo Postcard Series," *Historical Museum of BiH - Upcoming Catalogue*, in press.

⁴¹⁰ The article in question reprints a direct quote from the artist, noting the "charming fractured English" of the interviewee. Anna Husarska, "Postcards from the Edge of Hell: Sarajevo: Shells Fall Again, Electricity Falts and Water Trickles. Artists' Posters Shrink and Colors Disappear.," *Los Angeles Times*, December 14, 1994. Reprinted online, link currently unavailable.

⁴¹¹ Nada Salom, "Sindrom daljinskog upravljača," *Oslobodjenje*, November 2, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

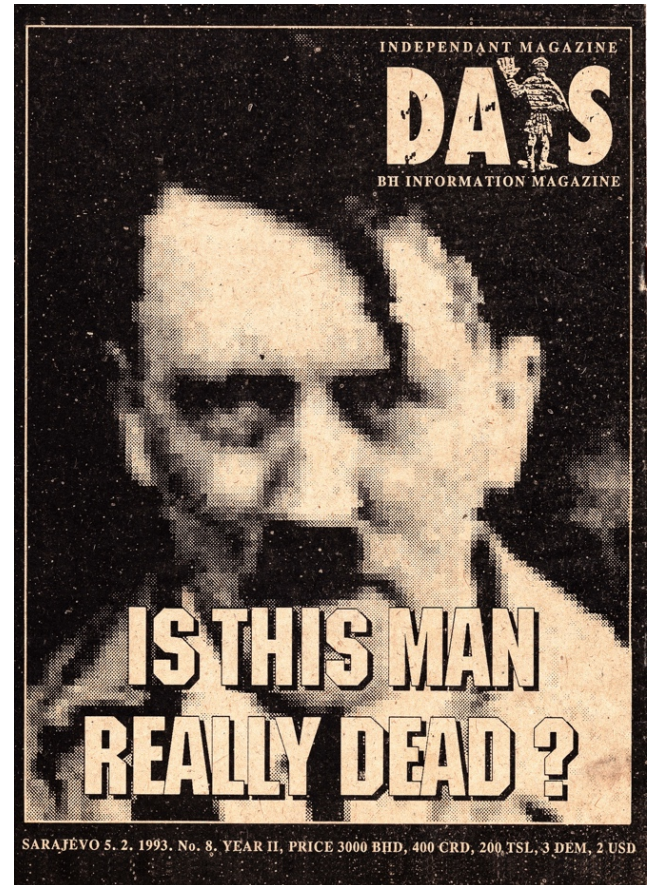


Figure 5. Front and back cover of the magazine *Dani* designed by TRIO. The TRIO group regularly designed the cover art for the Sarajevo magazine, which was particularly popular amongst the city's youth. The design in question proposes a direct parallel between the figures of Radovan Karadžić and Adolf Hitler, in this way mobilizing symbolic imagery related to the Holocaust in order to address the contemporary conflict. Sarajevo: *Dani*, 5 February, 1993, front and back covers. Bosniak Institute Archive. Courtesy of TRIO.

Figure 6. *Dani* cover art, TRIO Sarajevo, 1993. Sarajevo: *Dani*, 5 February, 1993, front and back covers. Bosniak Institute Archive. Courtesy of TRIO.

The cultural actors living in besieged Sarajevo were clearly aware of the nuanced meanings of the discourses which they were engaging with, and to some extent, also familiar with their foundations. However, Sarajevans were not passive in this use: they were also distinctly aware of its effects, and in some cases, openly voiced their disapproval for the dichotomous thinking it produced. In this way, the “black-and-white” divisions between those who left the city at the beginning of the siege and those who remained is commented on by Vefik Hadžismajlović, director of the National Gallery of BiH, in September 1992:

*"I am terribly afraid even now, and I have always been afraid of rough categorization. And it is present here. Those who are on this side are angels, those who are on the other side of the border, they are not, they should be put on the pillar of shame. Each case is a separate story. I think that one more aspect should even be appreciated: there are people who simply cannot withstand certain circumstances with their system."*⁴¹²

Referring to the criticisms directed at the Sarajevans who fled the city at the onset of hostilities, the dualistic thinking between the "good" and the "evil" is here acknowledged as a habit and simultaneously openly critiqued. While many integrated the notion of civilization and its corresponding facets into their personal and artistic vocabularies, others actively rejected it as an idealistic attitude that did little to help the humanitarian situation inside a literal warzone. On one hand, the vocabulary which accompanied the idea of civilization was in some cases used as a direct means of critiquing external non-intervention, inverting the argument of the similarity of Sarajevo to Western cities to criticize the apathy of Western audiences towards the destruction of a culture which they claim to be defending.⁴¹³ For some within the cultural sphere, the idea of an artistic resistance (further treated in Chapter III) was primarily a means of communicating with external European audiences, which did not have anything to do with the practical realities that Sarajevans had to deal with.⁴¹⁴ This view is echoed by Nermina Zildžo, who found it difficult to identify with artistic mobilizations in the name of civilization in light of the practical problems that life under siege brought:

"After a couple of months, I left 'higher' activities (so-called 'cultural resistance to war') as a nonsense that just didn't fit war conditions and joined basic 'combat' which still seems to me as the only reasonable thing to do. Instead of neglecting security questions while producing new

⁴¹² Author translation: "Ja se strahovito bojim i sada, a i uvijek sam se bojao grube kategorizacije. I ovdje je ona prisutna. Oni koji su sa ove strane, oni su anđeli, oni koji su sa druge strane granice, oni to nisu, njih treba staviti na stub srama. Svaki slučaj je zasebna priča. Mislim da čak treba cijeniti još jedan aspekt: postoje ljudi koji jednostavno svojim sistemom ne mogu da izdrže određene okolnosti." Nada Salom, "Bojim se grube kategorizacije," *Oslobodjenje*, September 28, 1992, 4, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴¹³ This was the case, for example, with an installation exhibited in Sarajevo by Braco Dimitrijević, a Sarajevo-born artist living in Paris at the time. The artist juxtaposed kitsch iconography of European civilization with recognizable imagery symbolic of wartime Sarajevo – adapted bicycles, simple potatoes and other mundane objects exposed together with depictions of victims of snipers. Sadudin Musabegović, "Instalacija u instalaciji," *Oslobodjenje*, October 6, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴¹⁴ This diverging view is articulated for example by Zdravko Grebo, organizer of one of the city's only working radio stations, Radio Zid: "Please, stop talking to me about cultural resistance, Zdravko continues. The idea is destined to reassure Europe. It's an alibi. My only worry is to decide what to do with the liter of water that I have left. Should my father shave? Or should my mother finally make herself a cup of tea?" Pascal Dupont, "Artistes Dans Une Ville Assiégée," *L'express*, January 27, 1994, sec. Actualité, Published online: https://www.lexpress.fr/informations/artistes-dans-une-ville-assiegee_596995.html.

art to look like 'civilized' victims, we chose saving what we already had plus protecting intellectuals in various ways."⁴¹⁵

In this manner, the narrative power of civilization discourses was not lost on Sarajevan artists, some of whom deliberately mobilized familiar language to directly target foreign consumers with the hopes of swaying public opinion in favor of the Bosnian cause. Primarily fulfilling the function of a linguistic moral framework, it allowed for Sarajevans to reject the violence imposed on their city using vocabularies readily identifiable by local and foreign audiences, some of which were reproduced when communicating with an external public. Some cultural actors integrated a civilization discourse into locally grown curatorial concepts, created in and for the city, providing its inhabitants with a framework through which to process and externalize their wartime experiences. However, not all artists willingly identified with the ideals of multiculturalism, with some prominent figures even going so far as to openly denounce it.⁴¹⁶ Therefore, the shifting narratives based on ideas of civilization were constantly reassessed, influencing the internal process of artistic practice and local receptions, but also how local actors interacted with their non-Sarajevan counterparts.

3.2.2. IRREGULAR MEANINGS, OR HOW SARAJEVAN USE OF CIVILIZATION LEXICONS CHANGED IN MEANING TO REFLECT LIVED EXPERIENCES

While the dominant discursive line based on idealized concepts of civilization relied on the simultaneous adoption of existing narrative and its adaptation to suit current needs, it should be emphasized that civilization was not only discussed in the context of Sarajevan citizens as members of a Western, European cultural space to be protected. Beyond political and moral positioning, these lexicons were integrated into Sarajevan vocabularies as a tool of personal expression, or a framework of addressing and processing the difficulties of life under siege. Although impactful on a political level, the production of culture and art has been accepted as having the very real capacity of providing solace to those in distress, offering a way to channel

⁴¹⁵ Megan Kossiakoff, "The Art of War: The Protection of Cultural Property during the 'Siege' of Sarajevo (1992-95)," 147.

⁴¹⁶ This was the case, for example, for painter Mersad Berber, as reported by the newspaper *Dani*. See: S. Pećanin, "Nikoletina Berber," *Dani*, May 1, 1994, 16, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

negative emotions of helplessness and psychological stress in impossible circumstances.⁴¹⁷ Historians such as Howard Zinn even claim that artists, whether actors or musicians, “take away from the moments of horror that we experience everyday- some days more than others- by showing what is possible.”⁴¹⁸ As such, artists and their work are known to play quite specific roles in war: through treating the impossibly intangible experiences associated with conflict, they can give shape to and therefore offer avenues for processing difficult emotions, both for their own and the public who consumed their work.⁴¹⁹ For some in the besieged city, references to civilization were used as part of an intimate form of expression that did not serve any particular purpose beyond the exteriorization of lived experiences, often intended only for private audiences. For others, these vocabularies allowed individual actors to address the practical difficulties that the deterioration of living standards under siege inflicted upon their daily routines, referring not to greater discursive discussions, but instead to everyday challenges of life under siege. As a result, a separate dimension of use can be distinguished from more typical morality-producing dichotomous lexicons, in where the structure behind such a framework is used as a backdrop for distinctly personal expression.

The sheer unpredictability and scope of the violence inflicted on the city left a deep impact on its population: nearly every single Sarajevan lost a family member, loved one, neighbor or friend, their pain often compounded by survivor’s guilt.⁴²⁰ Visual artists were not spared this fate, as at least 18 professional artists are known to have passed away or have been killed during the span of the siege.⁴²¹ Death was not only an abstract concept, but one with which everyday inhabitants became confronted with on a daily basis, meaning that the need for expressing these emotions was crucial to psychological survival for many. Death within the community was a semi-public affair, just as those who were dying can be considered to be semi-public figures, but appear to have been deeply impactful for those familiar with the deceased. The death of Ibrahim Ljubović in July 1995, only months before the end of the siege, elicited heartfelt responses and eulogies, which were printed in the pages of *Oslobodjenje* following his passing. Razija Lagumdžija recalls her colleague fondly, but presents his passing as something

⁴¹⁷ Jelena Hadžiosmanović, “How Is Culture Used as a Tool for Dissuasion in Conflict and Consensus: A Case of Sarajevo (1992-1995),” 22–23.

⁴¹⁸ Howard Zinn, *Artists in Times of War* (New York: Seven Stories, 2003), 7–8.

⁴¹⁹ Pamela Blotner, “Art out of Rubble,” 270–74.

⁴²⁰ Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 320.

⁴²¹ Davor Diklić, *Teatar u ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva*, 13.

unnatural, imposed, and in a sense, without laying blame, painfully exacted from above. Ljubović, who passed away after a long-term illness for which he was unable to receive specialized treatment outside of the city, most likely could have been spared his fate. Lagumdžija, who, above all seems weary in her reference to this failed travel to Stockholm mentions how the artist was unable to leave, but when attempting to give a reason for his passing, seemingly trails off: “Because...I don’t know why.”⁴²² Alma Suljević, a former student of Ljubović’s, shares what can be perceived as realistic helplessness: “Death in Sarajevo is not just death. (...) From him we learned what is beautiful, what is anxiety, what is joy and what is Bosnia.”⁴²³

The personal reconfigurations of civilization themes, for example those dealing with death, are also visible in the coverage of the afore-mentioned *Sarajevo '92, '93, '94* graphic collection. While the exhibition’s positioning within a utilitarian wartime discursive context has been addressed, it cannot be overlooked that the collection was originally also conceived as a “graphic chronicle in a large sense” that would testify to the experiences of its authors.⁴²⁴ According to Sadudin Musabegović, dean of the ALU, the exhibition was hereby conceptualized as an “inner pictorial expression of time stopped, time recurring and reduplicating itself – during each of these three years of siege – in almost identical forms of affective substance: destruction, terror and agony but also resistance, protest and hope.”⁴²⁵ In other words, the group show was conceptually engrained in chronicling the collective experiences of Sarajevans through the medium of graphic prints, which, in the words of Ibrahim Spahić extended beyond representations of the city as “a symbol of a victim and the victim of a symbol”.⁴²⁶

Visually, the collection of prints is clearly embedded in the vocabulary of the accompanying texts, often featuring abstract imagery, muted colors and few references to typical war art that tends to document the events rather than experiences of war. Therefore, the visual language employed by the ALU artists is not necessarily legible to external viewers, and is primarily a

⁴²² Razija Lagumdžija, “Neimar duhovnog bogatstva,” *Oslobodjenje*, July 8, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴²³ Author translation: “Otkinut je još jedan sarajevski list. I danas više nije važno na koji i kakav način nas je napustio. Smrt u Sarajevu nije samo smrt. Gospodina Ibrahima Ljubovica mi najmladji smo pratili s ushićenjem i posebnim lirskim nabojem. Od njega se uči šta je lijepo, šta je tjeskoba, šta je radovanje i šta je Bosna.” Alma Suljević, “Od njega smo učili,” *Oslobodjenje*, July 8, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴²⁴ N.n., *Sarajevo Devedesetdruga Devedesettreće Devedesetčetvrtre*, 3.

⁴²⁵ N.n., *Sarajevo Devedesetdruga Devedesettreće Devedesetčetvrtre*, 3.

⁴²⁶ N.n., *Sarajevo Devedesetdruga Devedesettreće Devedesetčetvrtre*, 4.

representation of internal collective struggles. Whereas an overview of the entirety of the collections extends beyond the scope of this study, a woodcut titled '*Sjećanje na AK*' by Zoran Bogdanović is perhaps the most emblematic example of this localized approach. The piece is dedicated to the late Alija Kučukalić, one of the Academy's most respected professors in the field of sculpture, fatally wounded by mortar shrapnel in June of 1992, at the onset of the siege. Simple yet emotive, the piece transmits the factual information of Kučukalić's demise while simultaneously offering an artistic homage to the beloved teacher. The combination of angular shapes and soft, round features creates an abstract image that binds associations of primary natural elements, of trees, mountains or even the delicate resilience of the wind, with angular shapes reminiscent of human features, hereby combining to offer a hope of solace amidst destruction. Although the collection was consciously positioned, often using language of civilization, as a framework of artistic resilience, the independent pieces stood in contrast to political imagery with the intense intimacy of their expression, at times not entirely legible to the external viewer.

Using dichotomous vocabularies to position themselves as active, if unwilling, participants in the conflict, the cultural community of Sarajevo expressed their personal experiences as victims of a siege, and intended for consumption by those who shared in these experiences. Some artists openly discussed their connection to this role, explaining why artistic expression remains relevant even during an ongoing siege, as was the case for Edin Numankadić:

*"Even in this moment it is best to respond creatively to this hellish destruction. Not from spite, defiance, but out of inner continuity, an eternal civilizational struggle through exhibitions, concerts, books."*⁴²⁷

For many artists, professionals and non-professionals alike, the act of creating art was a deeply cathartic activity that allowed them to process the extremely difficult emotions that accompany life under siege. Numankadić speaks in a similar way of his participation in the *Witnesses of Existence* project, framing artistic practice not as a fight for external values but for "something that we love, where we have lived, where we went to school, where we created. It is horribly

⁴²⁷ Author translation: "Pa i u ovim trenutku kad je najljepše na ovako paklenu destrukciju odgovarati kreativno. Ne iz inata, prkosa, već zbog unutrašnjeg kontinuiteta, vječne civilizacijske borbe izložbom, koncertom, knjigom." N.n., "Biti individualac," *Dani*, May 23, 1994, 61, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

important that we professionally truly defend this civilizational level.”⁴²⁸ This role was reflected also by the consumers of this cultural activity, visible for example in a review of one of Numankadić’s first exhibitions organized in 1992. Describing the drawings as reflections of the “fears, stresses, horrors” produced by the assault on the city, the exhibition is primarily framed by the author as an event meant to produce a feeling of community and to lift spirits.⁴²⁹ The specific nature of wartime artworks and the exhibitions in which they were shown to the public in Sarajevo is also a theme that places the “martyred city” within the context of its uniqueness, as for an exhibition of painter Ljubo Lah, whose show is directly juxtaposed with similar Parisian events, a “city of painting, but also of normal life in which people meet, drink Pernot, cast an eye on art and do not hear the roaring of war.”⁴³⁰ The implied dichotomy between the two cities does not appear here necessarily as antagonistic, but is used instead to exteriorize the felt specificity of cultural production in war circumstances.

On a spiritual level, the organization of regular cultural events became tied by local actors to the retention of a humanity in inhumane circumstances, safeguarding local communities from psychological decay.⁴³¹ In the words of one correspondent: “We organized performances and made art to survive.”⁴³² Often times, local cultural actors and artists would use familiar dichotomous language to explain and defend the relevance of their work in a deadly conflict, framing it within the context of a civilizational drive to create personal documents and communicate with others. Art critic Nada Salom frames artistic production in exactly this manner:

“All nations in civilization strive to leave behind a message. Artists of this city, from this cataclysm, transform their work into a message that manifests the indestructability of the spirit.

⁴²⁸ Author translation: “Povezao nas je taj osjećaj duhovnog otpora, da se kao profesionalci borimo za nešto što volimo, gdje smo živjeli, gdje smo se školovali, gdje smo stvarali. Strašno važno je da profesionalno branimo upravo taj civilizacijski nivo.” Nada Salom, “Tragovi postojanja,” *Oslobodjenje*, April 29, 1994, 6, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴²⁹ Nada Salom, “Ratni tragovi,” *Oslobodjenje*, December 1, 1992, 4, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴³⁰ Author translation: “Vjerujem da se danas ni u Parizu, grada slikarstva, ali i normalnog života u kome se ljudi sastaju, piju svoj perno, prepiru oko umjetnosti i ne slušaju tutnjanje rata, ne bi mogla otvoriti ovakva izložba. To takodje govori nesta o ovom mučeničkom gradu i njegovoj težnji za ljepotom.” Nada Salom, “Težnja za ljepotom,” *Oslobodjenje*, April 21, 1993, 9, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴³¹ This attitude was expressed, for example, by art critic Aida Begić when speaking specifically of the role of theatre during the siege. While the discipline in question is not entirely interchangeable with the visual arts, in this case, the sentiment can be considered to be transferrable. Davor Diklić, *Teatar u Ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva*, 38.

⁴³² Davor Diklić, *Teatar u ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva*, 31.

Their words, paintings, stage productions, music is warm with human pain, convincing, as an artistic document of suffering so that the state of the siege would become clearer to others."⁴³³

The discursive overlap that positions the artist as a producer of aesthetic elements viewed to be analogous with ethical characteristics, a key element of a civilized society, can also be recognized in some of the artistic texts published during the siege. For example, an exhibition of Slovenian graphic artists in Sarajevo is an occasion for discussion of the "aesthetic and ethical cultural act", opening questions as to "how much art and culture can change man and his environment."⁴³⁴ Discussing a group exhibition of a handful of established Sarajevan artists in Frankfurt, Germany, Muhamed Karamehmedović touches upon the complicated relationship between the artist, their surroundings, and their practice. Describing the artworks of a collection of the city's most well-known painters, he acknowledges the diversity in artistic responses to the siege, in which each artwork was solely the reflection of its maker:

*"To these creators from Sarajevo, who work in cramped spaces, while this city is turning into ruins, an additional question was asked: whether to present recognizable shapes, an objective picture of the real situation or to look for some symbols that the world will understand and that will, without pathos, talk about this infernal everyday life in which they have been for two years. In fact, some stylistic variants can be distinguished, but in essence they represent a portrait of the mental state of each individual author."*⁴³⁵

Indicating a break in traditions imposed by the siege, Karamehmedović points out the application of "wartime metaphors" to the visual arts, that turn into symbols and synonyms while underlining them as individual within a larger whole. Similarly, a review of Planinka Mikulić's exhibition featured language that equated aesthetic production with the concept of

⁴³³ Author translation: "Svi narodi u civilizaciji nastoje da ostave poruku. Umjetnici ovog grada, iz ove kataklizme, svoje djelo pretaču u poruku koja manifestuje neuništivost duha. Njihova riječ, slika, scenski pokret, muzika, toplja je ljudska bolna, uvjerljiva, a kao umjetnički dokument stradanja ona bi da stanje opsade postane jasnije i drugima." Nada Salom, "Ostatak je ludilo umjetnosti," *Oslobodjenje*, December 26, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴³⁴ Author translation: "Danas nama u Sarajevu, uz sva nostalgijna osjećanja za ugodnijim vremenima, na ovakvim i sličnim manifestacijama umjetnosti, preostaje da provjeravamo stanje vlastite percepcije kvaliteta i estetskog i etičkog kulturnog čina i da intimno pronadjemo odgovore na vječita pitanja smisla koliko umjetnost i kultura mogu da mijenjaju čovjeka i njegovo okruženje?" Nada Salom, "Slovenska grafična poslanica," *Oslobodjenje*, May 15, 1994, 6, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴³⁵ Author translation: "Pred ovim stvaraocima iz Sarajeva, koji rade u skućenim prostorima, dok se ovaj grad pretvara u ruševine, postavilo se i jedno dodatno pitanje: da li predstavljati pojavne oblike, objektivnu sliku stvarnog stanja ili tražiti neke simbole koje će svijet shvatiti i koji će, bez patetike, progovoriti o ovoj infernalnoj svakidašnjici u kojoj se nalazi već dvije godine. U stvari, neke stilske varijante se mogu razlučiti, ali u suštini one predstavljaju portret duševnog stanja svakog pojedinog autora." Muhamed Karamehmedović, "Drugačiji način slikanja," *Oslobodjenje*, July 14, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

civilization itself. The psychological journey on which Mikulić's works are to take the viewer are characterized as encompassing numerous associations accessible to those able to intuitively "travel through space and time", and who are able to recognize this "artistic language that exists as long as civilization itself."⁴³⁶ In this case, the idea of civilization does not function as a placeholder for judgement, and instead becomes a synonym for a constant and consistent institution in an increasingly fluctuating reality.

Artists like Mehmed Zaimović have also expressed their awareness of the role of the visual arts as messengers to the outside world, stating in an interview that "we must show the world, and ourselves, in the best light, with the best and plentiful exhibitions, concerts, theatrical productions, literature."⁴³⁷ However, the painter also emphasizes the personal importance of continued professional activity even in times of war, openly stating that his work is a form of therapy, and hereby also suggesting that the importance of showing Sarajevo art to the world remains secondary, or at the very least additional, to the impact of the work locally. In this way, cultural actors also used this familiar framework to address the external world from the inside, not only interacting with foreign actors in their work but also using civilization language as an internal signifier. Therefore, a remark by Gradimir Gojer in the opening of an exhibition indicates the theater director believed that the "West is so close and that the citizens of cosmopolis, they live also in the street of Kralj Tomislav."⁴³⁸

In some cases, civilization narratives were employed by individual artists as a discursive tool that allowed them to express their disillusionment with ever-shifting political developments, which often left Sarajevans feeling helpless. Sculptor Fikret Libovac, most famous for his delicate wire sculptures of birds and other natural objects, in this way incorporates ideas of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism into a discussion of his own, personal wartime situation:

*"Europe might think that there are many cosmopolitan people living there, but what about me, am I not cosmopolitan? What does Europe mean not by not preventing this from happening?"*⁴³⁹

⁴³⁶ Author translation: „(...) kako ovaj likovni jezik postoji koliko i sama civilizacija (...)” Muhamed Karamehmedović, "Magična ljepota 'drugog' svijeta," *Oslobodjenje*, August 24, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴³⁷ Nada Salom, "Boja zemlje," *Oslobodjenje*, October 21, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴³⁸ Gradimir Gojer, "Slikarstvo koje je 'shvatilo' vrijeme," *Oslobodjenje*, October 31, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴³⁹ *Kipar (Sculptor). Video. Ismet Arnautalić, and Ademir Kenović. Sarajevo: SaGA Production, 1995, 2:21.*

Beyond openly addressing the lack of foreign intervention, the artist frames his cosmopolitan, and thereby urban identity as analogous to the European, using these to express his personal feelings of abandonment by the international community – at the same, also directly distinguishing himself from external audiences. Even those artists for whom their creative expression was a tool of political agency openly opposed the reduction of their work to practical aims, and were often received as such as well. Therefore, it is not unsurprising that a reviewer of one of TRIO's exhibitions notes that Bojan Hadžihalilović would deny their work to be a result of the "typical Sarajevo spirit", but instead function as a pictorial representation of his and his partner's Dalida's spirit. Whereas the political engagement of the duo is not questioned, a local audience is clearly seen as privy to hidden, more intimate, depths of the group's production.⁴⁴⁰

This type of individual interpretation of civilizational discourse can also be found in the works of sculptress Alma Suljević, perhaps nowhere more visible than in her "Kentauromahija" piece, together with the accompanying group show organized for the occasion of its mobilization. The piece, discussed in the introduction of this text, offers another fitting example of artworks that directly engaged with civilization discourse in an intentionally introspective manner, using it as a framework for emotional expression rather than direct communication. While the dichotomous imagery of a battle between good and evil is quite central to both the concept and the form of this artwork, the artist's intentions nevertheless go beyond a simple reproduction of a familiar discourse. Externally, press coverage of the sculpture and its associated exhibition directly place Sarajevo as a "city of tolerance and culture which across the centuries has made it into what it is today," emphasizing the tropes linking multiculturalism, urbanity and civilization, and discussing the artwork in the context of the dichotomy between good and evil.⁴⁴¹ Karamehmedović in this way refers to the piece through a clear thematic lens that bases itself on concepts of civilization without directly engaging with it:

"From that scorched tram to that wondrous performance of the struggle of good and evil on it from our existence to the eye, from the eye to the stars, to the victory of good over evil from this symbolic display, from these monumentally conceived modern sculptures that the city of

⁴⁴⁰ Se. Kurtović, "Mi postavljamo pitanja," *Oslobodjenje*, April 30, 1994, 6, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁴¹ Muhamed Karamehmedović, "Izazov feniksa," 7.

Sarajevo will give to Berlin – an imaginary flame is heating us, some hot lava from the hills, an insignificant device of a fascist monster spitting that lava on the city (...). ”⁴⁴²

Taking imagery of destruction, directly addressing it as fascist, and therefore discursively inscribing it as comprehensibly evil within the accepted civilizational framework, Karamehmedović interprets the work directly as a “struggle between good and evil” using emotive terms accessible both to local Sarajevans and external viewership. However, the artist herself openly shies away from such dichotomous interpretations, offering a far more intimate clarification. When asked about the symbolism that contrasted the inherently “good” nature of the horse with the “evil” of the centaur, she openly argues that, for her, the sculpture in question far exceeds such limited divisions:

“The artistic problem imposed on me the optimistic solution in which the horse defeats the centaur in a psychological association. We have a horse, which inflicts a deadly blow on the centaur. The centaur finds himself cowering under hooves in the most humiliating position that a man-beast can be in. I cannot say that the centaur represents the Serbs, this or that world, East or West, nor that this is a certain struggle of good and evil, because that is a metaphysical lie, and I want to reach the truth. This is an interpretation of a work of art for which I am not responsible.”⁴⁴³

The artist is hereby clearly aware of the existence of such tropes, like many of her contemporaries, as well as their functioning in local collective imaginations, but dismisses them as reflective of her own intentions. This personal interpretation finds its place in other aspects of the interview, where Suljević discursively roots her work primarily as a projection of an internal, as opposed to external, struggle:

“From now on, I started with the already vulgar, but then not so vulgarly used idea that Sarajevo is an island, in fact, that it is our one metaphysical island. Our inability to communicate, our round world. A man who is surrounded, a man whose space of movement is limited. He sees everything, he knows everything, but his whole world is turned upside down. From the idea that Sarajevo is an island, I came to this philosophical idea about the centaur -

⁴⁴² Author translation: “Od tog sprženog tramvaja do te čudesne predstave borbe dobra i zla na njemu od našeg bitisanja do oka, od oka do zvijezda, do pobjede dobra nad zlom od ovog simboličnog prikaza, od ovih monumentalno koncipiranih modernih skulptura koje će grad Sarajevo pokloniti Berlinu – žeže nas jedna izmišljena vatra, jedna usijana lava sa brda, jedna beznačajna sprava fašističke nemani koja bljuje tu lavu na grad (...).” Muhamed Karamehmedović, 7.

⁴⁴³ Nermina Omerbegović, “Sarajevska kentauiromahija,” 7.

a man after his father, a horse after his mother. This is just Sarajevo's centauiromachy, our fight of centaurs.”⁴⁴⁴

On the surface, Suljević’s choice in subject matter follows the commonly present dichotomous discourse which identifies the Eastern barbarian as the enemy of multicultural Sarajevoan civilization, mobilizing mythological tropes which directly play into contemporary uses of these ideas. However, the deeply personal nature of this work appears to be rooted in the individual wartime experiences of the artist, who attempts to express internal struggles taking place within the siege context using a familiar vocabulary. In this sense, the superficial interpretations of the civilization discourse in this work do not allow the viewer to fully engage with its richness – and in turn, suggest that the uses of this discourse were not only limited to the traditional contexts in which it could be found.

Suljević’s sculpture provides us with a glimpse into the complex construction based on a publicly resounding discourse and internal, intimate understandings of it. Whereas somewhat obvious, the interaction of local artists with civilization-based concepts can also read as part of a search for “motifs that are capable to express the state of spirit here and now, this inferno,” a task only achievable from the inside.⁴⁴⁵ When read from the point of view of a Sarajevoan artist, the concept of “civilization” remains congruent with its conventional implications, while sometimes transforming its meaning and mode of use into one which is entirely rooted in local definitions and experiences. The discussion of Sarajevo as a “European civilized city” thereby takes on a different meaning, dependent on whether the phrase and its accompanied imagery is intended for external or internal audiences. While these borders were not in any way hermetic, their different interpretations can also help explain the importance that the concept of civilization took within the cultural scene of Sarajevo. It is therefore likely that, when a Sarajevoan artist discussed civilization, what they imagined in this meaning was not entirely congruent with what was imagined by a Western audience.

⁴⁴⁴ Nermina Omerbegović, 7.

⁴⁴⁵ Muhamed Karamahmedović, *Ratna Grafička Mapa Mladih Autora - Collection of War Prints of Young Printmakers* (Sarajevo: Medjunarodni Centar za Mir, 1993), n.pag, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

3.3. LIVING A CIVILIZED CITY: ARTISTIC MOBILIZATIONS OF URBAN SPACES

Whereas the theoretical embeddedness of a civilization discourse in the artistic practice of visual artists remains one of the most conspicuous vocabularies throughout the Sarajevan cultural community, these individual artistic responses were also accompanied by practical shifts in cultural practices which saw the importance of culture and urbanity as central to local productions. Whereas the discursive power of civilization as a tool for expressing both calls for attention and personal experiences was perhaps the most visible in the Sarajevan artistic scene, its accompanying lexicon became even further embedded into the very materiality of the city's cultural community, affecting the ways in which artists interacted with their urban environment. The importance of the city and its culture within the civilization discourse became hereby interwoven with practical developments within the Sarajevan artistic scene: by understanding how people spoke of their experiences, it becomes easier to understand how they reacted to the same. The following sections will focus on the use of an urban-based civilization discourse and its relationship to the importance of maintaining a sense of *normality* within the context of the siege, which will then form a basis for an analysis of the practical and theoretical foundations invoked in the adaptation of artistic production to wartime circumstances. Furthermore, this section discusses the notion of *urbicide* in further depth as a tool for discussing the proliferation of cultural events and practices in the destroyed urban landscape.

3.3.1. ADDRESSING ADAPTIVE WARTIME PRACTICES WITHIN THE VISUAL ARTS COMMUNITY

The outbreak of the siege resulted in an immediate need for civilian adaptation to wartime conditions, as everyday practices became increasingly more complicated. The city itself became dangerous to navigate due to the near-constant shelling of the city and sniper attacks from Bosnian Serb positions. Some 30,400 people were estimated to be reliant on humanitarian aid to feed themselves, leading to extremely high rates of malnutrition.⁴⁴⁶ The destruction of electric, phone and gas lines together with the city's water facilities forced citizens into new

⁴⁴⁶ M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Investigating War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia War 1992–1994*, 329.

behaviors, such as carrying water from available points, often for miles, and often with the help of improvised carts, carriages, sleds or other mobile contraptions.⁴⁴⁷ Surrounded by mountains, winters in Sarajevo were particularly difficult, as heating sources became increasingly scarce and residents took to burning books, furniture and other materials to avoid freezing to death.⁴⁴⁸ Amidst the constant shelling, Sarajevans had to get used to living in partially-destroyed flats, replacing the broken glass from windows with the recognizable UNHCR plastic foil, replacing a relatively high standard of living with unusable washing machines, dishwashers, kitchen appliances, computers, phones or anything else requiring running water and/or electricity.⁴⁴⁹ These newfound chores were not without their psychological consequences, in the words of painter Affan Ramić: “waiting in line is degrading to one’s personality.”⁴⁵⁰

Such an extreme deterioration of living conditions confronted ordinary citizens with wartime standards of living, a change for which few in the city were psychologically or physically prepared. For many of those left in Sarajevo, maintaining their pre-war patterns of behavior became crucial in preserving some semblance of mental health, and many civilians continued to engage in pre-war activities such as going to work or to school, maintaining social lives and attending public events as a form of survival. The role of “wartime self-organization,” an umbrella term that can refer to everything from the distribution of humanitarian aid, the creation of safe passageways through the mounting of improvised sniper-shields, to the adaptation of the educational system to minimize the risk for children attending school, have been regarded by anthropologist Stef Jansen as a form of maintaining ‘normal’, pre-war rhythms of everyday life.⁴⁵¹ This phenomenon, if it can even be called that, has also been studied in depth by anthropologist Ivana Maček, who emphasizes the need for maintaining a feeling of *normality* in abnormal circumstances. Through reclaiming these pre-war norms, often placing them within a moral framework denoting ideological positions, the importance of maintaining normality in wartime Sarajevo was constantly renegotiated in response to the regular destruction of norm-

⁴⁴⁷ M. Cherif Bassiouni, 331.

⁴⁴⁸ M. Cherif Bassiouni, 331.

⁴⁴⁹ Armina Pilav, “Collective Documenting of Extreme Urban Transformations: Evidence of Urban Resilience During the War in Sarajevo (1992–1996),” *Architecture and Resilience on the Human Scale. Cross-Disciplinary Conference Sheffield.*, 2015, 2.

⁴⁵⁰ Author translation: „(...) čekanje u redu degradantno je za personalitet.” Marko Vešović, “Umjetnost je moja religija,” *Dani*, April 5, 2002, Special edition- Sjećaš li se Sarajeva?, 6, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁴⁵¹ Jansen, *Yearnings in the Meantime*, 101. See also, for example: David M. Berman, “The War Schools of Dobrinja: Schooling Under Siege in a Sarajevo Community,” *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, no. 1705 (September 2005): n.pag.

creating institutions and the permanent insecurity of life under siege.⁴⁵² The commitment to everyday ‘normality’ was crucially embedded in a social dimension, instead of being seen as “one of brave atomized individuals.”⁴⁵³ As such, insistence on normality as per Maček refers not only to the conscious reproduction of peacetime habits, but also became a form of addressing a rejection of perceived moral degeneration in wartime circumstances:

*“I noticed that people in Sarajevo often used the concept of normality to describe some situation, person, or way of life. The concept carried a moral charge, a positive sense of what was good, right, or desirable: a “normal life” was a description of how people wanted to live; a “normal person” thought and did things that were regarded as acceptable. The term pertained not only to the way of life people felt they had lost but also to a moral framework that might guide their actions. Normality not only communicated the social norms held by the person using it but also indicated her or his ideological position. The preoccupation with normality reflected Sarajevans’ utmost fear and their utmost shame: that in coping with the inhumane conditions of war, they had also become dehumanized and that they might be surviving only by means they would previously have rejected as immoral.”*⁴⁵⁴

Although the concept of civilization is not particularly prominent in Maček’s work, her understanding of normality and normal behavior shows parallels to the ways in which concepts of civilization were mobilized within the Sarajevan context. ‘Normality’ became synonymous for accepted moral behavior, as a counterpoint to the ‘dehumanized’ and ‘immoral’ reactions one could have to life under war – a logic similar to the dichotomies created between the “civilized” and “uncivilized”. Jansen, having focused specifically on daily life in the peripheral (yet incredibly dangerous) Dobrinja neighborhood, makes such a discursive jump, tying an insistence on the preservation of standards of normality to residents’ “civilian and civilized dignity” through which “abnormality had been resisted by a commitment to routine.”⁴⁵⁵ An awareness for such parallels can also be found in Maček’s work, who compares her anthropological fieldwork to preconceived standards of her field:

“There was the “primitive other” whom we in the West did not understand, although in in the case of Bosnia the “others” looked like us, were literate, and even spoke our languages. The

⁴⁵² Ivana Maček, “‘Imitation of Life’: Negotiating Normality in Sarajevo under Siege”; Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 318.

⁴⁵³ Jansen, *Yearnings in the Meantime*, 100.

⁴⁵⁴ Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 5–6.

⁴⁵⁵ Stef Jansen, *Yearnings in the Meantime*, 99.

*colonial bureaucracy was present in the form of the UN. Life conditions were “primitive”: water was scarce and dirty, food was strange and difficult to get. Visitors were well advised to take their own provisions. There was no electricity. The utilities and comforts expected in a “civilized” place were lacking. The difference from the classical anthropological “bush” was that Bosnia in these conditions were situated within the remains of civilization, not outside them”*⁴⁵⁶

Classifying the city, if for illustrative purposes, as the “remains of civilization”, Maček indicates the ease with which a discursive overlap equating a “civilized” society as a “normal” one can be found within the Sarajevan community. Whereas it should be emphasized that these similarities were not always present nor applicable, Sarajevans often seem to have used civilization discourse as a form of asserting their normality, using it to indicate their primary identification with the urban, modern lifestyles they led before the war rather than their current circumstances. Often mobilized in the description of wartime experiences, these lexicons became carriers for a broad range of meanings, from expressions of individual survival mechanisms, attempts at external communication, or expressions of collective experiences – sometimes misunderstood or misinterpreted by foreign actors who lacked an understanding of the full experience of life under siege.

One of the central arguments of this text hinges on the representativeness of cultural actors, and in particular, visual artists: although part of an intellectual elite, artists navigated the precisely same circumstances as their non-artist neighbors. After all, “artists’ primary role within a society is to create art, which was, according to this theory, the most “normal” reaction to the war around them.”⁴⁵⁷ Amidst the horrors of material destruction and mass killing, which can be materially proven, the destruction of cultural meanings is more difficult to communicate, internalize and respond to. In this way, “the same impulse that moved Sarajevans under siege to create art animated their daily struggles against death-dealing circumstances.”⁴⁵⁸ Emmanuel Wallon has remarked on the capacities of the arts in providing reprieve from the intense psychological strain of destruction and suffering, remarking that:

“In fact, the besieged attached themselves to artistic activities as if their lives depended on it, braving the exploding shells and the bullets of snipers to frequent the Academy of Fine Arts,

⁴⁵⁶ Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 27.

⁴⁵⁷ Jelena Hadžiosmanović, “How Is Culture Used as a Tool for Dissuasion in Conflict and Consensus: A Case of Sarajevo (1992-1995),” 34.

⁴⁵⁸ Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 35,37.

galleries and theatres. When it comes to living as men and women instead of as animals in captivity, philosophy but also frivolity resume their rightful place."⁴⁵⁹

Creating and consuming culture thus became a method of reclaiming a semblance of normality in impossible circumstances, by providing avenues for comprehension and expression of difficult emotions that accompany prolonged life in an active war zone while simultaneously offering individuals security in the form of routine. Generally speaking, cultural actors active in besieged Sarajevo were acutely aware of their position within wartime society, simultaneously understanding their activities as professional and simultaneously personal.⁴⁶⁰ A number of press articles that discussed precisely the role of culture and art in war were published throughout the conflict, arguing the importance of continued production:

*"Creating in a Sarajevo where you have been deprived of much of your human dignity and basic human rights, where in one moment you can lose everything, means living, surviving. Going to the opening of an exhibition, a theater play or a concert for Sarajevans is proof of their perseverance. They thus show that they live normally, just as they want to look elegant when they go out on the street, just as they want to be at their workplace every day. There is something more than what is called spite and resistance to the aggressor, and that is a completely natural human tendency to live normally, to express the state in which a person finds themselves. Cultural events are the life of this city as much as it is death."*⁴⁶¹

Borivoje Simić similarly discusses cultural events as direct forms of reproducing normality, both for the artist and the viewer, and furthermore frames them as crucial to the protection of

⁴⁵⁹ Emmanuel Wallon, "Portrait de l'artiste en témoin. Les guerres yougoslaves de la page à l'écran.," in *Les mises en scène de la guerre au XXe siècle, Théâtre et cinéma* (Paris: Nouveau Monde éditions, 2011), 10.

⁴⁶⁰ The Sarajevo *LIFE* magazine published by FAMA International in 1995 with financial support from UNESCO, shows evidence of such approaches in the results of standardized interviews conducted with a variety of cultural actors in the city, including many visual artists or individuals that were involved in the creation of exhibitions. Although clearly intended for publication and external diffusion, many of the answers appear to be frank or slightly stylized, but seem to reflect a common pattern. Two questions that are posed by the interviewers are particularly relevant: "how have you survived?" and "can you give us a recipe for mental health?" Slightly over twenty out of the 87 interviewees, seven of them related to the field of visual arts, responded to either one or both questions with variations of "work" or "activity." Suada Kapić and Maja Razović, eds., *Sarajevo LIFE* (Sarajevo: FAMA International, 1995), Duplex 100m2 Library.

⁴⁶¹ Author translation: "Stvarati u Sarajevu u kojem vam je oduzeto mnogo toga od ljudskog dostojanstva i elementarnih ljudskih prava, u kojem u jednom trenutku možete izgubiti sve, znači živjeti, opstojati. Odlazak na otvaranje izložbe, na pozorišnu predstavu ili koncert za Sarajliju jeste dokaz njihove postojanosti. Oni na taj način pokazuju da žive normalno, kao što žele izgledati elegantno kad izađu na ulicu, kao što žele da su svaki dan na svom radnom mjestu. Ima tu nešto više od onoga što se zove inatom i otporom agresoru, a to je sasvim prirodna ljudska težnja da se živi normalno, da se iskaže stanje u kome je čovjek zataknut. Kulturni događaji su život ovog grada isto onoliko kolika ga čini smrt." Borivoje Simić, "Stvarati, znači opstajati," *Oslobodjenje*, January 14, 1994, 6, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

the “multicultural and multiethnic spirit of Sarajevo” that was being targeted by nationalist forces.⁴⁶² The multicultural nature of the city, and indirectly, its civilized status, were aspects to be defended, and the reproduction of normal habits permitted ordinary citizens to reaffirm their rejection of the violence to which they were subjected. In this sense, the sheer normality of continued artistic productions during the siege was often misunderstood by foreign actors and journalists as a purely aesthetic expression, a fact visibly lamented by Haris Pašović:

*“I am asked how the living dead that we are still manage to play, (...) The question baffles me. Is it not normal for a theater director to put on plays? We are not oddities. We are the last antifascist resistance, today, in Europe.”*⁴⁶³

The complicated interplay between globally recognized discourses that invoked the subject of civilization, present for example in references to a shared, albeit also distinctly Yugoslav, antifascist heritage, are contrasted by Pašović with the normality of his continued work as a cultural actor. Continuing in their chosen profession was the most natural thing to do, giving some order to days filled with destruction, but also often came tied to vocabularies that indicated moral judgements or affiliations.

Artists reacted to the siege of their city in ways similar to the rest of civilian population, specifically adapting their professional practices to wartime shortages. The UN control of the airport, through which the majority of humanitarian aid passed, meant that basic tools such as paints or paper became increasingly unavailable as the siege dragged on. In her report for UNESCO, Nermina Kurspahić emphasized how Sarajevans were virtually cut off from global developments in their field, with a lack of steady and regular access to professional journals and other relevant publications, for which funding was unavailable.⁴⁶⁴ The lack of regular supplies was lamented by designer Amra Zulfikarpašić, who found it difficult to continue with her work in siege conditions:

“This situation can affect my work, first of all, practically, I don't have electricity in the house, I can't turn on the computer, I can't organize my work properly. I simply do not have the conditions to work, and so to do the most ordinary thing, I have to cover many kilometers. (...)”

⁴⁶² Borivoje Simić, 6.

⁴⁶³ Author translation: “On me demande comment les morts vivants que nous sommes parviennent encore à jouer, explique Haris Pasevic. La question m'exaspère. N'est -il pas normal, pour un directeur de théâtre, de monter des pièces ? Nous ne sommes pas des curiosités. Mais les seuls résistants antifascistes, aujourd'hui, en Europe.” Pascal Dupont, “Artistes Dans Une Ville Assiégée,” n.pag.

⁴⁶⁴ Nermina Kurspahić, “Cultural Institutions and Monuments in Sarajevo,” 9.

I did many things for free, but every time I thought I had to do it, because people were incredibly reluctant to stop working, to stop thinking about the future."⁴⁶⁵

This difficult situation resulted in the relatively modest proliferation of performance art that was joined with the introduction of new materials, many of which were often direct results of the war: broken glass from windows shattered by nearby explosions, the remnants of burned-down buildings, or humanitarian aid packaging became part of the artistic lexicon. Irfan Hozo, in his late thirties at the time, participated in a 1994 exhibition featuring 14 works drawn on the carton packaging of humanitarian aid, combining pencil, ink and found objects to depict the city and its architecture – hereby merging the past with the present in content and form.⁴⁶⁶ Other artists intervened directly *in* destroyed spaces, mobilizing cultural and personal associations as a discursive element of the artworks themselves. This was the case for photographer Kemal Hadžić, whose “*Sarajevske karijatide*” series placed female models in the rubble of the *Vijećnica* library, proposing a “dialogue between art, reality and history”, presented as a response to “crime and destruction.” Referring to the ancient Greek use of sculpted female statues serving as an architectural support in lieu of less ornate pillars or columns, Hadžić juxtaposes the reality of destruction caused by Bosnian Serb Army artillery with historically accepted artistic canons, almost going so far as to rebuild the ruined space by photographing models in the role of pillars.⁴⁶⁷

Others, such as Nedžad Begović, film director by trade, also collected objects from rubble, including pieces of glass, sheet metal, charred boards and beams from abandoned and destroyed sites, exhibiting the installations composed of such found objects under the name “War Art”.⁴⁶⁸ This experimental practice, emerging in part from a simple lack of other artistic materials one could work with, has been contextualized as a performative act of reappropriation, through

⁴⁶⁵ Author translation: “Ova situacija može uticati na moj rad, prije svega, praktično, nemam struju u kući, ne mogu uključiti kompjuter, ne mogu organizovati posao kako treba. Jednostavno, nemam uslova za rad, tako da bih napravila neku najobičniju stvar, moram da prevalim mnogo kilometara. Bilo bi lijepo kad bi se oni iz Elektroprivrede koji se nešto pitaju jedan dan sjetili umjetnika, recimo književnika, slikara... (...) Mnoge stvari sam radila i besplatno, ali sam svaki put mislila da to moram da uradim, jer ljudi su nevjerovatno odbijali da prestanu da rade, da prestanu da misle na budućnost.” Nermina Omerbegović, “Plakat u zlatnom ramu,” *Oslobodjenje*, August 31, 1995, 11, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁶⁶ Planinka Mikulić, “Istina na humanitarnom paketu,” *Oslobodjenje*, June 9, 1994, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁶⁷ Enver Kazaz, “Arhitektonika simbola,” *Oslobodjenje*, August 3, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁶⁸ *War Art. Video. Ismet Arnautalić, and Ademir Kenović. Sarajevo: SaGA Production, 1993.*

which the manipulation of “objects that have lost their identity” were transformed into figures of birds, horses and plants, giving them a new life – and a new meaning.⁴⁶⁹

Begović was not the only Sarajevan cultural actor to refer to the visual arts produced during this period as “War Art”, a term codified by art historian Azra Begić in her critical texts on the *Witnesses of Existence* show. Introducing the concept in her introduction to the aforementioned exhibition, Begić refers to it as “art firmly anchored in our infernal everyday existence obtaining from it not only inspiration for its ideas and creative flights but also the materials for their realization.”⁴⁷⁰ Muhamed Karamehmedović is amongst the art critics who adopt the term, connecting the aesthetic expression of the personal suffering felt by those compelled to live amongst death and destruction with the introduction of new materials created by this same destruction, in a way bridging an emotional process with one of renewal.⁴⁷¹ In this way, even the visual arts scene itself discursively tied the acts of continued creation as a normal response of artists to the physical landscape it inhabited (and its consequences), and emphasized the importance of art as an outlet for the suffering experienced by regular Sarajevans. These innovative practices were hereby codified into a greater narrative, and the continued artistic production through new means became not only a question of aesthetic concern, but also one of an ethical or spiritual nature.

One of the most visible attempts at preserving pre-war routines can be found in the incredible efforts that kept the Academy of Fine Arts open and functioning throughout most of the siege of Sarajevo. At a crossroads between professional institution, educational establishment and key site for local personal networks, the different wartime roles played by the ALU offer some insight into the varying faces of normality offered by cultural production. The onset of conflict cut short the 1992 academic year for art students, who were only able to return to their place of study in the autumn of the same year to partake in an adapted educational program.⁴⁷² The ALU became a hub for both students and professors, offering a space where they could not only continue their professional activities or educational training, but also meet and exchange with their peers and mentors. During this period, compulsory attendance was suspended to account for student absences resulting from front-line duty or simple uptakes in mortar- or sniper-fire,

⁴⁶⁹ Silvija Jestrović, *Performance, Space, Utopia. Cities of War, Cities of Exile.*, 154.

⁴⁷⁰ Azra Begić, *Svjedoci Postojanja / Witnesses of Existence. Exhibition Catalogue.*, n.pag.

⁴⁷¹ An. Šimić, “Kentauiromahija se nastavlja,” 7.

⁴⁷² David M. Berman, “The War Schools of Dobrinja: Schooling Under Siege in a Sarajevo Community,” 14.

the danger of which naturally would keep students away from their studies. Instead, classes became heavily focused on one-on-one consultations and corrections offered by professors. Formal exams and grading practices were suspended throughout the conflict.⁴⁷³ Despite these initial difficulties, by the end of 1993, some formal lectures had resumed almost as in peacetime – beginning punctually at 8 A.M.⁴⁷⁴ As the war went on, the Academy also hosted foreign lecturers, such as Suzanne Meszoly, the director of the Soros Center of Contemporary Art in Budapest, who spoke on contemporary Hungarian art and the SCCA network in 1995.⁴⁷⁵

Throughout the siege, the Academy of Fine Arts of Sarajevo fulfilled multiple needs of its community, proposing solutions to various problems. On the one hand, the Academy's continued activities were crucial for the educational continuity of its students, whose young careers were stalled indefinitely by the siege. At the same time, as a school, the university adapted extensively to the new conditions. In a very forward-looking manner, the inauguration of a new post-graduate course in artistic conservation and preservation by dean Sadudin Musabegović in 1995 indicates the willingness to not only maintain but develop existing systems to adapt to the wartime situation.⁴⁷⁶ Nevertheless, efforts to develop the academic program remained constrained by the reigning conditions, meaning that the new department did not have access to necessary conservation chemicals and supplies, which had been appropriated for medical purposes, while the conservation studio itself had sustained damage from stray bullets.⁴⁷⁷

The institution's role in housing art students or professors who had been expelled from their homes also placed it in a new wartime role that made it a focal point within the cultural community.⁴⁷⁸ This was particularly important considering the mental strain under which the Sarajevan population was held, as many art students were either drafted or fought voluntarily on the front line, with external actors noticing that they and teachers were suffering from the

⁴⁷³ Ta. Pandurević, "Konsultacije i korekcije," *Oslobodjenje*, June 11, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁷⁴ Muhamed Karamehmedović, "A Sarajevo podrhtava," *Oslobodjenje*, October 17, 1993, 5, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁷⁵ Ta. Pandurević, "Predavanja Suzane Meszoly," *Oslobodjenje*, March 14, 1995, 12, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁷⁶ Ta. Pandurević, "Sačuvan dignitet," *Oslobodjenje*, November 17, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁷⁷ Helene M. Donnelly, "Croatia and Bosnia: Cultural Destruction. What Can We Do?" (Data & Archival Damage Control Center (DADCC), n.date), B2ST06.3-51, AG 8 CI, INF, Carton 31, 1, UNESCO Archives.

⁴⁷⁸ Nebojša Šerić Šoba, "Umjetnost je bilo pronaći ono od čega će se stvarati umjetnosti," *STAV*, June 23, 2016. Published online: <http://stav.ba/umjetnost-je-bilo-pronaci-ono-od-cega-ce-se-stvarati-umjetnosti/>.

traumatic consequences of war.⁴⁷⁹ For students and teachers who did not live on the premises, the trip to the Academy was often long and not without risks. Many students and teachers continued to make their way to their classes on a regular basis, in some cases explaining their choices through the need to do something to occupy their time. This was the case for professor Nusret Pašić, who made the daily trip across the city to see his students:

“I live 7 kilometers from the center which means that every day I had to walk 7 kilometers more hungry than full, a bit frozen, so that the walk, to call it that now a bit ironically was a form of morning gymnastics that within those 7 kilometers there were 4 to 5 places that were under sniper fire so that there was a bit running, sprint, some going around buildings, not to mention even some crawling. And it was a path that was pretty risky; it was risky to stay in Sarajevo, anyway, but to make that journey every day, that was added dose of risk. But the wish to do something, to communicate with people, not to stay alone in a building without communication and not to stay alone in the sense that you don't do anything to keep your mind intact, and your body after all. So that I went to the Academy every day, where I work as a teacher, and to the Sutjeska cinema, that is to the Obala Art Center, walking along that path thinking how this is a day of leaving a trace because I might not manage to do so the next day or I might not be among the living and do something.”⁴⁸⁰

The importance of continued participation in professional and educational activities was expressed by other teachers at the Academy, who framed their involvement as a way of dealing with the mental stresses of life under siege. This was the case for prof. Salim Obralić, who explained that “a person is happiest when they spend the day in the atelier or with students at the Academy, where a stay is turned into studying, survival, therapy, work and learning.”⁴⁸¹

As an educational institution, the ALU was also responsible for promoting young artists, even in wartime. A collective exhibition of student works, appearing under the name *MCMXCIV*, was positively reviewed in local press, painting a picture of a hopeful young generation whose collective *oeuvre* was heavily influenced by the physical and psychological context of the siege. For example, Muhamed Karamehmedović includes a mention of marble cubes past which visitors of the show would have to walk, most likely the product of a mortar hit nearby – one

⁴⁷⁹ Helene M. Donnelly, “Croatia and Bosnia: Cultural Destruction. What Can We Do?,” 1.

⁴⁸⁰ N.n., “Nusret Pašić. Advice for Survival (12.1993).” Interview by FAMA International, 1996. FAMA International. Accessed October 12, 2020. <http://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/oral-history/>.

⁴⁸¹ Author translation: “(...) čovjek koji je najsretniji kad provede dan u ateljeu ili sa studentima na Akademiji, gdje se boravak pretvorio u studiranje, preživljivanje, terapiju, rad i učenje.” Nada Salom, “Slikar Srmali Salim,” *Oslobodjenje*, December 12, 1994, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

which could just as easily have taken a human life.⁴⁸² Nada Salom points out how the young artists who participated in the exhibition reflect the climate through familiar symbols, through which not only an “objective picture of the real situation but also express the complex atmosphere in the besieged city, using all possible materials that these destroyers from the hill every day shower us with.”⁴⁸³ As such, the art produced in the wartime Academy was received and conceptualized in a similar, if not entirely identical, logic which emphasized a need for normality amidst destruction – through reconfiguring the physical evidence of their struggles, they were able to express deeply complex emotions and hereby take control of an uncontrollable situation.⁴⁸⁴

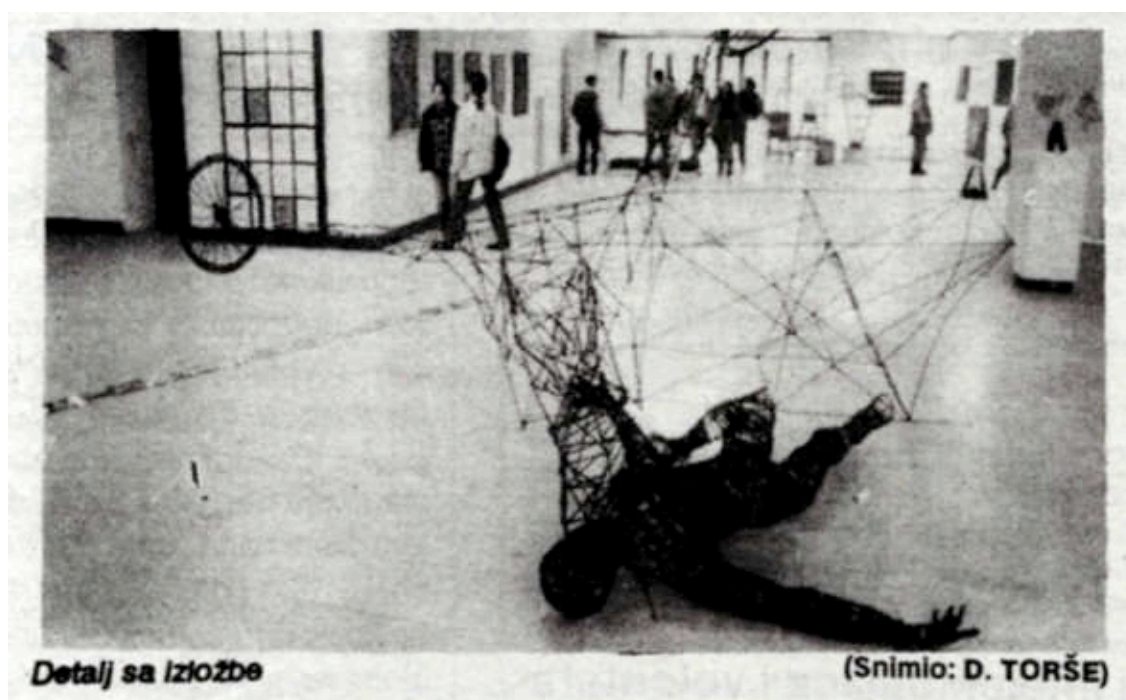


Figure 7. “MCMXCIV Sarajevo”, exhibition view. Taking place in the Collegium Artisticum, the show featured the works of a number of young Sarajevan artists. Image reprinted from “Generacija koju su htjeli zaustaviti” by Nada Salom, photography by D. Torše, Sarajevo: *Oslobodjenje*, November 12, 1994, 10. Courtesy of Oslobodjenje.

⁴⁸² Author translation: “Na izložbu studenata Akademije Likovnih Umjetnosti u Kolegijumu artistikumu ulazi se između kocki od mramora: sve je kocka pa i život i smrt u Sarajevu! Kocke ili komade kamena izvalila je vjerovatno neka granata i sa njima i na njima možda odnijela nečiji život.” Muhamed Karamehmedović, “Fascikle s novim imenima,” *Oslobodjenje*, December 9, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁸³ Author translation: “Ove generacije kao što se vidi, u svojim kreacijama, osim što odražavaju dah podneblja, simbole koje naši ljudi znaju, koje misle i koje pamte, kojima žele da izraze ne samo objektivnu sliku stvarnog stanja već i izražavaju složenu atmosferu u opkoljenom gradu, koristeći sve moguće materijale, kojima nas ovi rušioči sa brda svakodnevno zasipaju.” Nada Salom, “Generacija koju su htjeli zaustaviti,” *Oslobodjenje*, November 12, 1994, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁸⁴ Nada Salom, 10.



Figure 8. The damaged interior of the basement of the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, which housed the printmaking press and workshop. The space continued to be in use throughout the siege by students of the Academy. Image reprinted from *Sarajevo Devedesetdruge Devedesettreće Devedesetčetvrte*, 1995, Akademija Likovnih Umjetnosti, Sarajevo: *Medjunarodni Centar za Mir*, n.pag. Courtesy of Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The wartime activities of the ALU reflect only a fraction of artistic adaptations implemented by the wartime cultural scene to maintain a sense of normality within their community. On an individual level, many established artists were confronted with the crucial loss of the artistic workspace – the atelier, as well as the years’ worth of work often stored in them. Even though access to state-sponsored ateliers was only available to a handful of mid-generation artists before the war, many of them lost access to these spaces, either due to Bosnian Serb Army occupation of neighborhoods such as Grbavica, or simply as a consequence of mortar fire and incendiary shells. The loss of their life’s work was particularly distressing for artists like Affan Ramić or Ibrahim Ljubović, whose long careers had placed them amongst the country’s

foremost painters.⁴⁸⁵ Whereas Ramić was forced to halt his practice entirely for a period due to a lack of access to his materials, Ljubović appears to have been primarily affected by the emotional impact of such a loss.⁴⁸⁶ In turn, Ramić, in his early sixties, began creating installations with pieces made from a broken radiator from the ruins of the local Oriental Institute or typewriters from the Oslobođenje headquarters, remarking in an interview on the importance of continuity in his practice. One journalist describes this shift in the following way: “While others were carrying firewood, he, in addition to that task, also carried these silent witnesses of death.”⁴⁸⁷

Photographer Milomir Kovačević, who had taken up primary residence in the café *Sloga*, also experienced difficulties in continuing his work without a stable space, changing the location of his atelier some 20 times. Operating from a type of mobile photographic laboratory, he was able to come to agreement with neighbors that had managed to access electricity from the few official buildings that were serviced, or through brokering agreements with the police station next-door, exchanging electricity and water for photographs. The practice of syphoning electricity was a common one in Sarajevo – accessing “priority electricity” cables, attaching their own during the night and detaching them before dawn to avoid detection.⁴⁸⁸ As such, the struggle to maintain normal working conditions required specific survival strategies that also mirrored those outsides of the artistic community.

The importance of maintaining regular cultural events sometimes outweighed aesthetic concerns, resulting in adapted curatorial practices, at times sacrificing quality to ensure flexibility. In this way, photographs of some *vernissages* held during the siege, as during a solo show of printmaker Dževad Hozo or the experimental *WARum?* exhibition feature ladders standing in the background of the spaces. Although not prominent, nor arguably important, the presence of ordinary objects in an art space appears to have been tolerated in a fashion unlikely in peacetime. Similarly, exhibition openings almost exclusively took place in the daytime

⁴⁸⁵ Divna Pervan, “Sarajevo - Umjetnost Otpora,” *Oslobođenje*, April 17, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo; Ilija Šimić, “Protiv mržnje,” *Oslobođenje*, January 9, 1993, 5, Mediacentar Sarajevo; Nada Salom, “Umiranje u ljepoti,” *Oslobođenje*, May 13, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁸⁶ Nada Salom, “Umiranje u ljepoti,” 7.

⁴⁸⁷ Author translation: „Dok su drugi vukli drva za vatricu, on je, uz taj posao prenosio i ove nemišne svjedoke umiranja.” Dubravko Brigić, “Bilježenje tragičnosti,” *Dani*, January 31, 1995, 56, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁴⁸⁸ Milomir Kovačević, interview by Ewa Anna Kumelowski, March 15, 2018.

instead of evenings so as to conform to the military curfews in effect, and exhibition initiations and catalogues were printed using a variety of eclectic methods.⁴⁸⁹

This certain level of skillful improvisation can also be found in the curatorial adaptations made for an exhibition of French photographer Sofie Ristelhueber, whose large-scale photographs were featured in the rooms of the National Gallery of BiH in 1994. Only bringing a handful copies of her *Aftermath* monograph, which had gained popularity in the city, she consciously chose to exhibit 27 photocopies 100x130cm in size, a decision motivated by a wish to not take up valuable space in the airplane and to ease the process of returning the works to the artist.⁴⁹⁰ Again, this type of attitude towards the fine arts reflects the changing priorities within the local cultural community, where the act of hosting an exhibition (and hereby contributing to a “normal” cultural life of the city) outweighed the importance of purely aesthetic considerations.

This is not to say that the critics were entirely uncritical: one exhibition of photographs by Toša Mitaševski received a relatively positive review that pointed out the lack of lighting during its opening, meaning that visitors were forced to admire the exhibited photographs in near-total darkness, leaving the reviewing author dissatisfied with his experience.⁴⁹¹ Similarly, Sophie Ristelhueber’s exhibition was noted to be flawed only because of the medium in which the works were shown, as the quality of the photocopies did not allow for a truly judicious reproduction.⁴⁹² In this way, the failure to adapt to the siege conditions was not directly sanctioned, but received some negative reactions from the side of internal actors.

⁴⁸⁹ For a more detailed analysis, see: Ewa Anna Kumelowski, “Seeking Shelter at an Exhibition: The History of the Artists of the Siege of Sarajevo (1992-1996),” 139–40; 144–49.

⁴⁹⁰ Nada Salom, “Rez u naše meso,” *Oslobodjenje*, May 17, 1994, 6, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁹¹ Ta. Pandurević, “Čežnja za ljepotom,” *Oslobodjenje*, November 23, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁴⁹² Milan Cvijanović, “Sarajevo ne želim fotografisati, nego živjeti,” *Dani*, June 15, 1994, 54, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

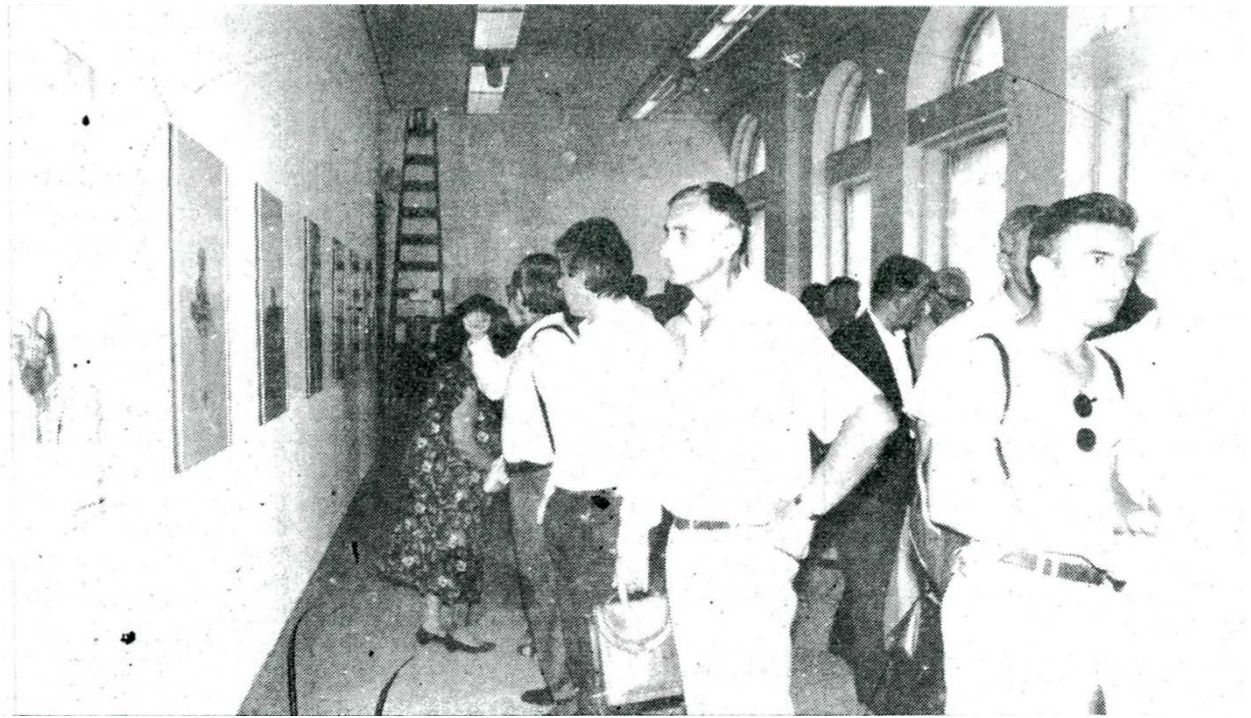


Figure 9. “Četrdeset grafičkih listova: Sarajevo 1992-1994” by Dževad Hozo, exhibition view. Image reprinted from “Nišan - ključ grafičkog govora” by Rusmir Mahmutćehaljić, photographer unknown. Sarajevo: *Oslobodjenje*, June 29, 1994, 7. Courtesy of Oslobodjenje.



Figure 10. Film still from a recording of the opening of “WARum?”, showing a visible storage space in the background. Unidentified director, TVBiH, accessed January 1, 2020, no longer available as of August 2022. <https://bojanbahic.com/>. 3:16. Artwork rights to Bojan Bahić and Sanda Hnatjuk.

An alternative, somewhat more pragmatic understanding of civilization discourses that intersect with the concept of normality appears to be present in the works and practices of Sarajevan artists, emphasizing the need to produce and create art through the dual importance of maintaining civilized routines and creating spaces where others could in turn reproduce their own normalities through participating in cultural events. While, for some, the discourse based around the concept of civilization remained a purely ideological tool, for others it was a means of expressing the frustration felt at the severe deterioration in the quality of life as well as a practical means of holding on to some semblance of ‘normality’. In these contexts, civilization and its lexicon are used not as an abstract theory, but as a practical way of explaining to themselves and others why artists continue to create art under siege. These adaptations were rarely, if ever, framed with direct vocabularies related to classical understandings of civilization, but instead functioned as a logical attempt at offering continued access to professional and educational opportunities, particularly for a generation of young artists whose futures were suddenly put on hold.

3.3.2. REDEFINING REPRODUCED NORMALITY: THE PROLIFERATION OF URBAN EXHIBITION SPACES FRAMED AS AN INTERSECTING PRACTICE

The destruction caused by the siege of Sarajevo prominently affected the city’s physical landscape and its urban environment, forcing the city’s inhabitants to reassess their pre-war spatial practices, adopt new patterns of behavior and limiting their movements to arbitrary places in the city. The physical danger to ordinary civilians was as evident as its consistency: over the course of the siege, UNPROFOR observers have estimated that Sarajevo’s landscape received 200 to 300 mortar impacts on a quiet day, a number which rose exponentially to 800-1,000 shells launched from Bosnian Serb Army positions on active days.⁴⁹³ First targeting critical infrastructure, such as gas, water and electricity plants, as well as medical, telecommunications and industrial facilities, these were promptly followed by landmarks of Sarajevo’s place identity or those of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian state, and were viewed as an attack on the collective memory and identity of these places, including objects of cultural

⁴⁹³ M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Investigating War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia War 1992–1994*, 222.

heritage.⁴⁹⁴ Amidst this physical devastation, ordinary citizens were left to navigate the shifting wartime landscape, developing new pathways of movement throughout the city and adapting inherently urban living patterns that created a new spatial organization within the city. Sarajevans imagined new uses for their landscape: creating urban gardens, converting parks into firewood, and later cemeteries, such actions were reflective of the physical impact on ordinary civilians caused by the siege.⁴⁹⁵ Noted by Armina Pilav, “the city, although unsafe, itself became a survival resource.”⁴⁹⁶

Originally conceived to denote the specificity of the destruction of the built environment as a form of violence in and of itself, the concept of *urbicide* has been transposed to the context of the Bosnian war to describe the targeted destruction of urban landscapes as a specific military tactic.⁴⁹⁷ Popularized by Martin Coward, the term *urbicide* refers to the intentional and systematic destruction of the built environment, not as a side-effect of the annihilation of groups of people, but as a symbolic representation of shared and heterogeneous spaces that such urban landscapes promote.⁴⁹⁸ As such, it refers to “the destruction of buildings not for what they individually represent (military target, cultural heritage, conceptual metaphor) but as that which is the condition of possibility of heterogeneous existence.”⁴⁹⁹ Although specifically targeting the built environment, the destruction of the city inherently aims to harm the collective inhabitants of a space through attacking precisely the spaces that permit its cohesion, and as has been often overlooked, also provoking an emotional reaction in the population.⁵⁰⁰ Radovan Karadžić himself has been quoted to believe in the partition of Sarajevo along ethnic lines, “so that no ethnic group will have to live or work together.”⁵⁰¹

According to Sabrina Ramet, “to conquer a territory in the fullest sense entails also the conquest of its history,” which is why the Bosnian Serb Army “took such care to destroy not only the

⁴⁹⁴ Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War*, 77.

⁴⁹⁵ Silvija Jestrović, *Performance, Space, Utopia. Cities of War, Cities of Exile.*, 139; Armina Pilav, “Before the War, War, After the War,” 23.

⁴⁹⁶ Armina Pilav, “Before the War, War, After the War,” 26.

⁴⁹⁷ For literature on *urbicide* in the Yugoslav context, see, for example: Cynthia Simmons, “*Urbicide and the Myth of Sarajevo*”; Andrew Herscher, “*Urbicide, Urbanism, and Urban Destruction in Kosovo*,” *Theory & Event* 10, no. 2 (2007); Zilha Mastalić-Košuta, “*Urbicid u Sarajevu u vrijeme opsade 1992.-1996. godine*,” *Znakovi vremena - Časopis za filozofiju, religiju, znanost i društvenu praksu*, no. 39–40 (2008): 136–46.

⁴⁹⁸ Martin Coward, *Urbicide*, 38,40.

⁴⁹⁹ Martin Coward, 39.

⁵⁰⁰ Véronique Nahoum-Grappe, “*L’urbicide : le meurtre du social*,” *Tous urbains* 11, no. 3 (2015): 35.

⁵⁰¹ M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Investigating War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia War 1992–1994*, 54.

mosques and Catholic churches of which they took possession, but also other buildings of historical, aesthetic and cultural importance.”⁵⁰² In Sarajevo, the targeted destruction of buildings was also part of a strategy of ethnically cleansing the city into separate ethnic enclaves.⁵⁰³ Objects of cultural heritage were targeted en-masse, with museums, libraries, archives and historic buildings, such as buildings related to the XIV Winter Olympics all falling victim to heavy shellfire.⁵⁰⁴ The city’s cultural actors did their best to protect cultural heritage buildings, but were quickly faced with and genuinely caught off-guard by the openness of such destruction: recalling collective efforts by a group of female cultural actors at saving the most precious of the city’s architectural heritage, curator Nermina Zildžo remembers how they hopefully placed characteristic light-blue flags printed with UNESCO’s world heritage logo, hoping to deter shelling of civilian objects of cultural importance. Instead, they were forced to scramble to dismount the flags, after quickly realizing that the flags were better suited as honing-beacons for the enemy’s artillery.⁵⁰⁵ Targeting public spaces of gathering was also a means of discouraging ethnic mixing, as civilians were killed indiscriminately regardless of their ethnic belonging, as there was no way of distinguishing them.⁵⁰⁶ However, following Coward’s understanding of urbicide, these places were destroyed not only because of their status as objects of cultural heritage, but as a built environment symbolic of urban cultural life and, more specifically, Bosnian ethnic pluralism.⁵⁰⁷

Architect and long-time mayor of Belgrade Bogdan Bogdanović has written extensively on the city, and has been particularly influential in the ways in which concepts of civilization and urbicide have become intertwined in a Balkan context, arguing that the primary force behind civilization can be summed up as “a battle between city lovers and city haters, a battle waged in every nation, every culture, every individual.”⁵⁰⁸ The dichotomy proposed between those who built cities and those who destroyed them are tied by Bogdanović to an ethical quality, equating the essence of the city with “moral beauty”, and are attacked by “savage, bestial city destroyers with no unconscious are hard at work gutting, sacking, murdering the population,

⁵⁰² Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia From the Death of Tito the Fall of Milošević*, 262.

⁵⁰³ Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War*, 74.

⁵⁰⁴ Mirjana Ristić, 91.

⁵⁰⁵ Nermina Zildžo, interview.

⁵⁰⁶ Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War*, 65.

⁵⁰⁷ Martin Coward, *Urbicide*, 24–28.

⁵⁰⁸ Bogdan Bogdanović, “The City and Death,” 54.

burning archives and libraries, demolishing museums and houses of worship.”⁵⁰⁹ Conceptualizing urbanity in a framework of civilization, Bogdanović also ascribes it a particular Western characteristic:

*“Sooner or later the civilized world will dismiss our internecine butchery with a shrug of the shoulders – how else can it react? – but it will never forget the way we destroyed our cities. (...) The horror felt by the West is understandable: for centuries it has linked the concepts of ‘city’ and ‘civilization,’ associating them even on an etymological level. It therefore has no choice but to view the destruction of cities as flagrant, wanton opposition to the highest values of civilization.”*⁵¹⁰

The discussion of urban destruction within the wars of Yugoslav dissolution has been noted to be rooted in part in a Balkanist discourse, where concepts of civilization and the historical hierarchization of civility is offered a visualization in the destruction of objects such as Mostar’s *Stari most* or the National Library of Sarajevo.⁵¹¹ The opposition of the rural values of the countryside with the urban, civilized nature of the city further encourages the stigmatization of the former as inherently incompatible with the latter, this simplistic dichotomy tends to overlook the practical role that the destruction of built environments plays in these conflicts.⁵¹² As such, while it is often appropriated within dichotomous logic of the barbarian attack on civilization, the essentialization of the Bosnian Serb attempts at destroying Sarajevo’s urban fabric into limited categories risks erasing the multiplicity of responses to the destruction offered by the city’s inhabitants.

The destruction of the city necessitated the adoption of new spatial practices and adaptive strategies to adjust to the new geography of surroundings, a fact which also became translated into new artistic practices throughout the city. Some scholars have framed artistic production as “the only way to gain freedom from oppression and confirm their connection and affiliation with the city.”⁵¹³ While not universal and not particularly common, the practice of introducing artistic interventions in culturally important spaces constitutes a discursive rarity developed by

⁵⁰⁹ Bogdan Bogdanović, 72–73.

⁵¹⁰ Bogdan Bogdanović, 53.

⁵¹¹ Martin Coward, *Urbicide*, 28–33.

⁵¹² Martin Coward, 37.

⁵¹³ Jelena Hadžiosmanović, “How Is Culture Used as a Tool for Dissuasion in Conflict and Consensus: A Case of Sarajevo (1992-1995),” 23.

Sarajevo artists.⁵¹⁴ On the one hand, cultural events provide a physical shelter from the near-constant shelling, while simultaneously also emerging “as a means of asserting and affirming the city in the face of its systematic annihilation”, through which cultural producers and consumers supersede their roles as actors in a cultural event to become a “congregation of citizens.”⁵¹⁵ Tying into the very civilization discourse described in this chapter, artists and curators regularly chose to place their artworks in spaces that had been deliberately destroyed by the Bosnian Serb army as a response to what was interpreted not only as a physical assault on the city’s architecture, but also on its multicultural traditions and urban culture – the civilization of the city. Artists who engaged with sites of destruction did so primarily from an aesthetic standpoint, interacting with meaningful locations and notions of urbicide to create, somewhat unintentionally, gathering places that facilitated community bonding through critical socialization processes.⁵¹⁶ The adaptation of spaces to difficult wartime conditions by civilians hereby becomes a conscious spatial pattern of defense that reclaimed the destroyed urban landscape for civilian life, actively participating not only in the physical rebuilding of the city but also emotionally tying physical acts to psychological effects.⁵¹⁷

The physical transformation of the city under siege resulted in an almost immediate process of adaptation by the Sarajevo population. The proliferation of collective spatial practices in which ordinary citizens found creative solutions to the newfound dangers of existing in public spaces and private homes became a significant characteristic of normal life under siege, often reliant on practices that reappropriated the destroyed urban landscape as a survival resource. The need for new patterns of adaptive practices extended into the cultural field, in part attributed as necessary to the maintenance of morale, but took on the same form as for all of the city’s inhabitants: “everything was an experiment.”⁵¹⁸ In some cases, curatorial adaptations, particularly those that interacted with ruins and other unstable spaces, can be considered also through the lens of negotiating shelter and protection to vulnerable populations. The emerging

⁵¹⁴ Sarajevo actors themselves also adopted the term of urbicide during this period. See, for example: Ibrahim Spahić, “Zašto?,” in *Dvadeset godina Internacionalni Festival Sarajevo - Sarajevska Zima 1984-2004* (Sarajevo: Međunarodni Centar za Mir, 2005), 35,36; N.n., *Warchitecture: Urbicide Sarajevo* (Sarajevo: DAS-SABIH, 1994).

⁵¹⁵ Silvija Jestrović, *Performance, Space, Utopia. Cities of War, Cities of Exile.*, 130.

⁵¹⁶ Asja Mandić explores this subject extensively in her works on culture as critical resistance, and remains the primary reference on the reconfiguration of destroyed spaces within the visual arts scene of Sarajevo. Asja Mandić, “Exhibitions in Damaged and Destroyed Architectural Objects in Besieged Sarajevo: Spaces of Gathering and Socialization”; Asja Mandić, “The Formation of a Culture of Critical Resistance in Sarajevo.”

⁵¹⁷ Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War*, 108.

⁵¹⁸ Armina Pilav, “Before the War, War, After the War,” 32.

spatial patterns and practices that reacted to the destruction of the city: through inverting destruction through physical, discursive and experimental special practices, the reappropriation of Sarajevo's ruins by its population can be considered to be reflective of turning "places of oppression as spaces of liberation."⁵¹⁹

The proliferation of cultural events in unusual, often public, places can be explained in part by simple necessity. Many of the city's exhibition spaces had become unusable early on in the war, either succumbing to shelling or becoming repurposed as part of the war effort.⁵²⁰ Little is known of the ephemeral events organized in shelters, hallways, ruins or repaired open passages, specifically due to their fleeting nature and non-traditional locations, meaning that while many Sarajevans were aware of their happenings, little documentation or information about their expansiveness can truly be assessed. However, the phenomenon was popular enough for architect Armina Pilav to mention them as an example of urban resilience in the face of war, and remains traceable in fragmented documentation.⁵²¹ Exhibitions held in the hallways of residential buildings allowed those living in proximity an occasion and place to gather, in a relatively safe space, and to socialize.⁵²² Some witness accounts are also available, allowing some insight into the processes that governed the organization of such events as well as their reception among the population:

„That summer our life was mostly spent in entrance halls. We lived in the cellars and the entrances because the shelling was so bad, we couldn't be in our flats. Still less go out and move about the town. But there was a very enterprising man called Janez Tadić who before the war had an agency called Stella Media, and he wanted us to organize an exhibition through his agency. The opening was 24 July at 12 o'clock. The exhibition was very well attended. Invitations went out in rather a rush done on computers because we didn't have any other means, and even if people couldn't get in from town, people came from neighboring entrance

⁵¹⁹ Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War*, 108.

⁵²⁰ This was the case for the Novi Hram gallery and the Energoinvest gallery, two private spaces converted into warehouses at the beginning of the war. See: Nermina Kurspahić, "Cultural Institutions and Monuments in Sarajevo," 7; Ana Kovač, "Rekvijem za galeriju," *Oslobodjenje*, May 11, 1994, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁵²¹ Armina Pilav, "Before the War, War, After the War," 32.

⁵²² An. Šimić, "Razapinjanje ljepote," *Oslobodjenje*, December 15, 1992, 4, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

halls, they all came to the exhibition. We couldn't do anything about the destruction of the town, but we could keep its pulse alive."⁵²³

The central aspects revealed in this short excerpt by Miroslav Bilać tie the extreme danger to a necessity to reassess cultural practices, giving them a form appropriate for wartime, while also underlining the popularity of the event amongst neighbors, most of which would most likely have been unfamiliar with the intimate Sarajevan cultural scene. The organization of shows in uncharacteristic, and arguably absurd spaces, appears to have been received neutrally by a general public accustomed to wartime improvisations, and who welcomed these improvised spaces of socialization. As such, the hosting of Andraž Šalamun, one of the founding members of the influential Slovenian OHO collective, in a room dedicated to the printing press in the basement of the Academy of Fine Arts was seen as a welcome respite from the wartime situation. Despite the caliber of the artist, the exhibition of his works in such an unusual space did little to dissuade visitors, and the event appears to have been successful despite its strange location. Furthermore, reviewers of the show were acutely aware of the dissonance created by showing one of Yugoslavia's most influential artists in a basement, but actively qualified the curatorial choice through a prism of understanding based on a necessity of reappropriating spaces of destruction: "either all places will be places of culture or they will not exist."⁵²⁴

⁵²³ N.n., "Miroslav Bilać. Paintings Exhibited in the Lobby (07.1992)." Interview by FAMA International, 1996. FAMA International. Accessed October 12, 2020. <http://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/oral-history/>.

⁵²⁴ Author translation: "(...) ili će sva mjesta biti mjesta kulture ili ih neće biti." Nermina Omerbegović, "Izložba i promocija," *Oslobodjenje*, September 20, 1995, 11, Mediacentar Sarajevo; S.M., "Izložba Andraža Šalamuna," *Oslobodjenje*, September 19, 1995, 11, Mediacentar Sarajevo.



Figure 11. Solo show by Andraž Šalamun, exhibition view. Taking place in the basement of the Sarajevo Academy of Fine Arts, the opening visibly drew many visitors. Material conditions shifted throughout the siege, improving significantly near the end of 1995. In this way, this particular exhibition opening was illuminated with electricity. Image reprinted from “Izložba i promocija” by N.O., photography by Darko Babić, Sarajevo: *Oslobodjenje*, September 20, 1995, 11. Courtesy of *Oslobodjenje*.

Whereas the introduction of existing improvised exhibition spaces in wartime Sarajevo awaits a more thorough analysis, the systematic mobilization of the ruined urban landscape into curatorial processes has been understood as a means of reappropriating targets of snipers and shelling, which had been chosen specifically to ‘kill’ the urban character and ‘spirit’ of the city. As such, infusing culture into destroyed or damaged places allows for the transformation from a bare existence of survival to an urban space of socialization, upholding the values for which it was being attacked.⁵²⁵ There is ample evidence to uphold the role that cultural events played for ordinary citizens as spaces of socialization, as explained by Divna Pervan on the occasion of an exhibition by Fikret Libovac:

⁵²⁵ Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War*, 120.

*“A Sarajevo where grenades no longer fall as “then” when I left, where we no longer go for water without hope that that water will ever reach our home together with us, where we sit next to a little flame somewhere in the neighborhood next door or having neighbors at ours, today we meet other people - relatives, friends, colleagues, excitement that I will never be able to fully express to anyone: hugs, tears and laughter, simply [feeling] welcome.”*⁵²⁶

As discussed previously in this text, the rubble created by the destruction of Sarajevo’s landscape, such as wooden beams, shards of glass, cables and pipes, ash and other debris became a source of inspiration for some artists who integrated these materials into their practice. However, the ruins produced by constant Bosnian Serb Army shelling also became a resource for civilians navigating the changed urban landscape. Within the visual arts community, the proliferation of exhibitions held in destroyed and semi-destroyed spaces became the most visible ways through which cultural actors navigated the complex wartime relationship between themselves and their surroundings.

Performance interventions in destroyed spaces, as those discussed in the previous section, exhibited a similar logic to the mobilization of these same ruins within the curatorial context of exhibitions. Characterizing such actions as “alternative reconstructive strategies”, Silvija Jestrović argues that performances (and, by extension, exhibitions) that took place in culturally significant ruins symbolically reconstruct these buildings, offering a new, adapted, function to places that had been forcefully targeted because of their social and cultural importance.⁵²⁷ While it should be underlined that the exhibition of artworks in destroyed spaces represented only a minority of events held during the siege, they have remained influential in popular memory of the conflict. Furthermore, whereas some exhibitions in ruined spaces took place in objects that held little importance in collective imaginations, the vast majority of such interventions took place directly in sites familiar to the public.⁵²⁸

⁵²⁶ Author translation: “Sarajevo po kojem kao ‘onda’ kada sam otišla više ne padaju granate, u kojem se više ne ide po vodu bez nade da će ta voda zajedno s nama nikada stići kući, gdje uz onaj žižak iz čaše sjedimo negdje u komšiluku ili su pak komšije kod nas, danas su susret i sa drugim ljudima – rođacima, prijateljima, kolegama, uzbuđenja koja nikada nikome neću moći do kraja iskazati: zagrljaji, suze pa smijeh, pa dobrodošlice.” Divna Pervan, “S Fikretovimi pticama,” *Oslobodjenje*, March 27, 1995, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁵²⁷ Silvija Jestrović, *Performance, Space, Utopia. Cities of War, Cities of Exile.*, 153.

⁵²⁸ For example, an exhibition of Andreas Pfeiffer’s photographs and digital works in the ruins of the ‘Skender Kulenović’ elementary school in Dobrinja, held in 1994, took place in a venue that held little importance for the vast majority of the city’s population (even if some attachment to the building could have been present in the neighborhood itself). See: An. Šimić, “Filmovi, izložbe,” *Oslobodjenje*, March 31, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

The prolific *Witnesses of Existence* exhibition provides a particularly relevant example of interventions in unusual, destroyed public spaces, illustrating the symbiotic synchronicity of discursive positions that aimed to rehabilitate ruined spaces as spaces of culture with the practical aspects of necessary wartime adaptation of the urban landscape. Held in the ruins of the Sutjeska cinema, the exhibition provides a clear example of a cultural event staged in and conceptualized in concurrence with the space's cultural relevance. As a building recently renovated to house artists, it makes sense that it should be used as such despite its destruction by besieging forces.

However, the role of such events for the broader Sarajevan population extended beyond a theoretical emphasis of discursive positioning and into the concrete effects of such architectural reconfigurations on the local population. Most significantly, the space in which the *Svjedoci Postojanja* show was held became used by civilians as a common passage that offered shelter from the snipers that regularly targeted the major intersection on which the building was located. The use of the Sutjeska's carcass as a passage is exemplary of Sarajevan adaptations towards their now unsafe urban environment, a fact of which the organizers of the show were also aware of, and in fact became integrated into the theoretical aspects of the exhibitions curatorial concept. As such, a map of the surrounding area together with a descriptive key was published in the exhibition catalogue, offering (specifically non-Sarajevan) viewers a vision of a shelter that simultaneously takes on a cultural role. On a discursive level, the fact that this exhibition was held in rubble was one of the most crucial elements of its curatorial concept. This sentiment was echoed also amongst the city's cultural actors, such as writer Razija Lagumdžija, whose diary entry on the *Witnesses of Existence* exhibition had been published in the daily *Oslobodjenje*:

"Warm tea was a great welcome. Destroyed spaces or unheated apartments, without glass in the windows, were our habitats in which we survived our fears in anticipation of new shelling, killing. In the forebodings of such a life, something appeared as resistance of the spirit, as defiance and dignity that defended us. (...) In the darkened, ruined Hall, full of visitors, in one

moment all that brought us to the wall of killing, as if in a terrible dream, was summoned, when we demolished, pierced and crossed to the side called life.”⁵²⁹

However, just as the exhibitions that were held in residential hallways, events held in reconfigured, public ruins also brought elite artistic events closer to a general public that might otherwise not have “attended” a similar show. As such, placing artworks in a heavily trafficked area created a unique space of socialization open also to those external to the local artistic community. Srdjan Vuletić, videographer of the recording sent to Venice that following year, recalls the particularly positive reaction of those who passed through:

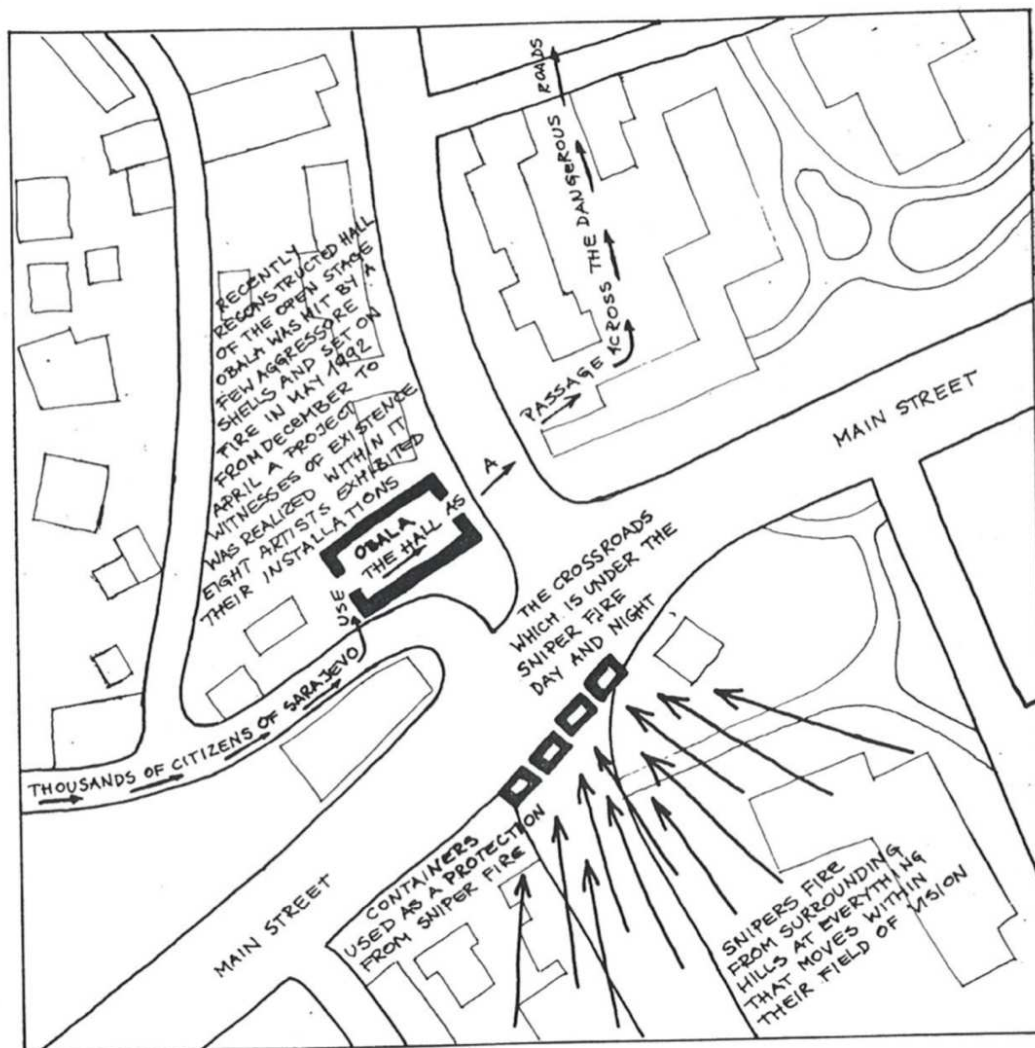
*“Because this space you could go through it to shelter yourself inside. And there was no single time that I heard that you know, that somebody reacted in negative way. Because people can say, like, “Waah, what are you doing?! We have smarter things to do!” No, it was really extremely important. And that surprised me. (...) So for me it was very well received, by ordinary people. Because it was kind of walking through gallery. People were walking through and there was so many people coming back with the water, because you have to go out and fetch water, and they stayed, they were not running through it, they walked, they talk amongst themselves. So for me that was a big surprise, mostly surprise, I think that this situation will never happen again.”*⁵³⁰

⁵²⁹ Author translation: “Topao čaj je bio veliko počašćenje. Porušeni prostori ili negrijani stanovi, bez stakala na prozorima, bili su naša staništa u kojima smo preživljavali strahove u iščekivanju novog granatiranja, ubijanja. U predasima takvog življenja pojavljivalo se nešto kao otpor duha, kao prkos i dostojanstvo koje nas je branilo. (...) U zamračenoj, porušenoj Sali, punoj posjetilaca, za jedan tren dozvano je sve ono što nas je kao u strašnom snu dovelo pred zid ubijanja, koga smo rušili, probijali i prelazili na onu stranu koja se zove život.” Razija Lagumdžija, “Svjedoci postojanja,” 7.

⁵³⁰ Srdjan Vuletić, interview.



Figure 12. Film still from *Witnesses of Existence*, depicting a recognizably unaffiliated person crossing through the space while traveling across the city. The opening scenes of the film feature a few individuals walking through the 'gallery' seeking shelter from snipers, visibly surprised by the presence of the cameraman. Film still from *Witnesses of Existence* film, Dubravko Brigić, Srdjan Vuletić, Sarajevo: *Obala Art Centar*, 1993, 00:10. *Witnesses of Existence* Carton, Courtesy of Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.



U NOĆI IZMEĐU 9 I 10 MAJA 1992 GODINE UPRAVO REKONSTRUISANA DVORANA OTVORENE SCENE OBALA POGOĐENA JE AGRESORSKIM GRANATAMA I ZAPALJENA. TRENUTNO HILJADE SARAJLIJA KORISTE DVORANU KAO PROLAZ PREKO RASKRŠĆA NA KOJE SNAJPERISTI DANOČNO PUCAJU. OD DECEMBRA 1992 DO APRILA 1993 U TOJ DVORANI REALIZOVAN JE PROJEKT SVJEDOCI POSTOJANJA, U KOME JE OSAM SARAJEVSKIH UMJETNIKA IZLAGALO SVOJE INSTALACIJE.

Figure 13. An illustration of the Sutjeska Cinema’s location in relation to the wartime urban landscape. The image was primarily produced for the consumption of international audiences unfamiliar with the Sarajevan cityscape, featuring short explanations of key points on the map in English. Image reprinted from *Svjedoci Postojanja / Witnesses of Existence. Exhibition Catalogue*, Nermina Kurspahić, Sarajevo: Obala Art Centar, April 1993. National and University Library of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

New uses of the former post office building, shelled into submission on the 2nd of May, 1992, offer particular insight into the relationship between discursive reactions to the urbicide of the city and their artistic formulations. A classic edifice dating back to Hapsburg times, the post

office appears to have been understood by Sarajevans as a symbol of urban normality rather than an object of cultural heritage, such as the Oriental Institute or the National Library.⁵³¹ The destruction of the post led to the disconnection of some one-third of the city's phone lines, severely impacting the average citizen's ability to communicate with one another and the outside world.⁵³² Representing the destruction of a Sarajevan urban lifestyle, the ruins of the secessionist institution were amongst the first destroyed buildings to host cultural interventions. A performance piece, taking place amongst the debris, initiated by Ante Jurić, Zoran Bogdanović and captured on camera by Predrag Čančar, was amongst the first artistic acts to be taken to the public space in 1992. As Jurić and Bogdanović collected debris, burned beams and ashes from the secessionist institution, the intervention took place in an unsheltered area, exposing the artists to snipers positioned in the surrounding hills. For Asja Mandić, "the building lost its practical use but through the artists' intervention and visitors' presence, it became a site of memory, commemorating the deaths of many civilians and the death of civilization."⁵³³ The salvaged remains were eventually transported into the Catholic Church of Saint Vincent, also virtually reduced to rubble, in an act of a "site-orientated and referenced practice" that transported the ruins of a significant landmark, combining it with the detritus of stained-glass windows and the damaged altar. As such, she argues that the artistic intervention into the space of the church, which included "cleaning the dust from certain spots, wrapping the church altar in white sheets, sweeping the floor and piling up the clutter of destruction", represented a commentary on the "mortality of these architectural monuments in terms of the mortality of culture itself."⁵³⁴ Unfortunately, little other documentation exists of artistic interventions in the damaged church: whereas fra. Petar Perica Vidić allegedly also showed his paintings there, under the name *Ranjene slike* (*Wounded paintings*), other shows were mostly held in the Franciscan monastery.⁵³⁵

⁵³¹ The post office edifice, beyond its practical use, was also the site of non-traditional artistic activity. Shortly following the end of the war, a graffito is rumored to have appeared on the walls of the building: "Tito, come back!", under which an answer was posted "I am not crazy! Tito." A similar rumor exists for a tag that appeared on a post office, most likely the central one in question, proudly proclaiming that "This is Serbia!". A response quickly followed, answering: "This is a post office, you fool!" See, for example: Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 219; Brian Whitmore, "Letter from Sarajevo," *The Nation*, August 18, 2003, 30. Published online: <https://www.thenation.com/article/politics/voting-data-race/>.

⁵³² Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War*, 79.

⁵³³ Asja Mandić, "The Formation of a Culture of Critical Resistance in Sarajevo," 727–31.

⁵³⁴ Asja Mandić, 731.

⁵³⁵ Planinka Mikulić, "Čarobni labirinti tuša," *Oslobodjenje*, July 14, 1995, 12, Mediacentar Sarajevo; Nada Salom, "Svetkovina slike," *Oslobodjenje*, October 17, 1993, 5, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

The post office became the target of artistic intervention for a second time in February 1996, only shortly after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords that heralded the end of the war. Following the official end of the siege, a group of four artists including Fikret Libovac, Enes Sivac, Alma Suljević and Alma Zulfikarpašić used the destroyed aula for their own group show. Mentioned by Ivana Maček as an example of an exhibition where “the contrast between destruction and creativity bespoke of a tremendous creative life force,” a similar vision is suggested in the exhibition catalogue, in which the past is linked to the present through the combination of large sculptures and paintings created in times of war with the physical consequences of said conflict.⁵³⁶ The destruction of a historically relevant, practically important and architecturally beautiful Austro-Hungarian-era building is hereby given a new form:

*“In other words, these works in the destroyed aula of the main post-office in Sarajevo are not a trace or locus of Art as an activity, they are art itself, they don’t show, but are reflected as conceived in this burned-down and ruined space, they are an integral part of our drama and the horrible atmosphere that is reflected in these spaces.”*⁵³⁷

In this case, the curatorial concept of the exhibition appropriated a destroyed space of public relevance as a backdrop for the works that were to be displayed in it, intentionally blurring the lines between the pieces and the ruins in which they find themselves. As such, the exhibition became an expression of precisely this overlap within the cultural practice of the time: whereas the artworks were a direct reflection of the destruction in which they were created, their imposition on a destroyed and therefore supposedly unusable building represents a bilateral relationship between artist and recipient.

The introduction of non-traditional exhibition spaces into the Sarajevo urban landscape was not limited to the simple reappropriation of destruction, but also took the form of active architectural construction. In 1994, the independent multi-media collective FAMA installed the “Survival Art Museum” in front of and sheltered by the National Theatre, on the square which would come to be named after Susan Sontag. Constructed with the participation of artist Ognjenka Finci from the rubble of the JNA’s barracks and ruined houses across the city, the

⁵³⁶ Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 56.

⁵³⁷ Author translation: “Drugim riječima, ova djela u destruiranoj auli glavne pošte u Sarajevu nijesu trag ili krivulja umjetnosti kao djelatnosti, oni su sama umjetnost, oni ne pokazuju, već se odražavaju kao rodjena u ovom spaljenom i srušenom prostoru, oni su sastavni dio naše drame i užasne atmosfere kroz odraz ovih prostora.” Muhamed Karamehmedović, *Pošta 1992-1996* (Sarajevo: Medjunarodni Centar za Mir, 1996), 4. Historical Museum of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

so-called 'Bosnian House' represented the only free-standing structure built during the entirety of the siege of Sarajevo.⁵³⁸ Home to a miniature museum that included paintings, installations, sculptures, posters and miscellaneous cultural artefacts related to daily life under siege, the building quite literally constructed a space for cultural exchange and socialization in the very center of the city. Writing in hindsight, Suada Kapić, the project's initiator already framed the Museum's construction within the context of a complex relationship that tied urbanity, civilization and culture in an inextricable way:

*"The acceptance of a distorted normality as the normality implied a change of the way of thinking, and the loss of all former habits once considered the true measures of a civilization which has disappeared. The need for balance made us realize that we must create as they destroy. And so the process began of establishing a balance between destruction and construction, fear and freedom, hunger and creativity, feeling the cold of winter and working – as the law of survival."*⁵³⁹

Inaugurated as part of the "Beba Univerzum" festival, the Museum was (at least in part) dedicated to "the records of accomplishments in the field of sculpture, theatre, publishing, painting, design."⁵⁴⁰ The structure was meant to present the citizens of Sarajevo with objects reminding them of "the cultural resistance of the city", and housed the sculptural constructions of Enes Sivac and Mustafa Skopljak, works by Nedžad Begović and Nusret Pašić, installations by Amra Zulfikarpašić, and wartime design such as TRIO posters and postcards.⁵⁴¹ In essence, the FAMA collective defied the destruction of their city through countering it with construction, infusing materials previously condemned to rubble with the cultural production of the Sarajevan population. The interconnection between the discursive contextualization of urban destruction and its effects on ordinary citizens can in this case be visualized through the Survival Art Museum: for cultural workers, erecting a building amidst destruction was also a reflection of an emotional defiance of urbicidal destruction.

⁵³⁸ Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War*, 124.

⁵³⁹ N.n., FAMA International. "FAMA Collection," accessed June 9, 2021, <http://famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/fama-original-projects/06/index.html>.

⁵⁴⁰ N.n., FAMA International, "Baby Universe - Survival Art Museum" (FAMA International, 1994), accessed October 12, 2020, <http://famacollection.org/projects/06/index.html>.

⁵⁴¹ V. Bičkalović, "Slika našeg opstanka," *Oslobodjenje*, July 21, 1994, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo; FAMA International, "Baby Universe - Survival Art Museum."

Installations and performances represent yet another medium through which cultural actors intervened in destroyed spaces. On the occasion of the “Beba Univerzum” festival, a burning contraption depicting a man on a bicycle was launched across the Miljacka river by artist Enes Sivac. Described by theater director Haris Pašović as a sign of progress within Sarajevo culture, which had now thoroughly “entered the 21st century”, the event combined a daring interception with available materials.⁵⁴² Putting himself and his assistants at risk of death by the hand of snipers, Sivac introduced a moving element into an otherwise static environment, creating a temporary cultural artefact that both taunted the Bosnian Serb Army soldiers in the hills and delighted viewers in the city. The performance was a multi-personal affair, as recalled by the artist:

*„We had a painter’s ladder. And when we lit the statue of the bicyclist, and the flyer, and the jumper on fire which was wrapped in paper. I got this mass, mass of napalm which we spread over the paper to make it flare up better. And my colleagues who helped me, Karić Šefik and Boro Žuža. They’re somewhere else now. They actually were the ones who lifted the ladder, the bicyclist and the fire. Fire and water were united and that, that air. Three, strange worlds. While we still remained in this one, in our own world.”*⁵⁴³

Through launching a burning bicycle man across the Miljacka, Sivac united the basic elements of fire, water and air in a bizarre experiment. The artist’s interventions on the public riverbank were not limited to this fiery performance, which was joined by a series of other wire-built sculptures that adorned the walkway adjacent to the river that runs through the city. This series is described by FAMA as inherently relational to its audience:

*“Outrunning the Wind is an exhibition of the sculptures of Enis Sivac. The sculptures were hanging above the River Miljacka. These sculptures produce their best effect on the audience is running while looking at them. Running has become a normal way of getting around the city that has been under fire for two and the half years. It is innovative attractive exhibition establishing a new relationship between the art of sculpture and the audience.”*⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴² Nada Salom, “Skulptura je poletjela,” *Oslobodjenje*, August 26, 1994, 6, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁵⁴³ N.n., “Enes Sivac. Installing the cyclist (09.1994).” Interview by FAMA International, 1996. Accessed October 12, 2020. <http://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/oral-history/>.

⁵⁴⁴ Suada Kapić. “Outrunning the Wind”, FAMA International. “Cultural Survival Newsletter #3”, August 24, 1994, accessed October 12, 2020, <https://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/fama-original-projects/05/index.html>

In this way, the art that was created during the siege can be seen to be in direct conversation with its surroundings. The project's initiator, Suada Kapić, expressed this intricate interconnectedness in her correspondence with UNESCO regarding funding for the adjacent Sarajevo Survival Map project: "Sarajevans survived terrible terror and destruction of old civilization in between of three levels of survival – biological, cultural and mental-health."⁵⁴⁵



Figure 14. External view of the Survival Art Museum, located on one of the central squares of Sarajevo. A sculpture by Enes Sivac is fastened to the metal railings above the roof of the house, while a poster announcing an exhibition by painter Ana Kovač can be seen in the lower left corner. Photographer unknown, FAMA International, 1994, accessed June 15, 2022, <http://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/the-siege-of-sarajevo-museum-the-art-of-living-1992%E2%80%931996/index.html> . Courtesy of FAMA International.

⁵⁴⁵ Suada Kapić to UNESCO, "PROJECT - Sarajevo Survival Map." Fax, November 28, 1995, B2ST06.3-51, AG 8 CI, INF, Carton 31, UNESCO Archives.



Figure 15. External view of the Survival Art Museum. Photographer unknown, FAMA International, 1994, accessed June 15, 2022, <http://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/the-siege-of-sarajevo-museum-the-art-of-living-1992%E2%80%931996/index.html>. Courtesy of FAMA International.



Figure 16. “All I Need is Love” by Amra Zulfikarpašić, exhibition view. The graphic prints shown in this exhibition were also included in other events, such as the 1996 exhibition in the ruins of the central post office. Photographer unknown, FAMA International, 1994, accessed June 15, 2022, <http://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/the-siege-of-sarajevo-museum-the-art-of-living-1992%E2%80%931996/index.html>. Courtesy of FAMA International. Artwork rights to Amra Zulfikarpašić.



Figure 17. “Biciklista” by Enes Sivac, installation view. A detailed view of the sculpture suspended above the Survival Art Museum. Photographer unknown, FAMA International, 1994, accessed June 15, 2022, <http://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/the-siege-of-sarajevo-museum-the-art-of-living-1992%E2%80%931996/index.html>. Courtesy of FAMA International. Artwork rights to Enes Sivac.

Strikingly, very few of the instances of urban reappropriation through artistic acts have been openly characterized by Sarajevan actors through the lens of civilization. Instead, they are framed and understood by many local artists and cultural actors as acts of reappropriation and a practical answer to the destruction rained down on their city, of which cultural production is an inherent part. While the Bosnian Serb Army openly attempted to annihilate any semblance

of urban, heterogenous life, the city's cultural actors responded by simply creating more places where this culture could flourish, often simultaneously employing the same spatial practices that permitted them and their fellow citizens to safely navigate the deformed cityscape.

3.3. CIVILIZATION AS A FRAMEWORK: ADDRESSING LIVED EXPERIENCES THROUGH DISCOURSE

While for many the wartime arts scene remained, perhaps for differing reasons, a token of exceptionality to the city's inhabitants, artists living and working in besieged Sarajevo shared many of the hopes, fears, and struggles of ordinary inhabitants. The overlapping historical specificity of vocabularies built on ideas of civilization with the personal expressive power that such discourses provide are only one of the approaches one can take to better understanding the lived experiences of civilians under siege, while at the same time emphasizing their agency as individuals within a much larger conflict. After all, it is their voices and their images that can best explain what it is to be an artist at war. These vocabularies were in no way unique to the visual arts community, and were visibly prominent in other cultural fields. While ascertaining the degree to which the notion of civilization was universally understood in Sarajevo as a discursive tool would require further study, it would be reasonable to assume at least some degree of overlap.

This approach also opens the opportunity for a necessary discussion of individual and collective experiences of the siege by those on whom it was imposed. Whereas a common narrative based on civilization can easily be identified as popular amongst local and external cultural actors, the ways in which it is then consumed is extremely varied. While some artists used their civilized status as a signaling strategy for external audiences, consciously using specific language to signal their moral victimhood, others used it to express their own suffering within their community. Furthermore, this lexicon lends itself to a new reading of core theoretical concepts which have been deployed in the study of everyday life during the siege of Sarajevo, providing new avenues for reflection.

CHAPTER IV. DEFENDING THE HOMELAND THROUGH ART. EVERYDAY LIFE ON THE FRONTLINES AS SEEN BY ARTISTS

“Bosna i Hercegovina i Sarajevo ne brane se samo oružjem, ljubavlju i srcem. Brane se i kreativnošću, idejama, maštom, talentom. Bosnu i Sarajevo brane umjetnici.”

“Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sarajevo are not defended only by weapons, love and heart. They are defended with creativity, ideas, imagination, and talent. Bosnia and Sarajevo are defended by artists.”

Se. Kurtović, printed in “Ja volim Sarajevo”, Oslobođenje, April 21, 1993, 9

Artists have long since played an integral, if marginal, role in armed conflict: whether contracted to document the military victories of powerful armies, employed to placate and motivate civilian populations in the face of wartime hardships, or independently decrying the horrors inherent to warfare, artists have been present on the battlefield for nearly as long as wars have been waged. The case of besieged Sarajevo, however, created an almost unique spatial context in which individuals produced and consumed art in an active warzone. Although this singularity is often overlooked in accounts treating Sarajevan wartime art, it is crucial in understanding both the artworks produced in this period as well as the experiences of the artists involved: the recurring comparisons to Picasso’s seminal *Guernica* can offer only partial accuracy – Picasso, after all, did not paint his masterpiece amidst flying shrapnel and sniper covers. As such, the existence of a visual arts community directly *within* an armed conflict, and by extension, artistic production that took place not in the aftermath of or spatially removed from war is an almost complete anomaly in global art history. Concordantly, the specific interactions between artists and the military aspects of their siege-time environment also mirror the experiences of other actor-groups who were subjected to the same conditions, providing a new avenue for discussing the relationships between civilian and army in besieged Sarajevo.

As the state of Yugoslavia disappeared in a flurry of battles, skirmishes and ceasefires, it left behind a complicated landscape of shifting allegiances and military traditions that directly impacted the creation of new military formations in the region and the people who fought for them. The sheer complexity of these structures and the mobility of the actors involved in them

makes it difficult to trace experiences of individual soldiers, yet the influence of pre-war foundations had a considerable impact on the roads which they took. The Yugoslav defense doctrine, an almost direct descendant of Partisan structures developed during the Second World War, rested upon two conceptually and administratively complementary components. The Yugoslav People's Army (*Jugoslovenska narodna armija, JNA*), officially founded following communist victory over fascism in 1945, provided a centralized and well-equipped professional army that could repel first waves of attack. The JNA was complemented by mobile, regionally organized Territorial Defense Units (*Teritorijalna Odbrana, TO*), designed specifically for independent guerilla-style warfare in the case of a failure of the centralized military system.⁵⁴⁶ These two structures formed the two pillars of an “all peoples’ defense” doctrine, which combined the capabilities of a professional army with the resilience offered by preparing society as a whole to protect their land.⁵⁴⁷ This structure created the preconditions for unequal military capacities between the national armies following secession from Yugoslavia, and had a significant impact on the way in which the siege of Sarajevo was imposed and defended.⁵⁴⁸

In the direct buildup to war, nationalist politicians in Serbia specifically took care to restructure JNA frameworks in ways that favored Serb control within its ranks, eventually leading to a mass-exodus of Slovenian, Croat and Bosnian soldiers from their units, many of whom would eventually join their local TDF units as fighting erupted in Slovenia and Croatia.⁵⁴⁹ This double-pronged system was further exploited in early 1992, as a new defense plan calling for the JNA protection of Serb population outside of Serbia transferred the command structure in Serb-held

⁵⁴⁶ Traditionally, TO units were organized in local workplaces and were armed primarily with light weapons. In the year preceding the Bosnian War, the TO units in BiH counted roughly 300,000 reservists recently released from regular service with access to decommissioned War II-era German and Soviet weapons and modern light arms. As they were locally organized, the individual TO defense units in BiH generally “came under the control of the nationalist party that ruled the municipality in which they were located. In a few mixed municipalities, the units split along national lines,” with individual members pledging loyalty to opposing factions. In this way, a large part of the military mobilization in BiH was built on the framework of the Yugoslav defense system. See: N.n., “CIA Directorate of Intelligence Memorandum: Yugoslavia Military Dynamics of a Potential Civil War” (CIA Directorate of Intelligence, January 3, 1991), 11–12, CIA Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/5235e80d993294098d517528>; Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 276.

⁵⁴⁷ Vahid Karavelić et al., *Prvi Korpus Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*, ed. Mesud Šadinlija (Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava Univerziteta u Sarajevu, 2017), 56.

⁵⁴⁸ Some studies appearing as early as 1981 actually pointed out the potential deficiencies of an “all peoples’ defense” doctrine, specifically questioning the willingness of individual actors to fight for united Yugoslavia as opposed to placing primary allegiance with constituent republics and regions. See, for example: Douglas A. Frazee, *The Yugoslav All-People's Defense System : A Pessimistic Appraisal*. (Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School, 1981), <http://archive.org/details/theyugoslavallpe1094520713>.

⁵⁴⁹ Vahid Karavelić et al., *Prvi Korpus Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*, 56.

territories into TDF units, supplied with a variety of arms.⁵⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the lasting ceasefire in Croatia that accompanied the signing of the Vance Plan in January 1992 spurred JNA leaders to relocate many of its units to Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁵⁵¹ As part of a large-scale personnel overhaul designed to avoid implicating the JNA, Bosnian-born but ethnically Serb recruits were transferred to BiH, while those from other republics were rotated out, to be eventually renamed as the Bosnian Serb Army (BSA, VRS).⁵⁵²

The fluctuating command structure led to an almost universal mobilization of paramilitary forces in both the Croatian and Bosnian conflicts: “according to UN reports, between the summer of 1991 and the end of 1993, at least 83 paramilitary formations have been identified in the fighting, alongside regular army and police forces.”⁵⁵³ As such, the numerous battles of the Bosnian War were fought not only by regular armies, but also by militias, special forces formations, police and armed civilians, “operating within different structures or outside any structure.” This led to confusion on chains of command, particularly problematic when it came to condemning atrocities committed in Bosnia and in Croatia, in part as it provided plausible deniability and concealed responsibility for orders given.⁵⁵⁴ The chaotic reorganization of the JNA into independent forces created a series of conflicts where, at its early stages, armies could not provide any consistent uniforms, emblems or insignias of rank, and whose porosity allowed officers to shift freely between units, and between official army and grey-zone militias.⁵⁵⁵ These informal structures were used by all warring factions active in Bosnia between 1992-1995, but the lack of formal authority and command structures left even the combatants themselves confused.⁵⁵⁶

By the time that JNA contingents active in Bosnia-Herzegovina officially retreated from their mountain positions, they left behind between 60,000-80,000 ethnically Serb soldiers and the majority of their weapons and equipment, which were joined by some 35,000 irregular militias

⁵⁵⁰ M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Investigating War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia War 1992–1994*, 41.

⁵⁵¹ Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 275.

⁵⁵² Robert Donia, 275–76.

⁵⁵³ These included 56 Serb (with 20,000-40,000 troops), 13 Croat (with 12,000-20,000 troops) and 14 Bosniak (4,000-6,000 troops). Holm Sundhaussen, *Jugoslawien Und Seine Nachfolgestaaten 1943-2011*, 332.

⁵⁵⁴ S/1994/674, “Final Report of the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992)” (United Nations Security Council, May 27, 1994), 32, https://www.icty.org/x/file/About/OTP/un_commission_of_experts_report1994_en.pdf.

⁵⁵⁵ S/1994/674, 30.

⁵⁵⁶ S/1994/674, 31.

to be converted into the Bosnian Serb Army under the command of General Ratko Mladić.⁵⁵⁷ The military advantage of this army was stark, and by the summer of 1992, it controlled some 2/3rds of the territory of the Bosnian state.⁵⁵⁸ The successive consolidation of power by the SDS in the proclaimed Romanija Serb Autonomous Region (also known as the Romanija-Birač Serb Autonomous Region) created parallel institutions hostile to the nationally-minded yet multi-ethnic Sarajevo municipal governments, and the political force behind the besieging army. In early March 1992, SDS leadership moved its Sarajevo operations to the now-infamous Holiday Inn hotel, accompanied by paramilitary forces that would fire the first shots on the Sarajevo public.⁵⁵⁹ Following the first short-lived barricades erected to voice displeasure with the Bosnian independence referendum in March 1992 by the SDS, massive peace protests took place across the city over the following weeks in an attempt to dissuade nationalist parties from encouraging active warfare.⁵⁶⁰ These protests were violently dissolved by shots fired from the Holiday Inn hotel, while nominally-JNA units seized a series of key military positions around the city, including the airport and police academy.⁵⁶¹ It was the Sarajevo Romanija Corps, a former TDF unit, made up of 13,000 troops and in command of a small number of tanks, heavy artillery and bunkers in the surrounding hillsides that were specifically implicated and responsible for the siege of Sarajevo.⁵⁶² Although it should be noted that the independent battles that were part of the Bosnian War involved a multiplicity of other actors, their spatial removal from the object of this study warrants their exclusion from consideration and as such will be omitted from further consideration in this text.

The defense of the city was charged to the 1st Corps Sarajevo of the Bosnian Army (ARBiH), officially inaugurated in early September, 1992 and primarily composed of converted TDF units

⁵⁵⁷ Holm Sundhaussen, *Sarajevo: Die Geschichte einer Stadt*, 1st ed. (Wien: Böhlau Wien, 2014), 317; Holm Sundhaussen, *Jugoslawien Und Seine Nachfolgestaaten 1943-2011*, 334. Other estimates have claimed up to 80,000 soldiers amongst the corps of the Bosnian Serb Army at this point. See, for example: Bassiouni, *Investigating War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia War 1992–1994*, 41.

⁵⁵⁸ Holm Sundhaussen, *Jugoslawien Und Seine Nachfolgestaaten 1943-2011*, 334.

⁵⁵⁹ For further discussion of the political moves made by the SDS in the period leading up to the 1992 independence referendum, see, for example: Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 264–73.

⁵⁶⁰ Although the civil protests that preceded the Bosnian War are almost universally integrated into popular accounts of the democratic breakdown in the country, their broad condemnation of *all* nationalist political parties and politicians is often overlooked. See, for example: Xavier Bougarel, *Bosnie, Anatomie d'un Conflit*, 57–58.

⁵⁶¹ Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 285.

⁵⁶² M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Investigating War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia War 1992–1994*, 54.

lacking access to heavy artillery or large aerial or ground weapons.⁵⁶³ While an organized military response was almost immediate, it would be difficult to understate the weakness of the 1st Corps, who inherited the TDF unit responsible for the Sarajevo area with only 6,390 armed soldiers and some 18,576 unarmed volunteers.⁵⁶⁴ Furthermore, “the consolidation of disparate units into a single army proceeded unevenly and over many months,” as the official state structure struggled to integrate all of the irregular formations that had assembled leading up to the conflict, making the immediate defense of the city a rather unstructured affair.⁵⁶⁵ This did not mean that the city did not put up a fight: volunteers quickly appeared, and, once the conflict had progressed, were joined as well by conscripts, swelling the numbers of the 1st Corps. Therefore, and although the Bosnian Serb Army forces that surrounded Sarajevo commanded significantly superior firepower, they were equally significantly outmanned by their opposing force, which counted some estimated 70,000 combatants.⁵⁶⁶ Over the course of the war, over 6,500 soldiers of the First Corps of Sarajevo have been recorded to have perished in the line of duty.⁵⁶⁷

The formation of unofficial militias such as the Muslim-majority Green Berets or Patriotic League, amongst the first to take up arms, was already well under way following the outbreak of conflict in Croatia in 1991, as “many middle-rank officers of Muslim nationality defected from the JNA and joined the embryonic forces loyal to the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina,” responding to the rising nationalist tensions within the remnants of the Yugoslav army.⁵⁶⁸ By April 1992, the two militias counted thousands of volunteers each and had access

⁵⁶³ The disparity in access to weapons between the Bosnian Army and what would go on to become the Bosnian Serb Army was further compounded by BiH perceived status as a “last refuge” for the JNA in the event of a foreign invasion, which had become somewhat plausible by the Soviet sanctions in Hungary and Poland in 1956, as well as in Czechoslovakia in 1968. In practice, this meant that the forces besieging Sarajevo had access to, and a practical monopoly on technological and military resources such as heavy artillery and armored vehicles, in comparison to the badly equipped TO units. See: Robert Donia, and John V.A. Fine, Jr., *Bosnia and Herzegovina. A Tradition Betrayed*, 174; Vahid Karavelić et al., *Prvi Korpus Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*, 123.

⁵⁶⁴ Vahid Karavelić et al., *Prvi Korpus Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*, 68.

⁵⁶⁵ Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 292.

⁵⁶⁶ Most sources estimate Bosnian Army 1st Corps forces to have numbered between 60,000 and 80,000 soldiers throughout the conflict, with more conservative estimates suggesting a number between 25,000 and 30,000 soldiers. Some sources have offered a detailed breakdown of the 1st Corps numbers, citing 60,442 soldiers in 1992 which swelled to 87,009 in 1995 – or an average of 78,253 combatants. See, for example: M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Investigating War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia War 1992–1994*, 316; Vahid Karavelić et al., *Prvi Korpus Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*, 389.

⁵⁶⁷ The fighting was most dangerous and intense at the beginning of the war, with 3,097 casualties reported in 1992 and 2,011 in 1993, which fell significantly in the following years (783 for 1994 and 694 for 1995). Vahid Karavelić et al., *Prvi Korpus Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*, 391.

⁵⁶⁸ Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 273.

to a considerable amount of light infantry weapons.⁵⁶⁹ As fighting broke out in and around Sarajevo following the April peace protests, it was primarily these Islamic formations together with elite police units (MUP), regular police forces, ordinary citizens of the city as well as leaders of the city's criminal underground who were the first to respond to the Bosnian Serb Army attack in the absence of a formally organized army.⁵⁷⁰ Whereas some of these formations were created in the period preceding the Bosnian War, other units sprung up spontaneously as fighting broke out, also in Sarajevo, as an "expression of a need for self-organization and the defense of one's own life."⁵⁷¹ Although tolerated early on in the conflict, these irregular formations were largely absorbed into the formalized structure of the Bosnian Army by the summer of 1993, amidst crackdowns on a handful of criminal elements that led some of the first units to defend Sarajevo.⁵⁷²

The constantly fluctuating relationships between individual actors and military-state structures created a situation in which ordinary citizens of Sarajevo experienced the siege of their city outside of a typical dichotomy of soldier and civilian. Instead, the violence of combat became embedded in everyday practices and social structures of the city, as civilians became targets of military violence while others became actively involved in the military defense of their city. This is not to say that the legal distinction between civilian and soldier holds no use in this context: instead, the fact that many civilians experienced the violence of the siege imposed on them in similar ways to soldiers, regardless of their status as non-combatants, should be explored further to understand how they coped under such conditions. The blurring of lines between civilian and combatant, a characteristic of now almost extinct siege warfare, shifted the very definition of defense, resulting in the employment of a single military vocabulary to describe ambiguous or diverging narratives about siege-time artistic production. In this chapter, the popular discourse based on 'cultural resistance' or 'cultural defense' will be used to explore experiences of civilians and individual combatant through the eyes of the Sarajevan artistic community.

⁵⁶⁹ Robert Donia, 273.

⁵⁷⁰ Robert Donia, 291.

⁵⁷¹ Vahid Karavelić et al., *Prvi Korpus Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*, 396.

⁵⁷² No evidence has been found of visual artist participation in units dominated by criminal elements, and it is unlikely that the community being studied here was directly or regularly impacted by these specific units. As such, they will not be treated further in this text. For more information, see, for example: Vahid Karavelić et al., 217–28; M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Investigating War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia War 1992–1994*, 317.

The artists active in besieged Sarajevo continued their practice in a context of extreme instability, mobilizing a varied portfolio of defense strategies that went beyond bare physical and emotional survival and allowed them to express their individual agency. Over the four years of siege, at least thirty-two exhibitions were hosted under the patronage of or in support of the Bosnian Army, while many creatives joined the official Artist Company of the Bosnian Army or were integrated into its combat-active brigades.⁵⁷³ Some became involved in administrative branches of the defending army, while others still coordinated material and moral support through independent cultural institutions of the city.⁵⁷⁴ At the same time, not everyone was uncritical of the city-wide defense efforts: some artists were unwilling to take up arms, or saw the porosity of military and civilian experiences as necessitating practical rather than discursive solutions. Admittedly, many questions remain unanswered by the available source material: experiences of extreme violence, whether involving civilian or non-professional combatants, are often particularly difficult to integrate into a social history. Instead, this chapter primarily offers new perspectives for writing the social history of the siege of Sarajevo by proposing a series of diverging wartime experiences that too often become merged in scholarship on the conflict. As such, this chapter is directed by a series of guiding questions: What roles did visual artists take in support of the Bosnian Army, and the defense of besieged Sarajevo? How did officially affiliated artists describe their experiences shifting between soldier and civilian modes of living? And, most crucially, how did visual artists as individuals understand their own relationship to the army that was defending their city?

This chapter centers on the relationship between visual artists and the military apparatus, as well as the varying contexts in which they interacted, through a focus on vocabularies that equate notions of armed and cultural resistance. The first section of this chapter will focus on institutionally sanctioned activities that saw visual artists actively interacting with the armed

⁵⁷³ Data compiled by the author.

⁵⁷⁴ This chapter will focus primarily on the activities of the 1st Corps (*Prvi Korpus*) of the Bosnian Army (ARBiH) that replaced the 4th Corps of the JNA on the 1st of September 1992, in charge of the defense of Sarajevo. The unit was under the command of Mustafa Hajrulahović, known under the nickname Talijan, with Vahid Karavelić serving as his deputy and Enver Hadžihasanović as commander. In practice, this newly formed structure incorporated two existing TO units (the City Headquarters of the Territorial Defense of Sarajevo (*Gradski štab Teritorijalne odbrane Sarajevo*) and the District Headquarters of the Territorial Defense of Sarajevo and Goražde (*Okružni štab Teritorijalne odbrane Sarajevo i Goražde*), as well as a handful of irregularly formed groups that were charged with the defense of the capital city and the surrounding mountain terrains. Although a handful of artists living in pre-war Sarajevo quickly placed their allegiance with Milošević's, or in rarer cases, Tudjman's regimes, the vast majority of visual artists either remained in the city or emigrated out of necessity rather than political ideology. See: Vahid Karavelić et al., *Prvi Korpus Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*, 123, 55.

forces, beginning with an overview of the activities organized by the *Umjetnička Četa* (Artist Company) of the 1st Corps of the Bosnian Army. Then, the experiences of visual artists who had participated individually in the armed struggle as combatants will be addressed, focusing specifically on how they address their shifting status between civilian and combatant within the context of a dual-defense discourse. The following section of this chapter will be devoted to artists whose formal affiliation was limited to civilian roles, but who participated in a variety of activities in support of the military. Artistic participation in non-combatant tasks, such as administrative support, will be addressed, before discussing different types of institutional support offered by Sarajevo institutions.

4.1.1. CULTURAL WARFARE, OR THE INTRODUCTION OF ‘CULTURAL RESISTANCE’ AS DISCOURSE IN A MILITARY CONTEXT

Theoretically anchored in a vocabulary built on discursive ideals of civilization and tangentially integrated into Yugoslav social heritage, the popularity of a ‘cultural defense’ or ‘cultural resistance’ concept within the Sarajevo cultural community is exemplary to how ordinary citizens framed wartime experiences. Used to denote civilian support to the military campaign being waged against the Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) and, less consistently, with elements of the Bosnian Croat Army (HVO), a series of lexicons invoking notions of defense or resistance regularly appeared within the context of the visual arts. At the same time, the notion of ‘cultural resistance’ also found itself dismissed by contemporaneous actors, who found little use in the equation of military and civilian roles within an armed conflict. In this way, providing a bridge between conceptual ideals and practical realities, a closer look at how ‘artistic resistance’ discourse appears within the Sarajevo cultural community can shed light on the deeply personal consequences of a militarization of everyday life for ordinary citizens.

The siege of Sarajevo was characterized by the deliberate targeting of the civilian populations by the besieging Bosnian Serb Army, as regular sniper attacks and shelling of non-combatant positions introduced an unprecedented level of violence into civilian society. Typical of siege warfare, the harassment of civilian targets is used to break down morale, or simply occurs as a

side-effect where its victims are treated as collateral damage.⁵⁷⁵ This was also the case during the siege of Sarajevo, where attacks on civilian targets have been noted to coincide with retaliatory attacks to Bosnian Army maneuvers and documented as a strategy of harming the city's morale.⁵⁷⁶ In practical terms, the imposition of the siege following numerous blockades, indiscriminate shooting of protestors and shelling of the urban landscape mean that ordinary people experienced full-scale military violence regardless of their status. The establishment of front lines on the edge of the city, and in the case of the neighborhoods of Dobrinja and Grbavica, ones that directly bisected the urban landscape meant that violence was inflicted indiscriminately throughout the city.⁵⁷⁷ As a result, it was often the people closest to the newly-created battlefields that were the first to defend them.⁵⁷⁸ Many reacted by either fleeing or actively defending their homes, and many of the initial units defending the city against the Bosnian Serb Army were made up of local, informal units or independent committees formed from the inhabitants of individual neighborhoods or housing complexes, motivated to take up arms to protect their homes, families, and property.⁵⁷⁹ These ordinary citizens were primarily joined by the formally organized police forces and informally disorganized criminal groups, two non-military demographics with access to weapons, although the latter were largely disbanded in 1994 following their unwillingness to accept formal reorganization into Bosnian Army command structure.⁵⁸⁰

In times of war, civilians often react to the horrors surrounding them “in a psychologically and strategically similar way” to those donning uniforms—“by actively involving themselves in the

⁵⁷⁵ Alexandra Wachter. “‘This Did Not Happen’: Survivors of the Siege of Leningrad (1941–1944) and the ‘Truth About the Blockade.’” In *Civilians Under Siege from Sarajevo to Troy*, edited by Alex Dowdall and John Horne, 37–60. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018; Dowdall, Alex, and John Horne, eds. *Civilians Under Siege from Sarajevo to Troy*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018, 8

⁵⁷⁶ As defined by the United Nations, attacks directed at the civilian population constitute war crimes. S/1994/674, “Final Report of the Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992),” 49.

⁵⁷⁷ Armina Pilav, “Before the War, War, After the War,” 26.

⁵⁷⁸ According to Bosnian Army statistics, an average of 60,098 (76%) the 1st Corps soldiers were originally from Sarajevo, and only 18,115 (23,2%) made up of mostly refugees from other parts of Bosnia. These numbers fluctuated over time and should not be considered an indication of the overwhelming presence of locally-born Sarajevans in the defending forces of the city. See: Vahid Karavelić et al., *Prvi Korpus Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*, 390. This phenomenon is also briefly discussed by Maček, who mentioned that this was at least applicable in the beginning of the war. Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 207.

⁵⁷⁹ Nedžad Ajnadžić, *Opsada Sarajeva u Kontekstu Historijskih Iskustava*, 251.

⁵⁸⁰ For more on the participation and suppression of criminal elements during the siege of Sarajevo, see, for example: M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Investigating War Crimes in the Former Yugoslavia War 1992–1994*, 317.

war effort.”⁵⁸¹ As such, the violence was not only experienced by those it targeted, but managed and navigated over time and in conjunction (or opposition to) to external circumstances. While the traditional division of soldier vs. civilian naturally suggests a dichotomy of the active vs. passive recipient of violence, Gunner Lind points out “that people can be actors in a war in many ways”, with individual roles constantly subjected to shifts, either voluntary or involuntary, that can occur throughout the conflict at hand.⁵⁸² Siege warfare also encourages the implementation of long-term strategies involving civilian reinforcements that ensure continued functioning of basic structures, engaging regular people in tasks normally under the purvey of the military – in the case of visual artists, for example, designing insignia for newly-formed units.⁵⁸³ As such, Sarajevan cultural actors also participated in the war effort as civilian actors through a number of channels: whether carrying out administrative tasks, designing insignia, or even raising funds for the Bosnian Army, they contributed to the perceived common struggle. The sheer scale of these initiatives can be explained in part by the static nature of siege warfare, where violence and destruction become part of daily routines over time, in contrast to the roaming nature of traditional armies or the irregular harassment of guerilla warfare.⁵⁸⁴ Therefore, the agency of those subjected to the siege should be taken into account when discussing the military aspects of siege life, as their fluctuating reactions to the violence that was imposed on them resulted in the creation of active survival strategies, non-military resistance, or in some cases, their integration into armed structures, occurring both voluntarily and involuntarily.

As a result, traditional divisions between the soldiers fighting on the front and the civilians who worked to sustain the war effort associated with most modern conflict were almost entirely dissolved. While civilians were constantly shelled and shot at, soldiers spent a significant portion of their time at home, taking care of civilian chores necessary for survival.⁵⁸⁵ Those who had taken up arms would return to the city in regular intervals, constantly navigating the complicated process of entry and exit of the battlefield, and hereby the shift between combatant

⁵⁸¹ Nicola Foote and Nadya Williams, “Introduction. Blurred Boundaries and Ambiguous Divisions - Civilians and Combat from Ancient Times to the Present,” in *Civilians and Warfare in World History* (London; New York: Routledge, 2018), 1.

⁵⁸² Nicola Foote and Nadya Williams, 8.

⁵⁸³ This was also the case in Leningrad, for example: Alexandra Wachter, “‘This Did Not Happen’: Survivors of the Siege of Leningrad (1941–1944) and the ‘Truth About the Blockade,’” 37–38.

⁵⁸⁴ Alex Dowdall, and John Horne, eds. *Civilians Under Siege from Sarajevo to Troy*, 2.

⁵⁸⁵ Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 191.

and civilian, non-combatant roles. In the minds of both attackers and inhabitants of Sarajevo, the theoretical distinction between civilian and soldier became faded as the conflict went on, with some individuals for example expressing that surviving in the city was more difficult for them than serving in the military.⁵⁸⁶ The introduction of military violence directly into an inhabited urban space hereby becomes a catalyst for the blurring of lines “between the civilian and the military worlds,” forcing regular inhabitants of the besieged city to navigate within a military framework in spite of their status as non-combatants.⁵⁸⁷ These shifts can be illustrated by the somewhat unsettling presence of wartime subjects in popular media available in besieged Sarajevo, as state television aired programs devoted to the 4th Motorized Brigade or publications like the popular *Dani* magazine featuring editorials introducing and explaining widely-used weapons.⁵⁸⁸ Similarly, the subject of self-defense against the Bosnian Serb Army appears to have entered everyday vocabularies of everyday Sarajevans, who viewed opposition as a valid response to the violence inflicted upon them – even if many of those who did so never actively participated in warfare.⁵⁸⁹ The introduction of wartime subjects into popular culture does not suggest that the society itself had become militarized – after all, the same *Dani* journals were known for the diverse issues covered in their pages – but instead suggests that the presence of weapons within the city had become so ubiquitous as to warrant space in a magazine that covered all aspects of daily life and popular culture.

Over the course of the conflict, the impact of this increased militarization extended beyond the city’s everyday routines and into the vocabularies used to understand and communicate the

⁵⁸⁶ Ivana Maček, 206.

⁵⁸⁷ Alex Dowdall, and John Horne, eds. *Civilians Under Siege from Sarajevo to Troy*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018, 8.

⁵⁸⁸ *N.n. 4 Motorizovana brigada Sarajevo - Ratni put. Video. Sarajevo: TVBiH, n.date.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLmJnCY-5-0>; Neven Luledžija. “Zažmiri i Pucaj.” *Dani*. November 26, 1994. *Bosniak Institute Sarajevo*.

⁵⁸⁹ One humoristic article published in the popular magazine *Dani*, which proposed readers with a checklist for survival of the siege, emphasized the importance of defense in the following point: “6. And here's what your homeland will need: Actively participate in fighting, if you're not already at the front, write texts, report to the radio program, inform us about the enemy's movements, observe his positions with binoculars. When using the phone, use false information. This has already shown its effectiveness. Example: when a friend calls you, he complains on the spot (like a Serbian rally) that there are only eight Kalashnikovs and barely four thousand bullets in your building, and that you are afraid, because it is the worst armed building in the settlement. Like fuck is anybody going to attack you [then].”. Author translation: “A evo šta će trebati tvojoj domovini: Aktivno učestvuj u odbrani, ako već nisi na frontu, piši tekstove, javljaj se u radio-program, obavještavaj naše o kretanju neprijatelja, osmatraj durbinom njegove položaje. Kad koristiš telefon, barataj lažnim podacima. To je već pokazalo svoju efikasnost. Primjer: kad te prijatelj pozove, spontano (kao srpski miting) mu se požali da u tvom ulazu ima samo osam kalašnjikova i jedva četiri hiljade metaka i da te pravo strah, jer to je najlošije naoružani haustor u naselju. Kurac će iko da vas napadne.” Olja A. Karačić, “Uvijek samo veselo i vedro,” *Dani*, September 25, 1992, 1 edition, 38, *Bosniak Institute Archive*.

experiences related to wartime existence. First appearing even before the outbreak of the siege, a discourse based on the idea of a ‘dual defense’ became popularized amongst local cultural actors before securing a place in contemporary academic and popular memory of the conflict. Identifying or equating siege-time cultural production as analogous to the military defense of the city accompanied the blurring of the boundaries between military and civilian domains, expressed mostly through terms such as ‘cultural defense’, ‘artistic defense’, ‘artistic resistance’ and ‘cultural resistance’, or any combination thereof. Through mobilizing popular imagery and language inherently related to a military lexicon, artists began discussing art within the context of defense, resistance, trenches, or front lines, mixing these concepts with a typically cultural vocabulary. Essentially framing themselves as protectors of the city’s multinational and civilized culture, the construction of which is discussed at length in Chapter III, continued artistic production became a means of resistance against the destruction of a culture deemed as inherently Sarajevan.

While origins are generally notoriously difficult to pin down, the importance of cultural and artistic contributions to the war effort has been historically influential in the ex-Yugoslav sphere. Understood as a crucial weapon in the arsenal of the antifascist Partisan struggle, artists were reserved a place as relevant actors within the Yugoslav military, contributing not only as soldiers but also through material and morale-boosting creative contributions.⁵⁹⁰ As little research has been done on the overspill of JNA cultural policies onto its successor armies, the extent of this type of overlap remains uncertain. However, the recurrence of specific terms such as the ‘struggle against fascism’ in modern vocabularies suggests that the influence of the Yugoslav memory of World War II in some ways shaped how artists framed their struggle some fifty years later.⁵⁹¹ Local vocabularies at times directly reference such perceived historical continuities in an armed-yet-moral struggle against an immoral aggressor, for example equating the defense of Sarajevo as victims protecting the multi-ethnic solidarity of the Sarajevan *raja*, referring to the best-known element of antifascist heritage of the city: the famous Partisan

⁵⁹⁰ The role of artists as participants in the Partisan struggle was not particularly visible within the discourses present in besieged Sarajevo. While the artists in the NOB were generally remembered primarily thanks to their contributions with engaged art and propaganda, few actors in Sarajevo qualified their own work in these terms. See, for example: Ivan Jelić, Dunja Rihtman-Augustin, and Vice Zaninović, *Kultura i umjetnost u NOB-u i socijalističkoj revoluciji u Hrvatskoj*; Gal Kirn, *The Partisan Counter-Archive*.

⁵⁹¹ Xavier Bougarel, “Death and the Nationalist: Martyrdom, War Memory and Veteran Identity among Bosnian Muslims,” in *The New Bosnian Mosaic. Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society*, ed. Xavier Bougarel and Elissa Helms (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 175, 182.

illegalac Vladimir Perić Valter.⁵⁹² Even more broadly, the supposed link between the arts and resistance has been evoked by a number of scholars, who broadly saw the utility of art in the face of conflict as a means of disseminating information, processing trauma or raising morale.⁵⁹³

The concept of cultural resistance can be found in some of the dominant narratives around the siege of Sarajevo and the dissolution of Yugoslavia, seen for example in Susan Woodward's characterization of Sarajevan response to the "essence of the assault by building ever greater resistance on cultural terms and a worldwide campaign to save the 'spirit of Sarajevo'."⁵⁹⁴ Spilling over into historical and art-historical contexts, the idea of a cultural resistance has therefore made its way into local historiographical discourse, where the idea of Sarajevan citizens actively defending themselves through culture becomes entrenched in the ways the history of the siege is written.⁵⁹⁵ Engaging with vocabularies that tied the act of creating art to the act of resistance, some academics such as Larisa Kurtović crucially address the performative aspects of such discourse, consciously used by individual actors to frame their roles and experiences of conflict:

*"Embracing humanistic and cosmopolitan ideals, which they saw as constitutive of their own identities and communities, Sarajevo's artists located in the creative arena, a ground for a struggle against wartime violence and the emerging national(ist) order. In this context, cultural production became a form of resistance to, and self-preservation from, chaos and destruction."*⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹² Mirko Pejanović, "Pogledi Istraživača o Fenomenu Odbrane Sarajeva u Opsadi," 97.

⁵⁹³ See, for example: Jo Tollebeek et al., *Ravages: l'art et la culture en temps de conflit*; Gilles Deleuze, "Qu'est-Ce Que l'acte de Création?" (Lecture, Paris, May 17, 1987), <http://www.lepeuplequimanque.org/en/acte-de-creation-gilles-deleuze.html>; Ljiljana Konstantinović, "Likovno stvaralaštvo zatvorenika koncentracionih logora i ratnih zarobljenika," *Peristil : zbornik radova za povijest umjetnosti* 21, no. 1 (1978): 205–8; Dolores Fernández Martínez, "L'oeuvre d'art En Tant Que Témoignage: Les Artistes Confrontés à La Guerre," *Cahiers de Civilisation Espagnole Contemporaine* 3 (2008): Published online, <https://journals.openedition.org/cccec/2580>; Laurence Bertrand Dorléac, *L'Art de la défaite*. (Paris: Le Seuil, 2010); George Yudice, *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

⁵⁹⁴ Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 235.

⁵⁹⁵ Whereas a number of texts refer to artistic production in a similar manner, one example can be found in the papers published following an academic round-table discussion that took place in 2005. As one of the most exhaustive academic publications about the siege of Sarajevo published in BiH, the volume devotes an entire section to the topic of "Sarajevo defending itself with culture and civilization". See: Smail Čekić, *Opsada i odbrana Sarajeva 1992-1995. Referati sa okruglog stola održanog 23. novembra 2005. godine*.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹⁶ Larisa Kurtović, "Paradoxes of Wartime 'Freedom': Alternative Culture during the Siege of Sarajevo," 220.

The contexts in which this concept, originally put forward by Sarajevan actors themselves, appears is extremely varied. While Megan Kossiakoff invokes it as a means of “depriving the aggressor to change history” through the protection of common cultural heritage in a conflict that involves ethnic cleansing, others focus on the act of creation in a time of destruction as of primary importance, extending it to the physical production of various forms of culture that broadly encompassed not only the visual arts but also cinema, theatre, music, as well as the literary arts.⁵⁹⁷ In this way, wartime adaptation of destroyed spaces is treated by Mirjana Ristić as part of a conscious spatial pattern of defense that repurposed the destroyed urban landscape for civilian life, allowing individuals to reclaim their city through resisting the destruction of their material world.⁵⁹⁸ Others have broadly placed culture in the arena of “creativity and resistance”. Arguing that the creation of art creates “more of a city”, Jelena Hadžiosmanović hereby explains how Sarajevan artists agreed on proving the city belonged to them through “stubborn human resistance” against the enemy’s attack.⁵⁹⁹ In a similar manner, Emmanuel Wallon frames the formation of the Sarajevan PEN club as “a factor of resistance against nationalist Serb aggression,” while the role of foreign artists as „amplifying the signals of resistance“, makes this linguistic connection with the reality of the conflict and the reality of artists caught up in it.⁶⁰⁰ For the latter, referring to the conscious targeting of cultural structures by Bosnian Serb forces, attendance of cultural events is described in primarily military terms:

„Since the libraries and the museums were aimed at as real targets, the theatre halls, literary circles and exhibition spaces become transformed into virtual trenches.“⁶⁰¹

Within the growing field of BiH art history, Asja Mandić’s analysis of siege-time art also heavily relies on the idea of art as resistance, positioning war exhibitions organized in ruins and public spaces as central to the discourse of cultural defense in Sarajevo, while also aptly noting that the “presence in these spaces assumed the risk of being in the battlefield.”⁶⁰² However, just

⁵⁹⁷ Megan Kossiakoff, “The Art of War: The Protection of Cultural Property during the ‘Siege’ of Sarajevo (1992-95),” 113.

⁵⁹⁸ Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War*, 108.

⁵⁹⁹ Jelena Hadžiosmanović, “How Is Culture Used as a Tool for Dissuasion in Conflict and Consensus: A Case of Sarajevo (1992-1995),” 24.

⁶⁰⁰ Emmanuel Wallon, “Portrait de l’artiste en témoin. Les guerres yougoslaves de la page à l’écran.,” 11,13.

⁶⁰¹ Author translation: “Puisque les bibliothèques et les musées étaient visés comme cibles réelles, les salles de spectacles, les cercles littéraires et les lieux d’exposition se transformèrent en tranchées virtuelles” Emmanuel Wallon, 11.

⁶⁰² Asja Mandić, “The Formation of a Culture of Critical Resistance in Sarajevo,” 735.

like in a few of the above mentioned cases, the idea of resistance or defense is not clearly defined outside of the realm of perception, mobilizing the well-used discourse without further attention to its contemporaneous uses. While direct equations with armed resistance were rare, the combination of language bearing clear military connotations with adjacent cultural concepts did build a specific lexicon that created, at the very least, a moral equivalency.

Vocabularies that equated armed resistance to cultural production can be found in Sarajevo sources as early as the summer of 1992, where discourses based on ‘artistic resistance’ became common in exhibition catalogues and reviews. Singer Ivan Kordić was amongst the first to mobilize this type of lexicon, speaking at the vernissage of one non-professional artist and soldier:

*“Amongst us there are those who are brave and courageous who do not allow their spirit or their mind to be destroyed, who will rebuild buildings and carry with them the dead like an open wound until the end of their lives, they who did not stand down for even one moment and who have accepted this cruel challenge and who with a paintbrush and a rifle take their stand in this time and this space.”*⁶⁰³

Using impactful imagery that carried sentimental praise and vivid descriptions of wartime reality, Kordić refers to artists as performing a dual role: that of moral and physical protection, by “paintbrush and rifle”. While not all iterations of this discourse referred to artists who were in the military, most followed a similar pattern, influencing the ways through which the conflict was framed. This attitude can be found periodically in cultural texts produced throughout the siege, seen for example in statements asserting Chopin did not bear arms, instead offering a wartime contribution of his Polonaise composition.⁶⁰⁴ Artists themselves also framed their work and professional collaboration within the context of resistance, as was the case for Edin Numankadić in his interview with Nada Salom:

“We were connected through a feeling of spiritual resistance, because we as professionals are fighting for something we love, a place where we have lived, where we have studied, where we

⁶⁰³ Author translation: “Medju nama su hrabri i odvažni, (...) koji ne daju da se uništi misao i duh, koji će obnoviti gradjevine i nositi sa sobom mrtve kao otvorenu ranu do kraja života, oni što nisu klonuli niti jednog časa i koji su prihvatili surovi izazov i koji i kistom i puškom stoje u ovom vremenu i u ovom prostoru.” Nada Salom, “Uprkos onim što žele da nas unište,” *Oslobodjenje*, December 12, 1992, 4. Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁶⁰⁴ Nada Salom, “Bojim se grube kategorizacije,” 4.

have created. It is incredibly important that we professionally defend this civilizational level."⁶⁰⁵

Despite the popularity of 'cultural resistance' discourses within the field of the visual arts, historically and in contemporary literature, scholars tend to omit the voices of those who were in fact present in both galleries and trenches, bypassing much of the lived experiences of the siege of Sarajevo. Acknowledging this disparity, Larisa Kurtović admits that "Sarajevo's cultural ambassadors repeatedly sent the same message into the world, with what appeared to be minimum effect", and notes the emergence of critical voices questioning the parity between cultural and armed resistance, particularly regarding the usefulness and valorization of the former.⁶⁰⁶ This chapter aims to critically revisit the idea of cultural defense or resistance and qualify the various meanings that such a concept has carried, in order to recontextualize the language employed and to identify in which points it diverged from the realities of the war.

⁶⁰⁵ Nada Salom, "Tragovi postojanja," 7.

⁶⁰⁶ Larisa Kurtović, "Paradoxes of Wartime 'Freedom': Alternative Culture during the Siege of Sarajevo," 222.



Figure 1. “Sarajevo Survival Map” produced by FAMA, 1992-1996. The map depicts the military situation around Sarajevo and illustrates the location of front lines as well as areas considered to be particularly dangerous for the city’s population. As one of the more recognizable visual sources created during this period, the map shows the discrepancy between the two opposing forces, a relatively isolated city and its inhabitants, and the surrounding heavily armored army. Further details can be found in the red points dotting the image, which represent points of particular significance and elevated danger with which all Sarajevans had to interact with. Suada Kapić, 1996, FAMA International. Courtesy of FAMA International. An interactive version of the map is available under: <https://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/fama-original-projects/10/index.html>

4.2. I KISTOM I PUŠKOM:⁶⁰⁷ VISUAL ARTISTS ON THE FRONT LINES

Although the effects of wartime violence on the Sarajevan population have been regularly addressed within scholarly literature, the ways through which ordinary citizens negotiated and navigated the danger of everyday life have only been partially documented. Specifically, literature treating the visual arts scene of besieged Sarajevo has tended to avoid a clear discussion of the artists’ experiences of wartime violence *beyond* the scope of established discursive framings. This section thereby focuses on the individual positions of visual artists

⁶⁰⁷ Author translation: “By brush and by rifle”

towards the Bosnian armed forces as an institution, exploring the pathways of participation through the prism of a dual-defense lexicon. This will be done in two parts: on an institutional level, discussing the creation and integration of the *Umjetnička Četa* (Artist Company) into the structure of the Bosnian Army, followed by a section treating the role of individual artists who integrated directly into the 1st Corps as rank-and-file soldiers. The goal of this section is to describe the roles of artists within the official army structure, emphasizing that, while the post-conflict ideas surrounding cultural defense were already being produced during the conflict in a variety of ways, they were not universally supported nor applicable, as appears to be presented to be the case in more contemporary literature. Through comparing the actions of artists affiliated in a variety of ways with the Bosnian Army with the ways in which they justified, explained, positioned and discussed their participation in the conflict, the lived experience of siege warfare can be better understood while also accounting for the highly personal experiences which accompany participation in war.

4.2.1. THE UMJETNIČKA ČETA: A MILITARY ORGAN FOR CULTURAL SUPPORT

As the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina moved quickly to professionalize its corpus, the decision to include an official organ responsible for cultural liaisons led to the creation of a formal institutional structure for artists active in the army. Representing and represented by primarily well-known and established figures, this *Umjetnička Četa* (Artist Company) functioned primarily as an example of overlap and cooperation between the military and the Sarajevo intellectual elite. The *Umjetnička Četa* was officially inaugurated in the summer of 1992, bringing together a group of roughly fifty musicians, actors and artists who wanted to contribute their artistic talents to the military struggle. While the unit existed throughout the conflict, it only became officially integrated into the of the 1st Corps of the Bosnian Army in 1994, following the extensive restructuring of command lines and improvements in material conditions, in part encouraged by loosening of supply lines.⁶⁰⁸ Visual artists made up a visible

⁶⁰⁸ The *Umjetnička Četa* formally fell under the jurisdiction of the Sector for Morale of the Regional Headquarters of Territorial Defense of Sarajevo (*Sektor za moral Regionalnog štaba Teritorijalne odbrane Sarajeva*), which was technically under the command of Dervo Harbinja but also enjoyed the support of General Mustafa “Talijan” Hajrulahović. Author Pavle Pavlović was named first commander of the company, and was followed by musician Kemal Monteno, painter Ekrem Čizmić, musician Nazif Gljiva, and finally musician Davorin Popović. Mirsada Baljić, “Uloga i Značaj Umjetnika u Okviru OS RBiH u Period Opsade i Odbrane Sarajeva,” 314.

minority of the company's members, having access to a less impactful repertoire for raising morale than actors or musicians, but nevertheless were included in official structures. In fact, they only made up two active members of the unit: Mirsada Bajlić and Stijepo Gavrić.⁶⁰⁹ These full-time participants nevertheless enjoyed support from students and professors from the High School of Applied Arts and the ALU, the majority of whom were officially integrated into other units and instead sporadically participated in the exhibitions and events organized by the Artist Company.⁶¹⁰



Figure 2. Members of the Umjetnička Četa before or after taking pictures for the cover of the “Umjetnici za slobodnu Bosne i Hercegovine” exhibition catalogue. While a few of the artists featured are of the younger generation, the majority of the company was made up of well-established artists with a longer career behind them. Courtesy of Edin Numankadić.

⁶⁰⁹ In addition to the artists included into the unit framework, art historians and cultural workers also found their place in the *Umjetnička Četa*. The company's structure included a section for art historians, which was led by Muhamed Karamehmedović, and which included Azra Begić and Nermina Zildžo as representatives of the Academy of Fine Arts, the latter of which also acted as delegate for the National Gallery of BiH.

⁶¹⁰ The artists involved in these exhibitions include: Mustafa Skopljak, Esad Muftić, Petar Waldegg, Nusret Pašić, Dževad Hozo, Seid Hasanefendić, Avdo Žiga, Salim Obralić, Hasan Sućeska, Affan Ramić, Edin Numankadić, Mehmed Zaimović, Dragan Čulić, Nedžad Ibrišimović, Adnan Begić, Renata Karamatić, Saida Mujezinović, Irfan Hozo, Amer Bakšić, Elma Vrana and others. Mirsada Baljić, “Uloga i Značaj Umjetnika u Okviru OS RBiH u Period Opsade i Odrbane Sarajeva,” 315–17.

The *Umjetnička Četa* visual artists positioned themselves, both contemporaneously and in texts written by former members after the end of the conflict, as the main liaisons between the public cultural sector and the military apparatus. Generally charged with raising morale in the army's ranks, the visual arts section focused its activities on the organization of exhibitions with an intended audience which extended beyond the average soldier. While members of the company did participate, in different contexts and to different extents, in front-line activities, its main roles as an official institutional representation of the city's artists was in the organization of exhibitions that financially supported the Bosnian Army as well as raising morale within the ranks.

In practice, members of the Artist Company were not entirely limited to the hanging of paintings on walls. In a post-war text, Baljić recalls for example how members of the unit volunteered to dig trenches in the mountainous areas surrounding Sarajevo, finally doing so in the summer of 1993 under the command of General Hajrulahović. In this case, the artists of the company actively placed themselves in a military position, close enough to be shot at and to engage in “sporadic dialogue along the no-man's land,” and participating actively in the tangible war effort.⁶¹¹ However, the motivational value of these types of activities cannot be entirely discounted. Considering that trench digging by civilians was a common, if unpopular practice, and one which often was ordered as a form of dangerous and (often unjustified) punishment, the voluntary participation of cultural actors in this activity could also have served morale-boosting purposes.⁶¹² In any case, it was an assignment that was substantially different from the more typical roles of artists in military contexts, often relegated to the documentation of the conflict but rarely involved in the more practical elements of battle.

No other mention of direct military engagement of the Artist Company can be found in non-military archival records, suggesting that in spite of its strong pro-combatant message, the majority of the *Umjetnička Četa*'s official role was limited to non-combat activities. This can be explained in part through demographics: considering that the majority of those officially integrated or affiliated with the company were above drafting age, it would make sense that they would have less contact with the front lines while remaining willing to participate in military-affiliated operations. Because of this, most the city's younger “up-and-coming” artists were nowhere to be found near most of the company's exhibitions and events. The unit

⁶¹¹ Mirsada Baljić, 318.

⁶¹² See: Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 210.

nevertheless tended to position itself in auto-descriptive texts as the main actor who connected the city's visual artists to the Bosnian Army, in spite of other actors such as Izet Džirlo and his *Galerija Paleta* also having closely collaborated directly with the army. Instead, the company focused on large-scale and well-publicized exhibitions, taking over the primary function most like a traditional organ of propaganda, even when the term itself was never actually used.

The first, and most memorable, of such exhibitions was titled "*Umjetnici Sarajeva za slobodnu BiH*": "The artists of Sarajevo for a free BiH". Taking place in late October of 1992 in the smaller *Galerija Gabrijel*, the show assembled the works of many of the city's most prominent artists as well as those of a handful of lesser-known names.⁶¹³ The exhibition was made up of 67 artworks made by 42 artists, and despite initial attempts at auctioning in Sarajevo, remained as part of a unified collection that made its way to Slovenia, and was eventually transferred to the *Dom Armije* and the Headquarters of the Supreme Command of the 1st Corps.⁶¹⁴ Amongst one of the largest similar events in Sarajevo during the period of the siege, the organizing committee made up of established artists Dževad Hozo, Edin Numankadić and Alma Suljević who were joined by Rasem Isaković, a lawyer from the Headquarters of the Main Command.⁶¹⁵ In fact, the exhibition enjoyed the support of military and political structures, suggesting the close involvement of political leadership in the depiction of the military through its cultural organ.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹³ Mirsada Baljić, "Uloga i Značaj Umjetnika u Okviru OS RBiH u Periodu Opsade i Odbrane Sarajeva," 315.

⁶¹⁴ Mirsada Baljić, 316–17.

⁶¹⁵ The artists exhibited included: Nedim Arifović, Nina Acković-Čišić, Mirsada Baljić, Smail Bato Bostandžić, Sead Čizmić, Suad Češljarić, Dragan Čulić, Alma Gavrić, Stijepo Gavrić, Seid Hasaneferić, Dževad Hozo, Irfan Hozo, Renata Karamatić, Husein Karišik, Mile Kasapović, Ana Kovač, Fikret Libovac, Ibrahim Ljubović, Edin Malović, Esad Muftić, Hamzalija Muhić, Saida Mujezinović, Edin Numankadić, Salim Obralić, Nusret Pašić, Affan Ramić, Mustafa Skopljak, Alma Suljević, Radoslav Tadić, Elma Vrana, Mehmed Zaimović, Avdo Žiga, Petar Waldegg.

⁶¹⁶ The exhibition received the support of Muhamed Kreševljaković from the Ministry of Defense, general Arif Pašalić of the MVP, Sulejman Braco Suljić and Osman Topčagić from the command of the Bosnian Army, Rasim Delić, general Sulo Vranja, Ivan Brigić and with special support from the prime minister Haris Silajdžić.



Figure 3. “Umjetnici Sarajeva za Slobodnu Bosnu i Hercegovinu”, cover exhibition catalogue. The exhibition catalogue is fronted with a group photo of *Umjetnička Četa* members, smiling and projecting an image of unity and confidence. Some of the artists are shown with their palm outstretched, a greeting popularized during the period of the siege which referenced to recurring imagery often found in Bosnian *stećak* gravestones. Although references to the freedom of the country and the relatively large crest found upper-right-hand corner of the cover allude to the presence of war, it is the artists that are put into the foreground of the exhibition and auction. Nermina Kurspahić, photographer unknown, Sarajevo: *National Gallery of BiH*, 1993. Courtesy of Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The exhibition in question provides us with one of the most visible instances of artist-led mobilization of military-themed discourse. Clearly indicating that the selection process was not based on aesthetic criteria, the organizers transparently admit that the practical contribution of the exhibition in theoretical and practical terms superseded any aesthetic considerations in the pages of the exhibition catalogue. Going as far as to actively discourage the viewer from directly evaluating artistic value of the individual works, the text instead urges them to view the exhibition as a whole, and an “individual artistic donation to the collective suffering, with the aim to overcome it.”⁶¹⁷ In other words: the quality of art displayed in this exhibition was only

⁶¹⁷ Nermina Kurspahić, *Umjetnici Sarajeva Za Slobodnu Bosnu i Hercegovinu* (Sarajevo: Umjetnička Četa ARBiH, 1993), n.pag. Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

secondary to the message it was meant to send, and to some degree, to bringing the military institution very real practical support in the form of funds and positive press.

The auction, accompanied by a catalogue published in Sarajevo but translated into English, French and German, and therefore clearly also destined for foreign audiences, openly delineates the intentions carried by the exhibition:

*“It is absolutely clear that the collected (material) means will not be sufficient for the purchase of a considerable number of weapons, but that is other things that matter in this action. First of all the whole action is completely voluntary; it means that artists of various aesthetic and artistic orientations have answered the essential appeal to be useful for something that is considered to be decisively important – the defense of all the values of life, including artistic creation as its superb human expression.”*⁶¹⁸

The artists that cooperated on the event were therefore not only mobilized for the practical goal of raising funds, but also with the aim of “defending all the values of life” through continuing their artistic practice. This formulation upholds the general discourse of an artistic defense of the city, presenting cultural production during wartime as an analogous activity to armed action through a logic based on the moral principle of civilized aesthetic production. This is not done overtly, as the importance of objective quality is clearly framed as secondary to the military function such an exhibition would play. However, the act of producing art remains fundamentally connected to the defense of the city precisely through its association to a civilization discourse.

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⁶¹⁸ Nermina Kurspahić, n.pag.

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This type of language can be found beyond the official event catalogue, appearing in reviews and articles published in local press. Following its transfer to the National Gallery of Slovenia in Ljubljana, where it was exhibited just in time for Christmas Eve in 1994, and its subsequent opening in the City Gallery of Maribor in 1995, a vocabulary which framed artistic production as a part of armed struggle was further propagated to foreign audiences.⁶²¹ The artists who spoke during the Slovenian *vernissages* kept in line with a heavily militarized language, seen for example in the introductory speech made by Dževad Hozo at the occasion of the opening, who referred to both a struggle for existential survival and resistance of inhumane conditions as being defied by the production of art.⁶²² A comparable sentiment is expressed by Edin Numankadić, who describes his experiences in Slovenia with a similar vocabulary:

"The very act of presenting wartime culture of BiH, the defense of a civilizational spirit in the middle of war conditions, was a fascinating fact for the Slovenians. The general impression is

⁶²⁰ Nermina Kurspahić, n.pag.

⁶²¹ The exhibition's tour appears to have enjoyed some popularity, and benefited from the support of Mirso Muhović and Zekerijah Smajić. Mirsada Baljić, "Uloga i Značaj Umjetnika u Okviru OS RBiH u Periodu Opsade i Odbrane Sarajeva," 316.

⁶²² For example: "It is also a multi-year form of struggle for existential survival, a resistance in which defiance is evident in the most inhumane conditions since Goya's Disasters - and it does not mean just a mere struggle for survival". Author translation: „To je i višegodišnji vid borbe za egzistencijalno preživljavanje, otpor u kojem je evidentan prkos u najneljudskim uslovima od Goyinog Desastresa – a ne znači samo puku borbu za preživljavanje.” Nermina Omerbegović, "Ambasadori kulture," *Oslobodjenje*, January 5, 1995, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

that the Slovenians, known for their culture and traditions, are fascinated by the vitality of culture and the spirit of civilization when it comes to BiH. ⁶²³

Both of these instances show the type of discourse commonly accompanying the activities of the *Umjetnička Četa*, clearly framing the work of artists as part of a larger civilizational struggle in the context of conflict. This framing takes on additional meaning considering the strong institutional and presumably personal ties between the army apparatus and the exhibition's organizers, creating an idea that the painters in question are doing their "fair share" of fighting in the cultural arena. The theoretical imagery painted by the artists was further supported by the practical realities of the conflict, through which members of the Artist Company received significant practical and logistical support from the hands of not only their military superiors but also from what appear to be external political influences.

In practice, this gave the company's members extended reach and visibility within the besieged city, directly benefiting its artists. The sheer logistical difficulties associated with transporting over fifty artworks out of a city at war enabling the above-mentioned Slovenian exhibition to take place were presumably alleviated through access to military resources, as well as support from the Embassy of BiH in Ljubljana.⁶²⁴ Other, smaller, company-affiliated events also appear to have received material support from the Bosnian Army. One example can be found in a small-scale exhibition by Jasmin Pehlinović, whose paintings were hung at the Dobrinja Press Center in 1993. In spite of taking place in one of the more volatile and virtually isolated neighborhoods of Sarajevo, the vernissage was also attended by Mirsada Baljić who acted as a representative for the *Umjetnička Četa*.⁶²⁵ Between the organization of an art show in a venue traditionally associated with and presumably under army control and the transportation of Artist Company leader Baljić through some of the city's most perilous districts, this instance suggests that cooperation between artist and army existed in the form of a symbiotic relationship, with the Artist Company effectively benefitting from its role as a central institutional holding within the cultural scene.

⁶²³ Author translation: "Sam čin prezentiranja ratne kulture BiH, odbrana civilizacijskog duha jedne sredine u ratnim uslovima, predstavljao je fascinantnu činjenicu za Slovence. Opšti je utisak da su Slovenci, poznati po svojoj kulturi i tradiciji, fascinirani vitalnošću kulture i odbrane civilizacijskog duha kad je riječ o BiH." ⁶²³ Nermina Omerbegović, 10.

⁶²⁴ Nermina Omerbegović, "Ambasadori kulture" *Oslobodjenje*, January 5, 1995, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁶²⁵ M. Dž., "Umjetnički matine," *Oslobodjenje*, May 10, 1993, 11, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

The *Umjetnička Četa*'s highly specific role within the conflict can be also traced in other initiatives from the company's command. For example, the exhibition *Borci Slikaju* (*Fighters Painting*), which took place in the *Galerija Mak* of the local literary museum in the spring of 1994, was organized specifically by the group in honor of the Day of the Army – *Dan Armije*. The two official members of the company, Gavrić and Baljić, were joined by Alma Suljević as the show's organizers, and together with a handful of individual soldiers from a variety of brigades created an exhibition of portraits of fallen brothers in arms.⁶²⁶ Presenting portraits of fallen soldiers painted by sixteen different authors, including students at the Academy of Fine Arts, professional painters and others who painted portraits of “the faces of martyrs and faces of fighters” observed on the front lines, the show itself was clearly supported by official state structures, visible for example in the presence of high-ranking military officials at the vernissage.⁶²⁷ Discursively, the exhibition championed the idea of the soldier as the prime observer of the defense of the city, an idea which was reflected in some of the reviews of the exhibition. In this way, art critic An. Šimić employed a familiar lexicon, describing the artworks as the product of artists “who had exchanged a rifle for a brush or a pencil and commemorate their fellow soldiers.”⁶²⁸

It is noteworthy that the appearance of a cultural defense discourse did not necessarily require participants to be professional artists, extending the role of the visual arts as a tool of resistance towards those who had not formally been trained in its use. While roughly half of the exhibition's participants were students at the ALU, others, such as one member of the 105. Motorized Brigade or another of the 4th Motorized Brigade appear to have had little to no contact with the visual arts scene outside of this single exhibition. The erasure of any distinctions between professional and non-professional painters resulted in the practical elevation of their common status as soldiers into the foreground of the event, creating an impression that their shared experiences and identities as part of a military overwhelmed their individual opinions on the matter. Furthermore, the *Borci Slikaju* show provides a practical example of the implementation of the “new public cult of *šehidi*” that received considerable

⁶²⁶ In some cases, the exhibition was also referred to as *Borci Portretisti*. The exhibition was opened by the commander Rasim Delić, signaling “great recognition for the artists”, and was also supported by the presence of gen. Nedžad Ajnadžić, Esad Pelko Brzi, Dževad Radja as well as unnamed others. Mirsada Baljić, “Uloga i Značaj Umjetnika u Okviru OS RBiH u Periodu Opsade i Odbrane Sarajeva,” 318–19.

⁶²⁷ Author translation: “To su lica šehida i lica boraca koja možemo sresti na prvim linijama.” An. Šimić, “Portreti za sva vremena,” *Oslobodjenje*, April 15, 1994, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁶²⁸ An. Šimić, 10.

support from the part of the ruling SDA party, as the Bosnian Army was also subjected to its nation-building and de-secularization projects.⁶²⁹ In this way, the *Umjetnička Četa* curated an exhibition which functioned discursively to even out individual qualities in a rather heterogenous group of artists, omitting their mixed levels of artistic education entirely, while simultaneously providing a platform for the promotion of political imagery supported by the ruling elites.

The rhetoric put forward by the Artist Company not only closely followed popular discourses encouraged by the SDA, but also seems to be the source of the most uniform discursive descriptions within siege-time artistic production. When compared to other types of artistic involvement, whether in the military or externally, one finds relatively little coverage of their activities coupled with a surprisingly consistent discourse that heavily emphasized the main underpinnings of a ‘dual defense’ concept. Sarajevo was not only defended by the (implicitly uncivilized) man with a gun, but also by the artist with his brush – furthermore, these two imagined men were in reality one and the same. This uniformity of the *Umjetnička Četa* can be explained, at least in part, through the cultural and social capital that the majority of its members had already accumulated in their careers preceding the conflict, and the apparent influence of the political structures on the unit. Whereas the ways in which the company’s activities are described by its participants, both contemporaneously and in hindsight, reflects a nearly exemplary world view based on the idea of an ‘artistic defense’ of the city, the unit is also one of the categories of cultural producers least visible in the larger archival landscape of the wartime artistic scene.

4.2.2. LIFE ON THE FRONT LINES. ARTIST EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES

The extensive call to arms which followed the beginning of the siege of Sarajevo saw a large part of the city’s artists join the defense forces in active combat, quite literally replacing their paintbrushes with rifles. Whether joining voluntarily or answering compulsory drafting notices,

⁶²⁹ *Šehid*, from the Arabic word “witness”, also translates in concept into the definition of “martyr”. In BiH, the concept became popularized during the 1990s as a way of referencing victims of the Bosnian War. Xavier Bougarel, “Death and the Nationalist: Martyrdom, War Memory and Veteran Identity among Bosnian Muslims,” 170.

these soldiers were not part of any official structure and were scattered throughout a variety of brigades in charge of the terrains in and around Sarajevo. Whereas sources pertaining to individual soldiers do reveal the importance of the relationship between the physical and the intellectual defense of the besieged city, these accounts are strikingly more diverse than those which have been promoted through official organs, and which have dominated popular understanding of local wartime experiences. Although Bosnians were not entirely unfamiliar with military practices thanks to the Yugoslav dogma of an “all peoples’ defense” and compulsory military service, this did not mean that the majority of freshly minted Bosnian Army soldiers actually had any experience in warfare. Those who joined up were, almost exclusively, not professional soldiers: and therefore, part of an extremely heterogenous group of actors.

At least amongst artists, it seems that many combatants did not perceive themselves primarily as soldiers, appearing reluctant to publicly identify as such.⁶³⁰ Instead, when speaking to the press or through art historians, artists in the army almost never spoke of the processes of entering the armed forces, and preferred to frame their wartime experiences through their position as artists, not soldiers. Some artists chose not to disclose their previous assignment to the Bosnian Army after having left the city, as was the case for one individual who had exhibited multiple times under initiatives run by or in favor of the army, records of which indicate both his name and unit. While it is plausible that the person in question never actually involved in armed combat and was instead mobilized in trench-digging or information-gathering operations, a statement to the press that he had “fought for no army” can be construed as somewhat deceptive.⁶³¹ However, the denial of military service suggests that ordinary Sarajevans might have felt uncomfortable with their time in the army, and by extension, that the dominant language of cultural resistance was not always one with which combatants themselves identified with.

Unlike in more traditional total-war situations, artistically minded soldiers of the Bosnian Army had regular opportunities to participate in the cultural life of the city they were defending. Active enrollment in the armed forces did not preclude individual soldiers from participating in

⁶³⁰ In her fieldwork, Ivana Maček similarly noted how many Sarajevans who had been soldiers did not want to identify publicly as such, suggesting that most men would have preferred to avoid military service. Tying these experiences to the trauma experienced on the frontlines, Maček points to the disparity between imagined roles of defense and the painful consequences of combat. See: Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 194–95.

⁶³¹ Sharon Weightman, “Starting Over,” *Florida Times Union*, December 28, 1997.

cultural events, as those on leave continued to attend cultural events at rates similar to those of non-combatants.⁶³² While this ease in participation was not universal and many soldiers found it difficult to reintegrate into civilian activities while on leave, whether due to the emotional strain of combat or a prioritization of wartime chores like fetching water or humanitarian aid. Some soldiers, echoing sentiments found also amongst the civilian population, disregarded cultural events as irrelevant in the face of dangers faced on the front line. One anonymous respondent did so openly: “I had no time for such nonsense. I had Chetniks after me, trying to finish me off.”⁶³³ As such, when looking at soldiers’ wartime experiences through the prism of cultural defense discourses, it become apparent that these dominant narratives were at times directly at odds with what combatants themselves had lived.

All the same, many artists who did become soldiers found importance in continuing their creative work independently of their service. This was often achieved during the regular leave that was granted from the front lines, a period of reprieve that could last anywhere from a few days to over a week.⁶³⁴ Many soldiers used this time to attend their studies, fetch supplies for their home or to take care of ill family members, and in the case of artists, to paint or to attend classes at the ALU. Selver Porča, described by in a wartime publication as a “member of the ARBiH above all”, framed his service as a duty to be undertaken without falter. At the same time, he retained and asserted his identity as an artist who continued his trade even on the front lines. Whereas it is uncertain to what extent Porča was actually painting between battles in his trenches, he points out how his new role as soldier prevented him from devoting as much time as he would have liked to his artistic endeavors.⁶³⁵ In an article dedicated to one of his solo exhibitions, the artist expresses a pressing need to continue painting even amidst war, a practice he maintained faithfully enough to announce a second show of his works “created in between

⁶³² A partially published survey on civilian wartime experiences conducted by FAMA International in 1996 offers insight through one question regarding attendance at cultural events. Although only 97 of the roughly 5,000 interviews are currently available, the accessible questionnaires also include answers from soldiers surveyed. Thirteen out of the twenty-seven respondents identifiable as combatants have affirmed participation in cultural events (whether on-base or on leave), a proportion similar to other respondents, of whom 37 attended cultural events out of sixty-eight. See: FAMA International, “The Siege of Sarajevo 92-96: Survival Questionnaires.” (Sarajevo: FAMA International, 1996-1997), accessible online at <http://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/fama-original-projects/12/index.html>

⁶³³ FAMA International, “The Siege of Sarajevo 92-96: Survival Questionnaires.” I.D. FC-SCUEST-97-TA-06. (Sarajevo: FAMA International, 1996-1997), accessible online at <http://www.famacollection.org/eng/fama-collection/fama-original-projects/12/index.html>

⁶³⁴ Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 206.

⁶³⁵ M. Smajlović, “Kako bez bijele boje?,” *Oslobodjenje*, January 14, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo; M.S., “Akwareli Selvera Porče” *Oslobodjenje*, October 11, 1995, 12, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

mortars and between light and candles.”⁶³⁶ Dragan Golubović, at the time a literature student and attendee of exhibitions, has addressed the overlap between “the parallel lives” that constantly shifted between the beauty of culture and the cruelty and difficulties of life on the front line in a similar manner. Thus, Golubović speaks of his attempts at bridging these two disparate realities, using breaks from fighting to read and study, even while in the trenches.⁶³⁷ The duality of these two individuals’ wartime existence, lived between civilian-artist and wartime-soldier realities, simultaneously emphasize both the importance of culture as an intimate tool for psychological self-care amongst soldiers, and the constant renegotiation of entry and exit from the front that remains to be studied in-depth.

Muhamed Ćeif, professional painter and member of the 105. Motorized Brigade, dedicated an exhibition of paintings to the destroyed city of Sarajevo in 1993, discursively combining his status as a soldier with his artistic credentials. The show was reviewed in a very brief *Oslobodjenje* article, receiving praise for both the choice of theme – and for the author’s military association. While the length of the text makes it difficult to ascertain whether Ćeif’s role as a soldier was primarily emphasized by himself or by the author of the article, the importance of his participation in the military defense of Sarajevo was discursively framed as central or inherent to his artistic practice during this period.⁶³⁸ The casual mixing of vocabularies associated with the arts with ones belonging to a military sphere mostly appeared in contexts where artists were in fact directly involved in armed combat, contributing to a discourse that presented armed defense as analogous to ‘cultural defense’, and extending the relevance of cultural production into an active element of the conflict itself.

Other artists used their time on the front lines, often characterized by long periods of inactivity and overwhelming boredom, as productively as they could, consuming and producing culture in order to avoid the psychological heaviness of combat. Some artists like Nebojša Šerić Šoba used their time in the trenches to work on projects or even improvising activities reminiscent of installations-turned-performance pieces. During his time as a conscripted soldier, Šoba recalls countering the monotony of digging trenches with an improvised reappropriation of Piet Mondrian’s iconic geometric compositions while on the front. As a reinterpretation of one of

⁶³⁶ Author translation: “(...) nastalim izmedju granata i izmedju svjetla i svijeca.” M. Smajlović, “Kako bez bijele boje?,” 7.

⁶³⁷ Diklić, *Teatar u Ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva*, 108–9.

⁶³⁸ N.n., “Vrijeme nestajanja,” *Oslobodjenje*, November 19, 1993, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

Mondrian's abstract paintings, the artist began forming the trenches he was tasked with digging following the geometric lines of the famous works – briefly confusing his superiors, who at first interpreted the artistic move as a sign of desertion.⁶³⁹ Although no documentation of this piece has been preserved, it reflects a peculiar discursive inversion of traditional art as resistance vocabularies: instead of replacing the brush of creativity with a rifle meant to kill, the artist inverted elements of warfare into an expression of artistic language.

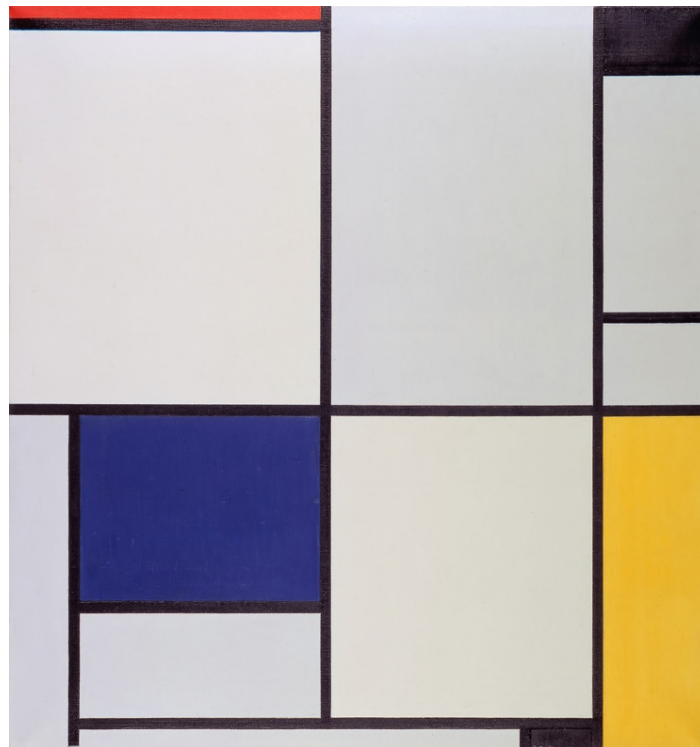


Figure 4. “Tableau I” by Piet Mondrian, oil on canvas, 1921, Kunstmuseum Den Haag. Open-source image, available under:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piet_Mondrian#/media/File:Tableau_I,_by_Piet_Mondriaan.jpg

The prevalence of language that referenced the concept of dual-defense was hereby also not uniformly mobilized by cultural actors active during the siege. Many artists did not see their work as inherent to the struggle for BiH independence, instead framing it either as a form of maintaining the normality of pre-war routines, or even actively rejecting the concept entirely as unrealistic. Fikret Libovac was perhaps amongst the most vocally transgressive artists who spoke about his combat experiences in registers that appeared to discursively disengage the act

⁶³⁹ Nebojša Šerić Šoba, interview by Ewa Anna Kumelowski, July 26, 2018.

of creating art from participation in armed combat. Best known for his delicate sculptures of birds and human figures assembled from subtle wires, Libovac openly presented his practice as an escape from the reality of war. For him, creating art was not a complementary activity to his military obligations, but one which allowed him reprieve from the traumatic experiences of the front line.⁶⁴⁰ Such an approach is essentially inconsistent with the idea of artistic defense, as art becomes a tool of spiritual escape as opposed to an active stance of defiance. In fact, the artist actively credits this type of resistance with the survival of Sarajevans. Instead, the sculptor frames his role as a soldier as a burden, something that was imposed upon him, a stance visible in his own words: “I was forced to kill a Chetnik, that was the only way to survive and live.”⁶⁴¹ Directly addressing the act of killing, Libovac further (whether consciously or subconsciously) contests a discourse based on a dual defense of Sarajevo. For him, his role as a defender of Sarajevo was not related to his role as an artist, but instead a sphere separate from the horrors of war:

*“Better to work than to kill yourself drinking between mortars, right? The war is much bloodier than it was in the beginning, now we are an army, and we have climbed the hills, now we are the barbarians. We won’t give up, really, won’t give up.”*⁶⁴²

Generally speaking, the vast majority of visual artists who served as soldiers in the 1st Corps remained relatively low in rank throughout the conflict, indicating a similarly low desire for military professionalization. Photographer Kemal Hadžić appears to be the unique exception to the rule, serving as technical editor of the military bulletins for multiple entities falling under the command of the 1st Corps (*Tehnički urednik lista u sektoru za M, IPD, I VP Komande I. Korpusa*).⁶⁴³ Although his role appears to be mostly limited to administrative tasks and, crucially, the documentation of front-line activities of the Bosnian Army, Hadžić is the only artist enlisted as a soldier, outside of the Artist Company, who has been identified within commanding ranks of the Bosnian Army. As a former member of the innovative *Zvono* collective and advertisement photographer, Hadžić was amongst Bosnia’s most accomplished artistic photographers, and appears to have been primarily tasked with documenting the conflict

⁶⁴⁰ *Kipar (Sculptor)*.

⁶⁴¹ *Kipar (Sculptor)*, 2:38.

⁶⁴² Author translation: “Bolje raditi nego ubijati se pićem u “intermecima”, zar ne? Rat je mnogo krvaviji nego na početku, sada smo vojska, i mi smo se popeli na brda, sada smo barabar. Ne damo se, istinski se ne damo.” Divna Pervan, “S Fikretovimi pticama,” 10.

⁶⁴³ Vahid Karavelić et al., *Prvi Korpus Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*, 450.

from a soldier's perspective. However, due to his extensive presence on the front lines, Hadžić was also privy to the difficult conditions under which soldiers of the 1st Corps served, as explained in a 1993 interview with *Dani*:

*"I was in situations where I could take pictures of real massacres, but I went the other way. I couldn't even watch this, let alone take photos. (...) Staying on the first battle line, where shots are fired, where a mortar falls every second, or every ten seconds and where every moment you wonder whether if luck will pass you over this time, and the mortar will hit, so being on the front line is something completely different. There you meet a certain structure of people – these are fighters who know why they are here and what their task is – photographing these soldiers, but photographing them positively, makes me glad and I feel satisfied while working. Because, in this way I do not steal their intimacy, but in some way glorify (?) the struggle through which they are going through."*⁶⁴⁴

While his personal opinions might have differed, the way in which he described the fight on the front lines was simultaneously realistic (depictions of extreme violence) and heroic (satisfaction from work, positive representation of soldiers) falls in line with an art-as-resistance discourse without directly engaging with it. At the same time, the physical and psychological hardships of combat are much more present than, for example, in texts affiliated with the *Umetnička Četa*.

Alma Suljević, initiator of the *Kentauromahija* project, was amongst the few female artists engaged in the armed forces outside of the formal structure of the *Umetnička Četa*. Integrated into the Bosnian Army as an officer for morale of the 1st Sandžak Brigade, she spent considerable time on the front lines, and most of her off-duty breaks at the Academy of Fine Arts rather than devoting her time to chores such as fetching of firewood or water. Crucially, Suljević framed her continued artistic practice as a key element of her understanding of wartime experience – for her, the war was an external event that had no influence on her work as an artist – at least while the conflict was still going on. At the same time, speaking to reporters in 1994, her claims of uninterrupted practice throughout the duration of the war were primarily

⁶⁴⁴ Author translation: "Bio sam u situacijama da snimam prave masakre, ali otišao sam na drugu stranu. Nisam to mogao ni gledati, a kamoli fotografisati. (...) Boraviti na prvoj borbenoj liniji, dje se puca, dje granata pada svake sekunde, ili svakih deset sekundi i dje se svakog momenta pitaš hoće li te ovaj put sreća mimoići, a granata stići, dakle, boraviti na prvoj borbenoj liniji je nešto sasvim drugo. Tamo se srećeš sa odredjenom strukturom ljudi – to su borci koji znaju zašto su tu i kakav im je zadatak – fotografisati te borce, ali pozitivno fotografisati, meni je drago i osjećam se zadovoljnim dok radim. Jer, tu ne kradem njihovu intimu, već na neki način veličam muke kroz koje oni prolaze." N.n., "Ne bih mogao biti paparazzo," *Dani*, February 20, 1993, 29, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

associated with her identity as an artist, but rather as a defender of Sarajevo.⁶⁴⁵ Working „between two battles”, Suljević employed popular dichotomous registers that juxtaposed the uncivilized attackers with the civilized defenders, whose civility is proven also through affinity for culture:

*“Well, a man doesn’t only fight with a rifle, the Chetniks feel it on their skin. Here every hero is in his field of work, which lead the most unique form of combat. Chetniks are going crazy, maybe we don’t realize it too much, but they have, in the field of propaganda, lost the war which they had begun, because thanks to foreign journalists, information was dispatched on time and now it can be seen whose war is fairer.”*⁶⁴⁶

Although her relationship to dichotomous representations of conflict have been shown previously to be primarily rooted in personal definitions, Suljević describes artistic production undertaken in the context of the siege as an element of the war she was fighting as a soldier, as well as a conscious effort at shaping global perceptions of the conflict. While not directly comparing combat to artistic production, she employs a vocabulary that morally equates the two actions and contextualizes them within broader understandings of a civilized struggle, in this case promoting a more classical idea of a dual defense discourse. As such, it is also worth to underline the constantly changing relationship between individual actors and the ideas they used to express their experiences: artists, like many other Sarajevans, regularly shifted discursive registers depending on their particular situation.

However, not everyone was content with joining the armed struggle, and strategies of draft-dodging were ubiquitous throughout the region.⁶⁴⁷ A series of conscription notices targeting progressively broader demographics were issued throughout the Bosnian War, affecting not only the individuals but also cultural institutions with which they were affiliated. The extension of conscription to all males under the age of forty-five that was in effect by 1995 made it

⁶⁴⁵ Jasenka Cico, “Bolu u zemlji giganata,” *Dani*, October 24, 1994, 70–71, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁶⁴⁶ Author translation: “Pa ne bori se čovjek samo s puškom, to četnici osjete na svojoj koži. Ovdje je svako heroj u svome polju rada, tvoji kolege vode jedan najubitačniji vid borbe. Četnici lude, mi to možda i ne osjećamo toliko, ali oni su na polju propagande, koju su sami započeli, izgubili rat, jer informacija je zahvaljujući stranim novinarima pravovremeno odlazila i sad se vidi čiji dje rat pravedniji.” Jasenka Cico, “Bolu u Zemlji Giganata,” *Dani*, October 24, 1994, 70, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁶⁴⁷ Draft-dodging was an almost universal phenomenon during the wars of Yugoslav dissolution as young men in Serbia, Croatia or Bosnia regularly did their best to avoid serving in their respective armies. The former president of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Stipe Šušteršič, has estimated that roughly 700,000 people eligible for military service had left the ex-Yugoslav republics, including 300,000 of whom from Bosnia. See: Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State and War*, 147.

difficult for individual artists to avoid serving in the army, and by extension to leave the besieged city, furthermore limited opportunities of attending exhibitions of their work abroad.⁶⁴⁸ Whereas the extent of this practice is difficult to ascertain amongst visual artists at this time, avoidance of military service was present in the Sarajevan cultural scene, as seen in the case of the employees of an alternative radio station *ZID*, who were able to get their draft notices rescinded following extensive bureaucratic maneuvers.⁶⁴⁹

Considering that many Sarajevans, despite their clear disapproval of and opposition to the siege of their city, were not always willing to join an armed struggle, the popular and officially promoted discourse based on a synergy of artists and army did not uniformly reflect the realities of all those fighting on the front lines. The psychological impact of warfare, particularly for those who never envisaged themselves as soldiers, was substantial, a fact which is often overshadowed by their creative work during this time in contemporary historiography. In this way, Nebojša Šerić Šoba, who primarily worked as a de-miner in the fields surrounding Sarajevo, was one of the artists deeply affected by the danger of his assigned task. For him, the extremely high risk associated with demining activities left him psychologically vulnerable, affecting his artistic practice in a similar fashion described by Libovac. Šoba connected the psychological trauma incurred on the battlefield to a lack of inspiration felt by him following the end of the war, further representing a wartime reality that existed in direct opposition to the idea of ‘cultural defense’. His case was also reflective of the paths of other Sarajevan soldiers: having joined the army voluntarily at the beginning of the war, he was unable to leave his duties without involving going through connections.⁶⁵⁰

The scarcity of source material makes it difficult to assess how artistic production within the context of the army was received and internalized by regular soldiers, and remains an open field for future research. While many of the exhibitions with ties to the armed forces, discussed in the following section, appear to have been popular amongst rank-and-file conscripts, their views on the concept of a ‘dual defense’ discourse remain obscured. For those already active within the city’s artistic community, their continued practice was regularly framed either as an extension of one’s military duties, or as an escape from the same. The importance of cultural

⁶⁴⁸ Maria Helena Henriques Muller, UNESCO representative for BiH, “Fax to Rok Vogrić from Maria Helena Henriques Mueller,” January 26, 1995. UNESCO Archives.

⁶⁴⁹ Larisa Kurtović. “The Paradoxes of Wartime Freedom: Alternative Culture During the Siege of Sarajevo.” *Resisting the Evil*, 2012, 197–224. 204-20

⁶⁵⁰ Joe Sacco, *Derniers Jours de Guerre: Bosnie, 1995-1996* (Rackham, 2015), 6, 36.

defense, which discursively placed the Bosnian Army and its associates within a sphere of moral, “civilized”, superiority over the attacking Bosnian Serb Army, was hereby received by regular soldiers in visibly less enthusiastic way than by actors that navigated institutional channels. In turn, the ways through which individual artists recounted, reflected on and interpreted their position as soldiers within the context of a cultural sphere echoes a mixed support or rejection of a cultural defense discourse that was significantly more popular within institutional channels.

4.3. DEFENDING CULTURE: THE ROLE OF CIVILIAN ARTISTS AND NON-COMBATANT POSITIONS IN THE ARMY EFFORT

While a military mobilization requires military participation, not all of Sarajevo’s cultural actors were able or willing to take up arms to defend their city. The proliferation of violence beyond the scope of regular combat also encouraged civilians to contribute resistance to the siege through alternative means, directly contributing to the war effort through support in non-combatant positions. Whereas other types of warfare do encourage heightened civilian participation through logistical or bureaucratic positions, the static nature of siege warfare combined with the introduction of violence into everyday life meant that even those who did not fight on the front lines nevertheless participated in the creation and proliferation of a cultural resistance discourse. In Sarajevo, the capital’s artists likewise used their creative skills and organizational capacities to support the Bosnian Army and its soldiers. The diverse ways through which cultural actors contributed to the war movement were accompanied by the same notions of artistic defense present in the rest of the army, often mobilized as a motive accompanying symbolic gestures but just as often disregarded as naïve and unnecessary. This section of the chapter will focus first on the non-combatant involvement of cultural actors within the formal Bosnian Army structure, before continuing to a deeper analysis of the complicate patterns of support engaged with by cultural institutions and independent galleries, interacting with ideas of ‘artistic resistance’.

4.3.1. CIVILIAN MOBILIZATION. ARTIST INVOLVEMENT IN NON-COMBATANT ROLES

While the most visible army-adjacent roles for artists were indeed combat-related, a category of actors who were involved in the development of administrative structures within the newly founded Bosnian Army or auxiliary civilian defense frameworks also emerged in the besieged city. These individuals were simultaneously in close contact with the everyday of the army apparatus, at times exposing themselves to the same risks as their armed counterparts, while simultaneously retaining their civilian status and, by extension, maintaining distance from a soldier-mode of experiencing combat. Conversely, it should be underlined that even those artists who returned from the front lines on leave, while only temporarily participating in civilian modes of living, cannot be considered as legitimate military targets.

Historically, the mobilization of civilian forces for combat-adjacent needs has taken many forms, often involving a large section of the population as crucial to the defense of cities in case of enemy attack, and is in part responsible for the blurring of lines between combatants and non-combatants.⁶⁵¹ Local populations can involve themselves in organizational and preparatory tasks, participate in the maintenance of services necessary for sustaining life in a city at war, or engage with the management of refugees and evacuations.⁶⁵² For Sarajevan cultural actors, these combat-adjacent tasks were taken up primarily in the form of administrative support for the fledgling Bosnian Army and through initiatives aimed at protecting cultural heritage – often invoking overlapping or contesting notions of ‘cultural resistance.’

One of the ways in which artists participated in the defense of Sarajevo was through the protection and defense of the cultural heritage actively targeted by the Bosnian Serb Army. The

⁶⁵¹ The diverse roles played by civilians within a military context remains a subject meriting further attention, despite the excellent studies which have been conducted on the subject. For some of the most exhaustive works on the topic, see, for example: Alex Dowdall and John Horne, eds., *Civilians Under Siege from Sarajevo to Troy* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2018); Nicola Foote and Nadejda Williams, *Civilians and Warfare in World History: An Interdisciplinary Study* (London ; New York, NY: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2017).

⁶⁵² While many instances of civilian participation in the military defense of cities is not necessarily tied to the Eastern European geographical landscape, some Sarajevan scholars have most closely compared the situation in the Bosnian capital to the defense of Moscow and Leningrad during the Second World War. See: Nedžad Ajnadžić, *Opsada Sarajeva u Kontekstu Historijskih Iskustava*, 50–51.

Commission for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, a volunteer force formed by actor Josip Pejaković, provided an opportunity for cultural actors to provide perceptible support to the defense of the city without necessarily taking up arms. Rescuing and protecting at-risk heritage objects, its members transported them to safe locations and kept them under guard. While not directly under the command of the Bosnian Army, the Commission navigated exposed sites at risk of enemy fire to protect treasured elements of Sarajevan cultural history targeted from above, providing perhaps the most practical example of ‘cultural resistance’ in the besieged city. The Commission also involved itself in more abstract means of dual defense, for example through its involvement in some minor exhibitions. A show of works by Ljubo Lah, held in 1993, is an example of such involvement. A review of the *vernissage* frames the event using a lexicon that equated merged cultural production with the concept of artistic defense, describing it as having been attended by „friends, art-lovers, people of the pen, representatives of the overall life of our country that defends itself also through art,” automatically placing the event in an artistic-defense register.⁶⁵³ The show was organized by actor Josip Pejaković, a friend of the artist, an act qualified by the journalist Nada Salom as “defending” the Sarajevan public. Although the exhibition was organized under the auspices of the Headquarters for the protection of cultural heritage, it was not directly related to the military, yet used language that implied defense of the city through cultural production.

Nevertheless, some actors affiliated with the Commission actively dismissed the concept of artistic defense as irrelevant within the siege context. In this way, curator Nermina Zildžo actually frames her involvement with the informal company in direct opposition to the idea of dual defense, explaining her decision to join the group as one based chiefly in a need to provide practical aid in light of the sheer destruction of cultural artefacts by the Bosnian Serb Army:

*“After a couple of months, I left ‘higher’ activities (so-called ‘cultural resistance to war’) as nonsense that just didn’t fit war conditions and joined basic ‘combat’ which still seems to me as the only reasonable thing to do. Instead of neglecting security questions while producing new art to look like ‘civilized’ victims, we chose saving what we already had plus protecting intellectuals in various ways.”*⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵³ Nada Salom, “Težnja za ljepotom,” 9.

⁶⁵⁴ Megan Kossiakoff, “The Art of War: The Protection of Cultural Property during the ‘Siege’ of Sarajevo (1992-95),” 147.

Zildžo's outright condemnation of the 'cultural resistance' ideal is rather rare within recollections of the war, but it appears to support the tacit disillusionment that many individual artists found within their relationship to the siege. At the same time, participation in the group also offered practical advantages, particularly to younger male participants wary of enlisting as combatants: their involvement qualified as engagement in the provision of essential services in the city center, and hereby absolved them of military duty.⁶⁵⁵ While little is known about the activities of this formation outside of Zildžo's recollections, its existence sheds light on the complicated relationship between Sarajevo's civilian artists and the 'dual defense' discourse that was being circulated on their behalf: while for many the concept held considerable value, others saw it primarily as a discursive tool that had little to do with the realities of war. In an interview, sculptress Ana Kovač similarly openly defies a dual defense lexicon, acknowledging similarities but ultimately creating a divide between cultural and armed resistance:

*"A man has only one homeland and only one hometown. Being a patriot does not mean loving all the inhabitants of your homeland at the same time. I don't like some people, I have bad experiences with them, but then there are so many people I admire. We, the artists in the city, did what we knew best, but it was the fighters who saved us."*⁶⁵⁶

Other artists contributed to the war effort through their engagement in administrative and logistical tasks within the Bosnian Army, often presenting a much more positive picture of artist-army collaboration. Especially common amongst established artists, particularly those of the so-called middle generation, non-combatant positions within the army requiring artistic skill were filled by those who wished to contribute to the formation of a new, Bosnian, army. Artists such as Seid Hasaneferendić, renowned painter and director of the National Gallery of BiH between 1994-2000, offered their skills in designing insignia for the many new formations.⁶⁵⁷ Dževad Hozo, printmaker and professor, also created new emblems and uniforms needed for the Headquarters of General S. Šiber.⁶⁵⁸ Both of the actors in question positioned their

⁶⁵⁵ Megan Kossiakoff, 146–47.

⁶⁵⁶ Author translation: "Čovjek ima samo jednu domovinu i samo jedan rodni grad. Biti patriota ne podrazumijeva istovremeno biti zaljubljen u sve stanovnike svoje domovine. Meni se neki ljudi ne sviđaju, sa njima imam loša iskustva, ali zato je i veliki broj onih kojima se divim. Mi, umjetnici u gradu, radili smo šta smo najbolje znali, ali borci su ti koji su nas sačuvali." Nagorka Idrizović, "Ako zlo ne stane...", *Oslobodjenje*, October 15, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁶⁵⁷ Seid Hasaneferendić, ed., *Seid Hasaneferendić - Trabzon. Monografija 1950-2004*. (Sarajevo: Vlastimir Mijović, 2004), 97. Library of the Academy of Fine Arts, Sarajevo.

⁶⁵⁸ N.n., *Dževad Hozo. Monografija 1961-2001*. (Sarajevo: National Gallery of BiH, 2002), n.pag. Library of the Academy of Fine Arts, Sarajevo.

participation in the logistical side of military organization as a crucial element of their private engagement and their professional practice, including information about this cooperation in post-war monographs. While Hasanefendić remains more aloof while describing his involvement, giving little details, Hozo openly discusses his professional relationship with Deputy Prime Minister Rusmir Mahmutćehajić and the resulting creative projects designed for the army, even alluding to other unnamed tasks which he had taken up.⁶⁵⁹

Other artists, such as the young design group TRIO also provided similar support, spending most of their time on official design projects for the army, police or railway services in exchange for everyday necessities such as alcohol, cigarettes, sugar, feta cheese or peas.⁶⁶⁰ These varying profiles suggest that while contributions to such administrative tasks were understood by some actors as a moral imperative, others might have been at the very least partially motivated by the material support, necessary for survival, that was offered in return. Furthermore, while all of these actors conceptualized their work for the army as a type of contribution to the forces defending the city, it is primarily Hozo who frames this activity as central to his identity as an artist in post-war publications, reproducing notions of ‘artistic resistance’ with little further examination.⁶⁶¹ Therefore, the assumption that all inhabitants of the city who participated in the war effort did so out of ideological conviction that is tacitly reproduced through a cultural defense discourse might not be entirely accurate. In fact, the vastly divergent motivations, entry-points and ways of recalling one’s activities during the war suggest a more diverse pool of experiences that are, at the same time, at times overlapping and therefore non-exclusive.

Another entry point for visual artists into non-combat positions within the official Bosnian Army structure presented itself through involvement in the production of military bulletins that were distributed amongst the various units. Painter and educator Željko Filipović was one of the artists hired to create layouts and illustrate these bulletins, drawing illustrations and comics for the small-scale publication of the 105. Motorized Brigade. Disagreeing with the suggestion that his activities could be categorized as propaganda, Filipović himself refers to his wartime activities through the spectrum of a dual-defense discourse as having fought neither with a

⁶⁵⁹ Dževad Hozo interview with Nadja Marčić. N.n., *Dževad Hozo. Monografija 1961-2001*, 224.

⁶⁶⁰ Anna Husarska, “Postcards from the Edge of Hell: Sarajevo: Shells Fall Again, Electricity Falts and Water Trickles. Artist’ Posters Shrink and Colors Disappear.”

⁶⁶¹ Dževad Hozo interview with Nadja Marčić n.n., *Dževad Hozo. Monografija 1961-2001*, 224.

weapon, nor with a brush.⁶⁶² The rejection of both of complimentary concepts indicates an awareness of the discourse as well as its positioning as foreign to his own experiences, suggesting further misalignment between a dichotomous representation of defense. Instead, Filipović appears to speak of his work through a professional lens, disassociating it from the violence of combat and the ideological underpinnings of cultural defense.

Finally, another semi-official pathway for individual artist participation in the conflict can be found in the organization of exhibitions directly dedicated to the Bosnian Army and its soldiers, curated outside of the confines of the army official structures. Although these types of events were not particularly common, one such exhibition was organized by artist Mešo Čičkelić, who transported a series of pre-war and wartime landscapes directly onto the battlefield. Meeting with the members of the First light artillery rocket division (*Prvi laki artiljerski raketni divizion LARD PVO*) as part of the vernissage, the show was aimed at improving morale amongst the troops. The article that covered the event made no mention of Čičkelić's own conscription status, nor can any information tying him to the army be found, suggesting that this individual initiative was the artist's way of directly contributing to the conflict through the mobilization of his own creative skills. Despite Čičkelić's missing connections to the army, the event itself appears to have been rather successful, and was even attended by member of the Bosnian presidency Stjepan Kljuić. Circumventing traditional institutional actors to directly access the front lines, this initiative is a good example of attempts at contributions to combat without active participation. In this sense, the exhibition in question was directly framed as having taken place "in recognition of the defenders for all that they have done and continue to do for our homeland Bosnia & Herzegovina and Sarajevo, and in the name of those who have given themselves for our common future".⁶⁶³

The nature of siege warfare produces a socio-spatial phenomenon almost unique to this type of warfare, in which civilians are both the subjects of regular violence, but also are given the opportunities to offer material support to the combatants defending the city just as in similar conflicts. The presence of individual artists within the structure of the military, essentially as freelancers, does not strip them of their non-combatant status, but offered an alternative mode of engagement with the armed forces that exemplified the militarization of everyday life under

⁶⁶² Zlatan Filipović and Željko Filipović, interview by Ewa Anna Kumelowski, September 23, 2019.

⁶⁶³ Author translation: "(...) u znaku zahvalnosti braniocima za sve što su učinili i čine za našu domovinu Bosnu i Hercegovinu i Sarajevo, i u ime onih koji sebe se daju zajedničkoj budućnosti" Se. Kurtović, "Susret sa slikarom," *Oslobodjenje*, November 29, 1993, 5, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

siege. When exploring the ways in which these actors discussed their relationship to army-adjacent tasks, it appears that the lexicons used to do so often interacted with a dual defense discourse, yet did so in a much more diverse manner than regular soldiers or artists officially integrated into the *Umjetnička Četa*.

4.3.3. GALLERIES FOR PEACE: THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS AND GALLERIES IN SUPPORTING THE ARMED FORCES

Creative support for the Bosnian Army was not limited to individual initiatives, but also found an outlet amongst formal cultural institutions that remained active throughout the siege. Many museums, galleries and exhibition spaces of varying sizes cooperated with the Bosnian Army to support the war effort without directly engaging in the military structure, or simply reacted to the incursion of military violence into civilian spaces with innovative adaptive processes that contributed to the protection of the city. These types of initiatives took several forms, ranging from the traditional activity of organizing exhibitions, this time in support to the army, to directly providing additional structures for civilian protection and support throughout the city. Institutions such as the National Gallery of BiH, the Academy of Fine Arts or smaller organizations such as the *Galerija Paleta* or *Galerija Mak* all adjusted their modes of functioning in accordance to changing realities, not only reproducing dominant discursive lines associated with the military aspects of the siege, but also implementing specific measures that allowed individual soldiers to continue their participation in the cultural life of the city in spite of their wartime commitments. As such, a dual defense lexicon was both present in direct conjunction with events organized by or under the patronage of the Bosnian Army as well as mobilized throughout the conflict in purely cultural contexts as well. While the presence of defense discourse was, as has been previously noted, stronger within institutional structures, subscription to its tenets was not universal amongst the artistic community, for whom pragmatic responses to everyday problems took a more important position.

The Academy of Fine Arts (*Akademija Likovnih Umjetnosti* - ALU) was one of the few cultural institutions that took special measures to accommodate the permeation of the war into the everyday routines of Sarajevans. On the one hand, many professors, particularly well-established artists from older generations, were either able to limit their involvement to

administrative and logistical responsibilities or avoided military service altogether. Some of them, such as Edin Numankadić or Seid Hasanefendić, actively involved in non-combatant roles, continued coming to the Academy in order to teach the younger generation. Others, like Fikret Libovac, who was at the time an assistant professor to Hasanefendić, continued teaching at the Academy while simultaneously fighting on the front lines. For Libovac, his situation meant a constant coming and going between two vastly different worlds, shifting his position from soldier to civilian on a regular basis. While his commitment to his students allowed him some reprieve from the psychological difficulties associated with his combat position, he was nevertheless “always prepared when they called me, when I was needed.”⁶⁶⁴ The degree to which the artist’s combat experience became discursively tied into his artistic practice can also be taken as a reflection of the domestication of siege-time violence, a process through which civilian lives and domains, such as the artistic sphere, become intertwined with the violence associated with combatants. Hereby, it is not surprising to find a review of one of Libovac’s exhibitions directly discussing the artist’s engagement as a soldier, as well as his entourage’s reactions to the dangers he faced:

*“During the war, in the midst of those terrible battles at the beginning, he would come back for a short time and leave behind the fear that we will never see him again, because Fikret was constantly ‘there’. We left so that we could not even say goodbye, until one day when a message arrived for my daughter, his colleague and friend: ‘Dear Lada, today we liberated Žuč.’ That was all.”*⁶⁶⁵

The constant shifting of wartime perspectives, oscillating between civilian and soldier modes of living, was not unique to Libovac, as many of the students enrolled in the Academy were similarly going between the front line and the university. The realities of war did have a significant impact on the student body of the ALU, and while estimates remain difficult to ascertain, according to UNESCO reports “many art students were killed or maimed on the front line.”⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁴ Divna Pervan, “S Fikretovimi pticami.”

⁶⁶⁵ Author translation: “U ratu, u predasima između onih strašnih borbi na početku, dolazio je nakratko a ostavljao za sobom strepnju da ga više nikada nećemo vidjeti, jer Fikret je stalno bio ‘tamo’. Otišli smo da se nismo mogli ni pozdraviti do jednog dana kada je stigla poruka mojoj kćerki, njegovoj kolegici i prijateljici: ‘Draga Lado, danas smo oslobodili Žuč.’ To je bilo sve.” Divna Pervan, 10.

⁶⁶⁶ Helene M. Donnelly, “Croatia and Bosnia: Cultural Destruction. What Can We Do?,” 1.

As has been noted previously, the introduction of more lenient admissions procedures allowed for young soldiers to adapt their schedules to apply for their studies at the ALU, while lowered criteria for admissions, cited by dean Sadudin Musabegović, meant that fifty students out of the roughly sixty applicants were admitted to the university in 1995.⁶⁶⁷ Furthermore, the official application period was extended and remained flexible, giving a chance to potential students who “due to their responsibilities in protecting the country were unable to take the entrance examinations”.⁶⁶⁸ Classes were changed to account for the dangers of travel and irregular access to the academy building, which was located on the front lines, and regular instruction was mostly replaced with individualized tutoring.⁶⁶⁹ The resulting system developed as a response to changing circumstances exemplifies the structural adaptations offered on an institutional level in besieged Sarajevo, requiring flexibility and an acute responsiveness to the burden imposed by the military defense of the city on its population. In this way, the ALU can be counted as a space in which visual culture was fostered in direct conjunction with the military experiences of both students and faculty, accidentally generating a crucial space for socialization specifically adapted to serve within a siege context.

The *Umjetnička Galerija Bosne i Hercegovine* (National Gallery of BiH) was another prominent institution that adapted its activities to the new conditions of the siege, undergoing a series of organizational changes while simultaneously continuing to perform its functions as one of the city’s most influential cultural institutions. One of the biggest changes brought on by the siege came in the form of major personnel cuts, as the majority of the museum’s staff left the city or was unable to continue work, forcing the gallery to continue with only three out of its previous nine permanent employees. This left the museum short-staffed and vulnerable, a fact which was exploited by looters to relieve the museum of multiple significant holdings from its collection. Whereas the museum does not hold any formal affiliation with the Bosnian Army, the gratuitous destruction enacted by the Bosnian Serb forces meant that remaining employees were forced to adapt their routines in function to the wartime violence that entered the realm of the city. Despite heavy damage caused by six-to-seven mortal shells to the buildings’ façade and parts of its interior, the gallery spaces were converted early on in the war to house local refugees from other parts of the city, many of whom had found their homes suddenly surrounded by the front line. Although the museum had little choice in opening its

⁶⁶⁷ Ta. Pandurević, “Sačuvan dignitet (Preserving dignity),” 7.

⁶⁶⁸ Ta. Pandurević, “Konsultacije i korekcije,” 7.

⁶⁶⁹ Ta. Pandurević, 7.

doors to displaced persons, the transformation into a wartime shelter did not take place passively. Remaining in the National Gallery until 1993, the fugitives were engaged to participate in the protection of the wartime gallery: providing additional bodies to fill the spacious National Gallery, its temporary inhabitants were essentially inducted to serve as a volunteer security force, and deterring further looting of its collections by criminal elements.⁶⁷⁰

This specific example of wartime adaptation was part of a broader strategy in which the remaining employees of the National Gallery of BiH navigated the uncertain borders of the front line characteristic of siege warfare. Aware that the imposition of wartime violence in civilian spaces made its original function of presenting and propagating Bosnian artistic heritage to the public extraneous, those responsible automatically shifted their mission to the more immediate task of protection and conservation, in fact mobilizing the very circumstances that required them to do so in their favor.

Nevertheless, this change in primary occupation did not preclude the National Gallery from hosting *vernissages* throughout the siege. Despite its limited capacities, the space opened at least 41 exhibitions by the summer of 1995.⁶⁷¹ While the majority of these events were limited to large-scale presentations of established local and international artists, fitting with the original profile of the institution, it was also host to at least one exhibition with direct ties to the Bosnian Army. Organized under the patronage of the *Udruženje Likovnih Umjetnika Sarajeva* (Association of Fine Artists of Sarajevo), an event in honor of the Day of the Army (*Dan Armije*) took place in the halls of the museum in 1995. Coordinated by both the General Headquarters of the Bosnian Army and the National Gallery, the opening speeches praised artists as the “undeniable moral force of our society”, while art historian Muhamed Karamehmedović presented the featured collection as a symbolic expression of the way in which “today a free Bosnia breathes through the soul of its army”.⁶⁷² Whereas the presence of a dual-defense discourse in this classical space appears to have been limited, Karamehmedović’s statement clearly positions the artworks as a discursive counterpart to the vitality of the army, equating military and artistic defense on a moral level.

⁶⁷⁰ Megan Kossiakoff, “The Art of War: The Protection of Cultural Property during the ‘Siege’ of Sarajevo (1992-95),” 136–37; Ta. Pandurević, “Nacionalni muzej likovnih umjetnosti,” *Oslobodjenje*, June 11, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁶⁷¹ Ta. Pandurević, “Nacionalni muzej likovnih umjetnosti,” 7.

⁶⁷² Ta. Pandurević, “Bosna diše dušom Armije,” *Oslobodjenje*, April 16, 1995, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

Even with the minimal institutional relationships between the National Gallery and military structures, the familiar discourse based on the synergy of the two worlds in this way finds its presence in a more direct manner. Beyond offering its rooms to projects in which civil society groups cooperated with the Bosnian Army forces, like many other institutions active during the siege, it was also a space in which the physical presence of military life merged with purely civilian routines. Many soldiers, particularly those stationed in close proximity to the city center, would take advantage of their shorter breaks to come into the city and rest. As shorter respites offered enough time to attend cultural events, but not enough to warrant changing clothes, soldiers on leave who came directly from the front lines often attended these exhibitions in uniform.⁶⁷³ This practice was coincidentally particularly visible in archival materials devoted to the *Umjetnička Galerija*, which welcomed both ranking officers and regular conscripts during a variety of *vernissages*. This was the case during one of the city's most innovative exhibitions, conceived by up-and-coming artist duo Sanda Hnatjuk and Bojan Bahić under the title *WARum?*. A series of video recordings shot by local media and TV document the opening of the exhibition, showing the predominantly younger audience mingling amongst experimental installations and humorous prints. Almost entirely absent from current art historical memory of the Sarajevan cultural community, this particular exhibition deserves special attention as an example of the more subversive currents present in the city at the time, despite a technical absence of dual-defense narratives in its conception.

⁶⁷³ This practice is mentioned by Dragan Golubović in his recollections of the wartime theatre scene, and his own trips between the front line and the theatre. While not necessarily specifically speaking about the visual arts, the practice can be assumed to have been transferable to cultural events in general. See: Davor Diklić, *Teatar u ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva*, 101–5.



Figure 5. “Title unknown” by Bojan Bahić and Sanda Hnatjuk, exhibition view *WARum?*, 1995. Film still from a video recording of the *WARum?* exhibition opening. Unidentified director, TVBiH, accessed January 1, 2020, no longer available as of August 2022. <https://bojanbahic.com/>. 1:17. Artwork rights to Bojan Bahić and Sanda Hnatjuk.

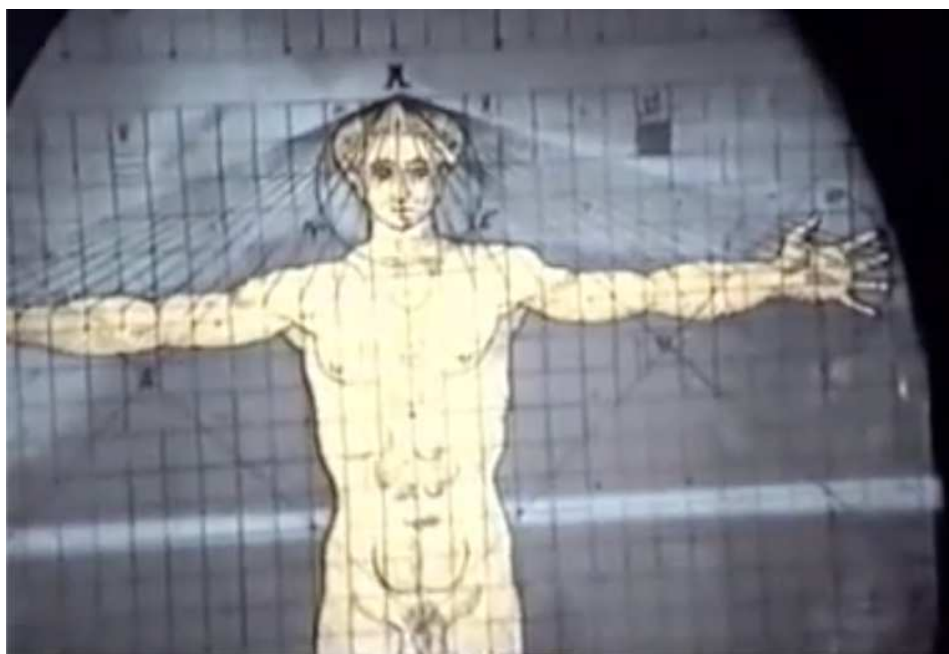


Figure 6. Title unknown by Bojan Bahić and Sanda Hnatjuk, exhibition view *WARum?*, 1995. Film still from a video recording of the *WARum?* exhibition opening. Unidentified director, TVBiH, accessed January 1, 2020, no longer available as of August 2022. <https://bojanbahic.com/>. 1:12. Artwork rights to Bojan Bahić and Sanda Hnatjuk.

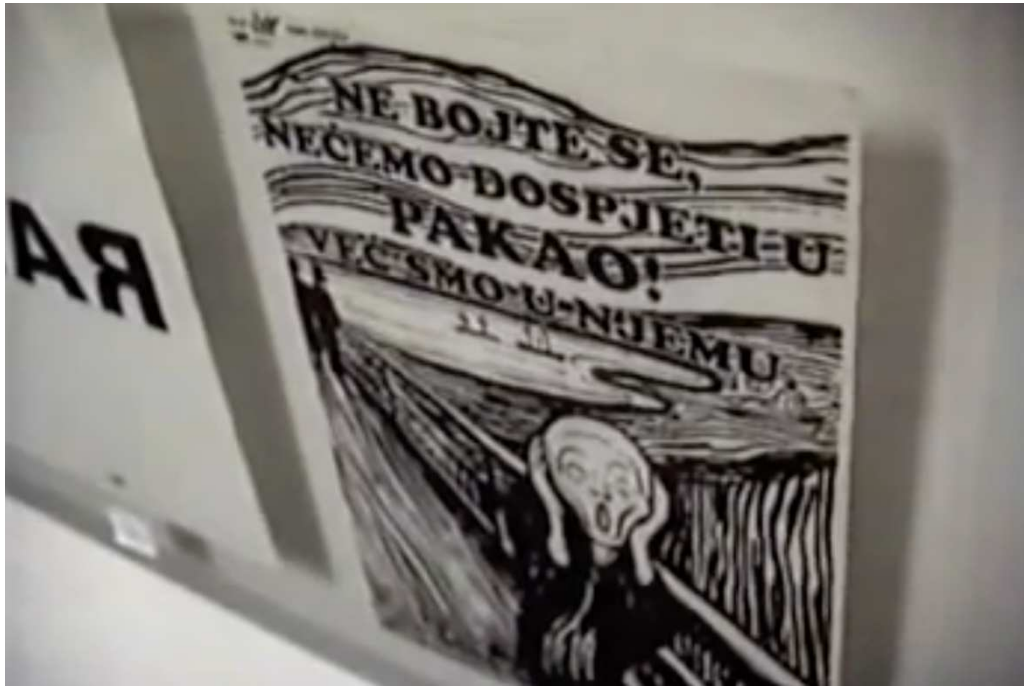


Figure 7. Title unknown by Bojan Bahić and Sanda Hnatjuk, exhibition view *WARum?*, 1995. Film still from a video recording of the *WARum?* exhibition opening. Unidentified director, TVBiH, accessed January 1, 2020, no longer available as of August 2022. <https://bojanbahic.com/>. <https://bojanbahic.com/>. 2:57. Artwork rights to Bojan Bahić and Sanda Hnatjuk.



Figure 8. Title unknown by Bojan Bahić and Sanda Hnatjuk, exhibition view *WARum?*, 1995. Film still from a video recording of the *WARum?* exhibition opening. Unidentified director, TVBiH, accessed January 1, 2020, no longer available as of August 2022. <https://bojanbahic.com/>. <https://bojanbahic.com/>. 1:57. Artwork rights to Bojan Bahić and Sanda Hnatjuk.

The title of the show, a contraction of the word “war” with the German word for “why?”, openly indicates a discursive positioning of the artworks within a wartime context, combining imagery of transgressive global cultural heritage for a Sarajevan public. Bringing together a series of installations and ironic affiches filled with references to global literary or artistic traditions, the show combined to produce a vivid visual representation of the contradictions of the artists and the public. As such, Magritte’s famous painting “The Treachery of Images”, also known under the title “This is Not a Pipe”, is reworked by the artist-duo into a work that proclaims: “This is not a pipe of peace”. These playful reinterpretations are joined by a more morose video-piece depicting a series of recognizable images of the assault on the city, intercepted by irregular fragments of television static, offering a final image of an abandoned football field that is zoomed out to reveal the cemetery that it was converted into. The piece in question intertwines the presence of wartime into the public sphere, offering a visualization of the blurring of lines between the civilian structure of a sports-complex with its wartime reconfiguration.

The exhibition text featured in the catalogue, penned by Nermina Kurspahić, goes into little detail on the conflict itself, and is notably avoidant of the more classical vocabularies that often accompany art that directly engages itself with the war situation. Although mentioning Adorno’s famous adage that questions whether art is possible after Auschwitz, it seems that Kurspahić’s emphasis lies primarily on the artworks as an expression of the emotions that accompany life under siege.⁶⁷⁴ Furthermore, the pieces shown would have been difficult to interpret as particularly supportive of the Bosnian Army beyond a general support for Sarajevan freedom, as ironic repurposed installations seemed to mock more than praise. Although discursive references to art as defense rhetoric are notably absent from this exhibition as a whole, the combined result visually demonstrates the porosity of military and civilian existences, doing so through the emphasis on the lived realities of the military targeting of the city’s civilian population.

The exhibition was accompanied by a performance piece, documented by Radio BiH, that saw the artists collaborate with Radio Zid and the Sarajevan public to launch a variety of boat-adjacent objects, made from scrap wood, paper or other materials, into the Miljacka river. The televised recording of this happening shows a handful of ordinary citizens respond to the event in a similar way to those who happened upon the *Witnesses of Existence* exhibition held in a

⁶⁷⁴ Nermina Kurspahić, *WARum?* (Sarajevo: National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1994), n.pag. Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

passageway shelter, discussed in Chapter II. Those interviewed almost automatically seem to frame the strange gathering within a discursive framework that emphasizes the need for peace, even if the artists' intention is difficult for them to grasp, as one participant stated: "Well I don't think anything [of the event] just that we are all happy."⁶⁷⁵ As such, this additional element of this unique collection also gives some insight into the reception of such works by the general public, which was, somewhat unsurprisingly, defined by a mild confusion concerning the artistic event combined with the spirit-raising capacities of its impact.

Furthermore, documentation of the show offers a look into the practical consequences of siege-time blurring between civilian and military spheres, in which visible markers of military association become embedded in civilian spaces. A recording covering the exhibition vernissage shows a young man, clad in uniform, speaking to some of his peers, catalogue in hand. Although it is difficult to gauge to what degree the presence of uniformed but off-duty Bosnian Army soldiers in civilian spaces had become a regular occurrence in all aspects of everyday life, but appears to have been, at the very least, accepted within the visual arts community. The unidentified young man in question is also exemplary of the merging of civilian and soldier modes of living: functioning in public spaces simultaneously as a soldier, but also as an ordinary person attending a cultural activity with friends in his free time. Once again, this aspect of the militarization of everyday life does not mean that the boundary between civilian and military was eroded in a legal sense, as the military presence at an exhibition fully took place in a civilian context with personnel on leave, but shows how everyday life in besieged Sarajevo was affected by the siege in more ways than the simple destruction of regular institutions.

⁶⁷⁵ Author translation: "Pa ništa ne mislim samo da smo sretni svi. Ništa drugo." Video recording of the *WARum?* exhibition, 1995. Unidentified director, accessed 01.01.2020, no longer available as of August 2022. <https://bojanbahic.com/>. 6:14-6:19.



Figure 9. Film still from a video recording of the *WARum?* exhibition opening. A group of young exhibition-goers, including a soldier in uniform, socialize in front of an installation piece. The soldier in question is holding a catalogue of the exhibition, suggesting that his presence at the event might have been primarily motivated by interest rather than coincidence. Unidentified director, TVBiH, accessed January 1, 2020, no longer available as of August 2022. <https://bojanbahic.com/>. 6:45. Artwork rights to Bojan Bahić and Sanda Hnatjuk.

Figure 10. Film still from a video recording of the *WARum?* exhibition opening. Unidentified director, TVBiH, accessed January 1, 2020, no longer available as of August 2022. <https://bojanbahic.com/>. <https://bojanbahic.com/>. 6:46. Artwork rights to Bojan Bahić and Sanda Hnatjuk.

The practical necessities of war forced the military realities into the public sphere – a practice that was not unique to the visual arts scene. Furthermore, the visible military presence in cultural activities organized by the National Gallery was not limited to local artists. Even the peacekeeping forces in the city appear to have regularly supported foreign artists who wished to exhibit in besieged Sarajevo, providing logistical support and security for the visiting individuals. In this way, Sophie Ristelhueber benefited from significant support from French UNPROFOR command in transporting herself and her photographs into the city, while her vernissage was attended by General Jovan Divjak himself, Deputy Commander of the Bosnian Army until 1994.⁶⁷⁶

At the same time, private galleries also participated in the war effort in their own manner. The most prominent example of such an endeavor can be found in the work of the *Galerija Paleta*, primarily made possible through the initiative of gallerist Izet Džirlo, who worked closely with the Bosnian Army on the organization of numerous exhibitions in honor of the armed forces defending the city. Located in the relative center of the city on the southern banks of the Miljacka river, the gallery hosted over 100 different exhibitions in its small space over the course of the siege, a significant number of which were tied to the army. While the gallery did not claim a clear profile, its traditional tendencies were translated into a preponderance for Islamic art and army-related exhibitions during its wartime activities. The gallery provided a regular program, which, at least at some point during the conflict, included the opening of a new exhibition related to wartime themes at least every eight days. While it was not the largest cultural initiative in the city nor the most innovative, Paleta appeared to have enjoyed extensive public support, with roughly 3,000 Sarajevans, including members of the Armed Forces or the Military Police, having signed their visitor book already in the early fall of 1992.⁶⁷⁷

It appears that the small institution's contribution to the Bosnian Army was appreciated in the ranks of the army, prompting them to bestow at least four separate awards to the gallerist in recognition of his contributions to the moral unity within the army between 1993 and 1996. While Džirlo also served the army in the capacity of a soldier, his experience on the front lines

⁶⁷⁶ Sophie Ristelhueber, interview by Ewa Anna Kumelowski, July 8, 2019.

⁶⁷⁷ Borivoje Simić, "'Paleta' Protiv Rata," *Oslobodjenje*, September 2, 1992, 3, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

remains obscured by his artistic activities while on leave.⁶⁷⁸ Appearing to withdraw when asked about his front-line experiences, it seems that this particular actor preferred to see his contribution to the city's struggle through the lens of his cultural activities. In this manner, the events hosted by the Paleta gallery provide yet another avenue through which a cultural defense discourse manifested in besieged Sarajevo: while the space's gallerist was strongly involved in the proliferation of art in the benefit of the armed forces, organizing exhibitions which clearly articulated their support for a dual defense discourse, he nevertheless appears to have framed his individual role as a soldier as part of a completely different, more private, context.

The gallery Paleta cooperated with the armed forces in many forms, supporting "cultural activity in the service of the Armed Forces of the Republic"⁶⁷⁹ through the hosting of official army events, the organization of a number of auctions, as well as the showing of artworks created by or for soldiers. As a result, its owners created a space of sociability that was equally intended for soldiers as for civilians. One of the most prominent initiatives involved the hosting of a sub-part of the celebrations related to the third anniversary of the founding of the Bosnian Army, an event sponsored by the 1st corps, 12 Division, 115 Mountain Brigade, as well as the Organ for Morale. Whereas the event itself consisted of a variety of elements from speeches to sports-matches, two exhibitions were also included in the program. One, an exhibition of documents that illustrated the destruction of mosques in Bosnia & Herzegovina during the raging conflict, was held in the Bosniak Cultural Center, and visited by at least fifty soldiers on leave.⁶⁸⁰ Paleta's contribution to the program came in the form of an exhibition of pictures by Alija Akšamija, which opened at noon on the 14th of April 1995. Titled "Ratni Put 115 Bbr", the exhibition presented a series of forty photographs made by Akšamija during his time with the brigade, having joined the force in order to document the war, though most likely limiting his participation in battle due to his already advancing age.⁶⁸¹

Opened by gen. Fikret Muslimović, the exhibition appears to have received a significant amount of attention, praised by both public and military figures as well as the 150 members of

⁶⁷⁸ Bob Drans, "Bosnians Skeptical of Carter Effort," *The Orange County Register*, n. date, Galerija Paleta Archive.

⁶⁷⁹ Author translation: "(...) galerija se opredijelila za kulturnu djelatnost u službi oružanih snaga Republike". Borivoje Simić, "'Paleta' Protiv Rata."

⁶⁸⁰ N.n., "Izvještaj o realizaciji programa obilježavanja treće godišnjice Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine" (Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine, April 18, 1995), 6, Galerija Paleta Archive.

⁶⁸¹ Nermina Mujčinović, "Da se ne zaboravi...", *publication unknown*, date unknown, n.pag. Galerija Paleta Archive.

the 115 Bbr. who had made their way to the vernissage.⁶⁸² While the documents pertaining to this event do not directly address ideas of artistic resistance, nor does the support of this type of discourse appear to be their direct intention, the inclusion of artistic events within the scope of army celebrations means that the importance of the arts to the army were, in a sense, recognized. Even removing the direct discursive implications, the cooperation between major military organs and a (quite literally) small gallery provides further evidence of an overlap between military and civilian institutions that had become a part of daily life under siege.

The activities of the *Galerija Paleta* also provide some insight into discussions of secularity within the nascent Bosnian state as well as its military forces. Whereas it cannot be qualified in any way as a purely religious exhibition space, the gallery in question was home to the largest selection of shows featuring Islamic calligraphy, *levhe*, *stećaks* and other religiously connotated illustrations and scripts.⁶⁸³ Throughout the war, at least a handful of such events were organized in the cramped gallery, eliciting a positive response from the general public, for whom the *Paleta* gallery might have been the only space where such works could be admired at the time. In fact, the vast majority of exhibitions organized during the siege period shied away from religious imagery (no matter the religion), and no individual institution appeared as dedicated to the organization of such events as much as Paleta did. On the surface, there appears to be little overlap between the organization of these types of events and the military structures that oversaw the city, with most documents pertaining to them showing little reference to the Bosnian Army. However, some, such as Ešref ef. Kovačević's exhibition of *levhas*, featured invitations that mentioned the co-organization by the command of the 15. Motorized Brigade in honor of the Bajram holiday.⁶⁸⁴ Despite the clear involvement of the military, the articles reviewing the exhibition made no mention of any army ties, instead focusing on the deeply spiritual nature of these religious calligraphies.⁶⁸⁵ It should additionally be noted that this was the first time ever that Paleta organized such an event, a wartime change

⁶⁸² N.n., "Izveštaj o realizaciji programa obilježavanja treće godišnjice Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine," 7.

⁶⁸³ *Levhe* are items of religious calligraphy, commonly used as decorative items for the home. *Stećaks* are monumental medieval tombstones that remain scattered around Bosnia, ubiquitously used by all national groups while often erroneously attributed exclusively to the Christian Bogomil sect. A number of recognizable symbols used on the gravestones became popular throughout the 1990s, often to denote belonging to a unique and idealized historical community.

⁶⁸⁴ Galerija Paleta, "Invitation to 'Izložba Levhi' by Ešref Ef Kovačević," May 19, 1994, Galerija Paleta Archive.

⁶⁸⁵ Anes Ibrahimbegović, "Levha nije za novac," *Dani*, June 15, 1994, 50, Galerija Paleta Archive; Vojislav Vujanović, "Likovna i višeslojna duhovnost," *Oslobodjenje*, June 4, 1994, n.pag., Galerija Paleta Archive.

which was positively received.⁶⁸⁶ In this way, the complicated relationship between the political processes taking place and their impact on the daily lives of ordinary citizens can be addressed from a more empirical angle.

The same pattern repeats itself in a handful of similar events organized by Džirlo, as in the invitation to view the calligraphies of Šukrija Gavranović in 1994. Here, the exhibition text focuses directly on the spiritual importance of this artform as an expression of beauty in the Islamic faith, foregoing any mention at all of the ongoing conflict. The presence of the siege is only visible in the list detailing the exhibits, which feature *levhas* of the oath to the Army of BiH, and to the Patriotic League.⁶⁸⁷ In this way, the exhibitions featuring religious art in the *Galerija Paleta* do not necessarily frame the Islamic faith as a tool or constitutive element of the Bosnian Army, but instead tacitly acknowledge the interdependence of the two entities. This is not to say that the exhibitions in question should be treated as any type of propaganda effort, but instead suggest the close interconnection between the military and a rise in religious piety within some segments the wartime society, which nevertheless remained framed primarily through personal processes. However, the expanding presence of a Bosniak majority in the army, sometimes expressed through explicit Islamic dimensions, could explain the closeness of the spiritually-minded *Galerija Paleta* and the Bosnian Army, as well as the many awards which were bestowed upon it.⁶⁸⁸ At the same time, the preponderance of religiously-connotated art within a single gallery opens up questions surrounding the soldiers' own attitudes towards these types of cooperation. While the few images available suggest that the exhibitions in question were relatively popular with regular soldiers, the visual arts in this way can provide a new avenue for approaching the study of cultural history of the BiH military.

⁶⁸⁶ P.B., "Izložbeni prostori," *Dani*, September 10, 1993, 19 edition, 54, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁶⁸⁷ Rešid Hafizović, "Kaligrafija Autora Šukrije Gavranovića" (Sarajevo: Galerija Paleta, 1994), Galerija Paleta Archive.

⁶⁸⁸ Ivan Lovrenović, *Bosnia: A Cultural History*, 201–4.

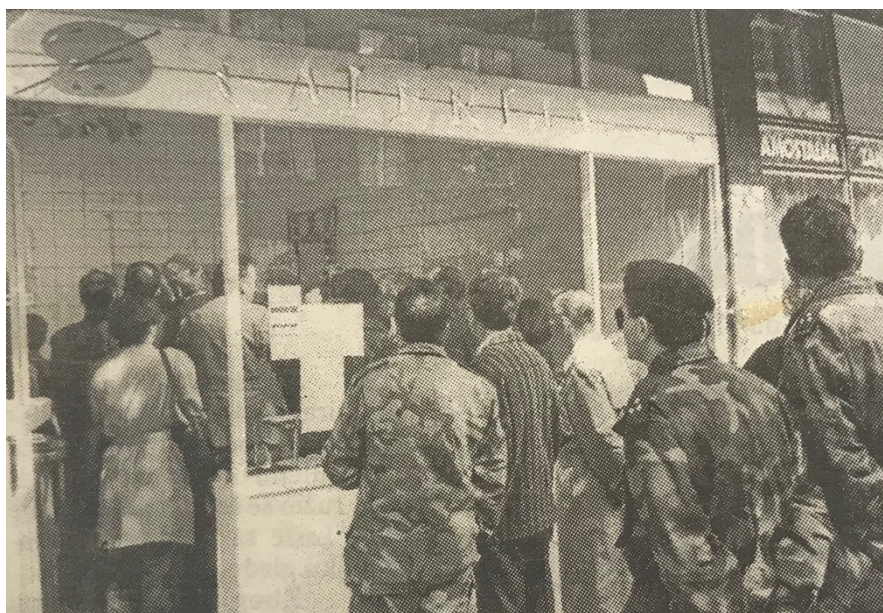


Figure 11. A photograph of one exhibition opening at the *Paleta* gallery. According to numerous press sources, the gallery enjoyed significant popularity amongst Sarajevans, as well as amongst the ranks of the Bosnian Army. Image reproduced from “Stotinu ratnih izložbi” by N. Lipa, date unknown, publication unknown. Archives Galerija Paleta.

The symbiotic relationship developed between the gallery and the army, notably outside the confines of the *Umjetnička Četa*, resulted in a series of exhibitions through which the ideals of artistic defense were lauded by critics and in exhibition texts. One exhibition, showing the work of seven S.M. soldiers, was praised by author Ibrišimović as “opposing artwork, and art that was carried by people who at the same time defended our country.” The same article went on to clearly evoke the dual defense principle: “The defense in two ways – with a brush and a rifle.”⁶⁸⁹ The same author repeated this phrase in the exhibition text for a show titled *1000 Dana Opsade Sarajeva* (1000 Days of the Siege of Sarajevo) exhibition which would take place nearly a year later, using particularly strong language to evoke artistic contribution to the fight against the enemy:

“In one hand, holding a rifle, and in the other holding a brush, and one and the other today we can see in the gallery ‘Paleta’. Because if there were no rifle, we would not be standing here, and if there were no brush, we would not be seeing paintings. (...) What does it mean when a soldier-painter has a steady hand with which he can draw a steady and assured stroke on paper or a canvas with a brush, chalk or pencil, what does it mean when a soldier-painter has a steady and sharp eye with which he can clearly distinguish a detail on a face, figure or landscape, a

⁶⁸⁹ Nedžad Ibrišimović, “I kistom i puškom,” *Oslobodjenje*, January 28, 1994, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

detail and the whole to which this detail fits, what does it mean when a painter has the fight, knowledge, and the feeling for composition and the whole? On the battlefield it means victory, and in the gallery, a painting.”⁶⁹⁰

The exhibition in question presented the works of artists from a variety of brigades stationed in and around Sarajevo, heavily favoring works by regular soldiers who had not yet received significant recognition in the art world. Featuring artwork titles such as “*Džamija na Igmanu*” (“A mosque on Mount Igman”), “*UN Vojnik*” (“UN Soldier”) or “*Bosanska Kuća*” (“Bosnian House”), produced by soldiers from the 1. Motorized Brigade and the “Kralj Tvrtko” brigade, painted in aquarelle suggest an exhibition featuring not only traditional methods, but also an overarching theme favoring traditional Sarajevo imagery peppered with wartime subjects. Two authors even presented a painting titled “Nišani”⁶⁹¹, further suggesting a religious and traditional character of the exhibition.⁶⁹²

While it is clear that Ibrišimović personally favored the use of direct dual defense discourse, he was neither the first nor the only to mobilize it in the context of culture. Similar ideas can be found in the coverage of one soldier’s first solo exhibition, who began painting after being paralyzed by a sniper bullet. Here, the artist himself directly engages with artistic resistance discourse, even going so far as to use the same imagery as Ibrišimović, suggesting that the idea of dual defense was also popular amongst rank-and-file soldiers, albeit ones whose profile matched that of Paleta’s: “At first I fought with a rifle, and when the criminals made this impossible, I began fighting in a different way – through art.”⁶⁹³ Published a few months after the signing of the Dayton Accords, it suggests that this line of thought was already finding its permanent place in public discourse.

⁶⁹⁰ Author translation: „U jednoj ruci držati pušku, a u drugoj držati kist, i jedno i drugo je to, što sad imamo u galeriji ‘Paleta’. Jer da nije puške, ne bismo bili ovdje, a da nije kista, ne bismo gledali slike. Što znači to kad jedan borac-slikar ima pouzdanu ruku kojom može na papiru ili na platnu povući pouzdan i siguran potez kistom, kredom ili olovkom, što znači to kad slikar borac ima pouzdano i oštro oko kojim može jasno uočiti detalj na licu, figuri ili pejzažu, detalj, i cjelinu u koji se taj detalj uklapa što znači kada slikar ima dara, snage, znanja i osjećanja za kompoziciju i cjelinu? Na bojištu to znači pobjedu, a u galeriji sliku”. Nedžad Ibrišimović, “Slika pobjede,” *Oslobodjenje*, January 30, 1995, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁶⁹¹ A *nišan* is a type of Islamic gravestone, commonly used in BiH.

⁶⁹² Nedžad Ibrišimović, *1000 Dana Opsade Sarajeva*, (Sarajevo: Galerija Paleta, 1995), Galerija Paleta Archive.

⁶⁹³ Author translation: “Prvo sam se borio puškom, a kada su me zločinci u tome onemogućili, počeo sam se boriti na jedan drugi način – umjetnošću”. N.Li., “Borcu-umjetniku uručene knjige,” *Publication unknown*, February 1996, n.pag, Galerija Paleta Archive.

Furthermore, Paleta's other activities also make it clear that Ibrišimović's ideal was put into practical use. Events such as auction exhibitions upheld the spirit of his words, appearing at the beginning of the war with the goal of raising funds for purchase of weapons and supplies by the Bosnian Army. This short-lived practice appears to have been adopted with particular zeal by Džirlo's gallery, housing the great majority of the first local auctions and exhibitions meant to sell artworks. This was the case for Kenan Hašimbegović, who showed his oil paintings of the Bosnian landscape in early September 1992, and who donated the entirety of the proceeds to the armed forces of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Similarly Mario Landek's symbolic oil paintings featuring waterscapes, on the surface seemingly unrelated to conflict rhetoric, as well as young artists Amer Bakšić's drawings showing themes from the war, were donated with the proceeds of the exhibition going to the army.⁶⁹⁴ None of these artists were particularly well known at the time, making an expectation of sizeable donations unlikely – however the act itself of selling them for the army can be seen as a minor contribution in the spirit of bridging the cultural to the physical battle. As auctions became scarcer in the cultural milieu, artists found new ways of supporting and honoring the armed forces. In this way, architect Hajrudin Zagora donated one of his works to the army following the 25th show that took place at the Galerija Paleta since the beginning of the war in 1993. In another case, an exhibition of classical aquarelles depicting the old town of Sarajevo, organized with the support of the Museum of the City of Sarajevo, scenographer Kemal Hrustanović donated one of his works to the Army of BiH. The same was the case for the 1993 exhibition of Muhamed Ćeif, who donated one of his sixteen works.⁶⁹⁵

As time went on, exhibitions where works were actively sold in name of the Bosnian Army became scarce and eventually died out as a practice. This phenomenon can be tied directly to the disillusionment of the city's inhabitants – at the beginning of the conflict, disbelief at the new conditions coupled with hope for a swift end to the siege led the city's citizens to believe the conflict would be short-lived and temporary. Over time, this illusion was abandoned as citizens were confronted with a long-lasting conflict and dwindling savings that became necessary for bare survival.⁶⁹⁶ As a sort of compromise, artists gradually began gifting

⁶⁹⁴ Borivoje Simić, "'Paleta' Protiv Ratu," 3; Borivoje Simić, "Bogatstvo Vode," *Oslobodjenje*, September 13, 1992, 3. Mediacentar Sarajevo; Borivoje Simić, "Bijeg Od Snajpera," *Oslobodjenje*, September 8, 1992, 3, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁶⁹⁵ "Vrijeme nestajanja," 5.

⁶⁹⁶ Ivana Maček, "Transmission and Transformation," 17.

individual works to the army as a show of support. The only exception which can be found is that of an auction which would have taken place in May of 1993, almost a year after the beginning of the siege. While it is unclear who exactly organized this auction, a list of nearly one hundred benefactors, made up of everyone ranging from artists to private companies such as “Olimpik-tours”, was published in *Oslobodjenje* including a short description of the artworks and artefacts being auctioned, as well as an information phone number.⁶⁹⁷ This well-organized outlier further suggests that similar endeavors were common amongst other cultural circles of Sarajevo, and not only in *Galerija Paleta*, encouraging the idea that the idea of resistance through culture in besieged Sarajevo was equally wide-spread as it was multifaceted.

4.4. ARTISTIC REPRESENTATION OF A SOLDIER’S LIFE: HOW DID MILITARY STRUCTURES INTERACT WITH THEIR OWN IMAGE?

Just as the rest of Sarajevo’s inhabitants interacted in different forms with the armed forces defending the city, the city’s artists had vastly divergent experiences with the institution and the discourse it produced and favored. Even then, the formal categories of “civilian” and “soldier” become blurred in practice if not in meaning, as individuals navigate the different arenas between home and front-line, interacting with others through Bosnian Army institutions or as individual actors. Addressing the binary concept of ‘cultural resistance’, this chapter explores the diverging roles and voices of artists involved with military action in the besieged city, whether as soldiers on the front line, in administrative positions in the army, or as external actors contributing to the army. By doing so, it addresses the numerous ways in which ordinary people were confronted with violence in civilian spaces and how they navigated the same, using the institution of the army as a theoretical proxy. In this sense, the actual role of the military in facilitating such exchanges is not always clear, and while often showing tacit or active support to artist initiatives, appears to be organized beyond the logic of the battlefield. Without a doubt, cultural defense rhetoric benefited political, cultural and military elites in Sarajevo, even though it was not uniquely propagated nor identified with by these same elites. Some individuals, whether participating in combat or not, supported the idea of an artistic

⁶⁹⁷ N.n., “Darivaoci i prodati eksponati,” *Oslobodjenje*, May 30, 1993, 8, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

defense of the city through their words and actions. While echoing a primarily institutionally-accepted line, the heterogeneity of approaches shown in this chapter suggests that individual artists did so both out of personal conviction and identification, and out of support for ruling government policies. However, the further one strays from institutional or official military structures, the more common active critiques of such a discourse become apparent, exposing popular divergence from a seemingly unified vocabulary. In fact, many Sarajevan artists actively disagreed with, if not scorned, the popularization of a 'cultural defense' discourse as idealistic and unrepresentative of actual lived experiences, exposing the complicated relationship between state-backed discourses and personal wartime experiences.

CHAPTER V. BUILDING A CULTURAL BRIDGE: REVISITING THE SARAJEVAN IN THE VISUAL ARTS SCENE OF BESIEGED SARAJEVO

“Pedeset godina nakon Auschwitz, svijet nije ništa naučio. Čak ni to da je od obilježavanja pedesetogodišnjice mnogo važnija činjenica da su se logori ponovili.”

“Fifty years after Auschwitz, the world has learned nothing. Not even that it is more important that the camps have returned than a commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary.”

Karim Zaimović, printed in “Strašno je bilo u Auschwitzu, dovidjenja u Sarajevu”, Oslobođenje, January 31, 1995, 14-15

One of the key characteristics that set the siege of Sarajevo apart from other conflicts can be attributed to the isolation experienced by the city’s inhabitants, for whom movement towards and communication with the exterior world were heavily restricted throughout the period of the war. Once the front lines had settled, only a lucky few were authorized to leave the city legally, trapping most of the city’s population within the confines of its borders, while information about loved ones abroad or current global affairs became hard to come by. However, the structures that upheld the siege exhibited some porosity, creating opportunities for individuals to leave the city or interact with foreign visitors, in this way allowing them to participate in the global art scene despite their isolation. This extensive Sarajevan isolation also did little to dissuade foreign cultural actors from traveling to the Bosnian capital, who joined the estimated 100,000 foreigners (representing nearly 1/4th of the city’s pre-war population) that had involved themselves with the conflict.⁶⁹⁸ Whereas the majority of foreigners were employed by the dozen of UN agencies and some 200 NGOs active in the city at the time, they also swarmed to the Bosnian capital in the role of soldiers, diplomats, aid workers, journalists and celebrities.⁶⁹⁹ This global dimension of the siege of Sarajevo has been researched

⁶⁹⁸ Holm Sundhaussen, *Jugoslavien Und Seine Nachfolgestaaten 1943-2011*, 333.

⁶⁹⁹ The international landscape was further complicated by the presence of foreign mercenaries or irregular militias, who, to different degrees, joined the fighting on all sides of the conflict. See: Holm Sundhaussen, 333.; Peter Andreas, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo*, iii–ix.

extensively, as its status as the longest and most internationalized siege in modern history was accompanied by an unprecedented mediatization of a conflict.⁷⁰⁰

Beyond the ex-Yugoslav sphere, political attitudes towards the Bosnian War and the Sarajevo blockade remained complex yet often ambiguous, support for the besieged city varied from government to government. While some material and physical support was offered throughout the war, some scholars alleged a general atmosphere of mismanagement and general apathy for the fate of the Bosnian people, specifically from Western powers and the global influence of the European Community and the United Nations.⁷⁰¹ It would nevertheless be inaccurate to speak of a single homogenous ‘international community’ within the Bosnian arena, nor a ‘Western’ influence, as the policies of individual states varied vastly amongst themselves. The diverging and shifting policies of Western states such as France, the United Kingdom or the USA were often at odds of the unilateral support given to Bosnian Muslims by Islamic states such as Iran or Saudi Arabia, and further differed from the inconsistent support offered by Moscow to the Bosnian Serbs. At the same time, the policies propagated by these states often did not actually represent the views of their citizens.⁷⁰² In this way, the interactions between Sarajevo artists and international visitors should be discussed primarily from an actor-based perspective, as diplomatic structures and political arrangement did not necessarily reflect the reality of international cultural collaboration.

The city of Sarajevo was connected to the outside world thanks to the extensive infrastructure put in place to support flows of humanitarian aid into the city. Primarily run by and secured by the UNPROFOR, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force assigned to ‘keep the peace’ in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the implementation of an ‘air-bridge’ out of the airport under UN control offered an alternative to direct military intervention. Early on in the conflict, the service began offering unreliable flights to Zagreb or Trieste primarily for humanitarian or diplomatic personnel, operating under the biting nickname ‘Maybe Airlines’, and slowly became more

⁷⁰⁰ Peter Andreas, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo*, 8, iii–ix.

⁷⁰¹ See, for example: Paul Parin, “Das Lügenarsenal Westens. Die Produktion falschen Bewußtseins zum Zweck der Legitimierung von Politik,” in *Bosnien und Europa. Die ethnisierung der Gesellschaft*. (Germany: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994), 32–41; Harry Bauer and Thomas Kimmig, “Frieden um jeden Preis? Ein Diskussionsbeitrag zum Krieg in Bosnien und seiner Wahrnehmung in der Bundesrepublik,” in *Bosnien und Europa. Die ethnisierung der Gesellschaft*. (Germany: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994), 42–59.

⁷⁰² For more information about international responses to the Bosnian War, see: Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia From the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milošević*, 214–22; Stefanov and Werz, *Bosnien Und Europa*; Jasmin Branković, ed., *Naučne, kulturne i diplomatske veze Bosne i Hercegovine i Francuske kroz historiju* (Sarajevo: Federalno ministarstvo obrazovanja i nauke, 2017).

accessible to non-affiliated individuals wishing to involve themselves in the Sarajevan cause.⁷⁰³ In fact, “once the airlift was operational, Western powers immediately stopped insisting on a cease-fire and withdrawal of heavy weapons around the city.”⁷⁰⁴ The humanitarian policy of the UN and NATO forces, which hinged on maintaining a flow of aid towards the city, relying in part on the good will of (and bribes for) the besiegers, in this way kept the Sarajevan population from starving or freezing to death, but also has been argued to have prolonged the siege. This contentious situation was already acknowledged by foreign media during the 1990s, as journalists openly discussed the role of the international community in the ongoing crisis: “without aid, the siege could not have lasted.”⁷⁰⁵

However, the accessibility of the Sarajevan warzone also made it an attractive destination for a variety of characters that wished to better understand the conflict, making it possible for various international public personalities, politicians, philosophers, or cultural workers to join the considerable crew of reporters and journalists stationed primarily in the infamous Holiday Inn hotel. The extensive media coverage offered by foreign correspondents to publics far removed from the region, made possible by the relative ease of access, meant that those who watched the Bosnian War unfold from the comfort of their living rooms were most familiar with developments in Sarajevo, but did not have access to up-to-date information about other battlefields such as Mostar or Goražde. As such, the besieged city of Sarajevo became the “lens through which most outsiders viewed” the Bosnian War, in this way becoming an embodiment of the conflict in the eyes of the global public.⁷⁰⁶ Thanks to the proliferation of live-footage reporting and on-site journalism, ordinary people in countries far away became acquainted with the plight of Sarajevans, creating an unprecedented condition where foreign audiences were able to see a conflict unfold in real-time. As has been noted by Silvija Jestrović, information on the city of Sarajevo in this way was transported across the world to audiences unfamiliar with the region:

⁷⁰³ Peter Andreas, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo*, iii.

⁷⁰⁴ Peter Andreas, 27.

⁷⁰⁵ N.n., “Bosnia: The Strange Siege of Sarajevo,” *The Economist*, July 31, 1993, n.pag.

⁷⁰⁶ Robert Donia, *Sarajevo, a Biography*, 287.

*“Besieged Sarajevo, pieced together through news reports and images, entered our living rooms and our imaginations. It was easy to ‘know’ the city and its suffering without understanding either the city or the war that was tearing it apart.”*⁷⁰⁷

At the same time, the same process of mediatization contributed to the production of imagery that discursively positioned the victim against the attacker, and the extensive foreign media presence in BiH was used by all involved parties to spread their version of the conflict around the world.⁷⁰⁸ In this way, the narratives that now dominate the memory of the siege were, at least in part, constructed in conjunction with foreign actors and intended for foreign audiences.

Furthermore, the relative ease with which one could travel to Sarajevo encouraged artists and cultural actors to orchestrate various shows of support, becoming instrumental to shaping the enduring image of the conflict. The sheer presence of international cultural diplomats gave Sarajevo “a hip, intellectually fashionable profile arguably unmatched in any war zone since the Spanish Civil War.”⁷⁰⁹ Cultural icons ranging from household names such as singer-songwriter John Baez, Bono, frontman of the famous rock-band U2, philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévi, to world-class theater director Susan Sontag all made their way to the Bosnian capital. Some of those who came to Sarajevo were already familiar with the city, like Bill Tribe, a British literature professor who had lived there for decades and who produced a documentary about the attack on his home.⁷¹⁰ Others were accused of participating in ‘war-safaris’, an insult reserved for foreign individuals who exploited the available infrastructure and relative ease of travel to briefly visit the city, primarily with the aim of boosting their own popularity.⁷¹¹ The visits of international personalities were covered extensively in Western media, “epitomizing the suffering and resilience” of the city, and in part producing a specific image of Sarajevo for foreign observers often based primarily on the experiences of foreign cultural actors.⁷¹² As

⁷⁰⁷ Silvija Jestrović, *Performance, Space, Utopia. Cities of War, Cities of Exile.*, 126.

⁷⁰⁸ Marie-Janine Calic, *Krieg und Frieden in Bosnien-Herzegovina*, 111.

⁷⁰⁹ Peter Andreas, *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo*, 72.

⁷¹⁰ See: *A Sarajevo Diary - From Bad to Worse. Video. Bill Tribe. London: Channel 4, 1993.*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGpWcej-Fog>.

⁷¹¹ The term became popular throughout the Sarajevan cultural scene throughout the conflict, and was generally used to denote international actors who found themselves in Sarajevo championing its cause, while in reality doing little more than taking photos and improving their own social standing. See, for example, a similar argument made by artist Zoran Filipović: Zoran Filipović, “Intervention: Sarajevo,” *Index on Censorship*, 1994, 6 edition.

⁷¹² Silvija Jestrović, *Performance, Space, Utopia. Cities of War, Cities of Exile.*, 116.

such, attitudes towards foreign visitors were relatively diverse both within and beyond the besieged city.

International presence on the local cultural scene was generally viewed by Sarajevans with a mixture of admiration and distrust: for example, Susan Sontag's staging of 'Waiting for Godot' in the besieged capital earned her popularity thanks to her "symbolic political intervention", yet was also criticized for her simplistic depictions of everyday life during the siege that negated the importance of recurring "expressions of normality."⁷¹³ At the same time, these symbolic contributions were generally received with open arms by the Izetbegović government, for whom these exchanges offered an opportunity to promote their cause to a global public. In this light, some liberal Sarajevans actively critiqued the governmental auto-promotion of the democratic values that sent them apart from their adversaries, which they saw as contrary to their own experiences.⁷¹⁴

While decidedly less populous than cultural actors from other fields, renowned visual artists also made their way to the besieged city to exhibit their works and interact with their local colleagues. Although such trips and exhibitions fostered positive publicity abroad thanks to the caliber of the visual artists who involved themselves in them, they were also almost entirely the result of relationships and reciprocal cooperation, and often resulted from pre-war connections fostered through international exhibitions and cultural exchanges. In this way, established artists such as Christian Boltanski, Sophie Ristelhueber or Annie Leibovitz were invited to participate in the wartime visual arts scene, with at least ten foreign artists actually making their way to the Bosnian capital. Furthermore, over fifty exhibitions showcasing artworks by foreign artists were held in the city, often the results of collaborative efforts between local institutions and foreign initiatives.⁷¹⁵ Many of these contributions have been discussed primarily through an external lens, with international coverage of these events

⁷¹³ Silvija Jestrović, "Waiting for Godot: Sarajevo and Its Interpretations," in *Performance, Space, Utopia. Cities of War, Cities of Exile*, 119. Susan Sontag was amongst the many foreign cultural actors that produced literature on Sarajevo during the siege, in an attempt of informing international publics about the city's fate. See, for example: Susan Sontag, "Godot Comes to Sarajevo," *The New York Times Literary Review*, October 21, 1993. Reprinted online: <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1993/10/21/godot-comes-to-sarajevo/>; Susan Sontag, "Waiting for Godot in Sarajevo," *Performing Arts Journal* 16, no. 2 (1994): 87–106. For literature on Sontag's presence in Sarajevo, see, for example: Dina Abazović, "Theater of War : Cultural Resistance and Susan Sontag's Staging of Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot in Besieged Sarajevo," in *Kunst Og Konflikt: Teater, Visuell Kunst Og Musikk i Kontekst* (2019), 91–105.

⁷¹⁴ Dani Team, "Ne zovi mama doktora," *Dani*, April 21, 1993, 14, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁷¹⁵ Data compiled by author.

focusing on the experiences and thoughts of these traveling artists rather than their reception in the city. In this way, much remains uncertain about the international dimensions of the wartime visual arts scene, and several questions continue to be unexplored: what forms did international cooperations within the field of visual arts take, and how were these initiatives received within the besieged city? How did international artists speak of their experiences within the context of the narratives that reproduced the image of the conflict, and how did these diverge from the experiences of local artists? Considering that much of the literature available on the subject is limited to interviews with and texts by the actors in question, the diversity in local responses to such initiatives remains gravely understudied, and contributing to a one-sided narrative of foreign cultural presence in besieged Sarajevo.

This chapter aims to critically address the impact that the foreign artistic presence had on developments within the Sarajevo arts scene, exploring the construction of narratives surrounding their activities within the city and comparing them to discourses found abroad. Abandoning the traditional focus on one-sided ‘West-to-East’ transfers, this chapter hereby attempts to better understand how inhabitants of the city viewed, interacted with and spoke of the international actors that had come to their city. This will be done through a revisiting of the main discursive trends which have been discussed in this text through an international lens, giving special attention to the importance of the prevalence of an ‘European’ discourse within the context of legitimization and international cooperation. After briefly outlining the appearance of such vocabularies in practice, the focus will be shifted to the role of artistic collaborations with actors from other spaces from the former Yugoslavia, which so far has been conspicuously absent from previous considerations. Exploring the legacies of Yugoslav networks discussed in Chapter I of this text, the unexpected instances of bilateral initiatives organized in conjunction with colleagues from former Yugoslav republics will be introduced. Going on to address the presence of visitors from beyond the region in the besieged city, this section will focus primarily on how they ended up there, and how their works were received by the Sarajevo artistic community. The second section of this chapter shifts in focus to instances in which Sarajevo artists were able to export themselves and their works beyond the confines of the siege, addressing the mechanisms that permitted such exchanges as well as their framing within the context of existing narratives about the ‘European’ belonging of their participants. This will be done by exploring international cultural projects that were organized in cooperation with, and not only for, Sarajevo artists, and finally through the reception of

Sarajevan visual artists in external artistic centers.⁷¹⁶ In this way, this chapter largely hinges on a central question: in what ways did Sarajevan artists navigate an international arts scene at a time in which they were almost entirely cut off from it?

5.1. YUGOSLAV NETWORKS AND EUROPEAN HERITAGE: THE ROLE OF EUROPE IN WARTIME LEXICONS

One of the common discourses proliferated by and within the Sarajevan wartime cultural scene can be defined by the city's understood belonging to a broader European cultural tradition, a quality that places the city within a context of a larger regional community and reaffirms the 'civilized' nature of its inhabitants. Part of a series of lexicons popular amongst local and international actors, references to the Bosnian capital as part of a broader European cultural context was constructed as much internally as externally, relying on a series of accepted meanings. Tied intrinsically to lexicons based on a dichotomous discourse delimitating the civilized from the barbaric, the role of a trope that conceptualized Sarajevo as a specifically 'European' city was popular primarily as a discursive placeholder used to denote its inhabitants as part of a 'civilized' culture – and therefore, worthy of international protection. However, the characterization of the city, or the region as a whole, as belonging to this European tradition did not emerge with the onset of the conflict, but can be traced within the visual arts to its unstable position in the socialist Yugoslav state.⁷¹⁷ In this way, local identifications with European ideals were not only externally imposed, but deeply ingrained in the region's history. Built on discursive structures used to define or exclude certain groups from an imagined

⁷¹⁶ Unfortunately, the role of diaspora artists that were not physically based in Sarajevo between 1992-1996 will largely be omitted from consideration in this text, despite the numerous exhibitions and initiatives that were conceived by this group of actors in the period of study. Due to the geographical disparities and distinctively different experiences of the Bosnian War, this category of artists will not be discussed as part of the Sarajevan artistic community within the context of this dissertation, but merits further study thanks to its quality and engagement in the conflict.

⁷¹⁷ Although a complete overview of BiH cultural production within a European context is omitted from this text, similar language can be found in major Yugoslav exhibitions that predated the breakdown of the socialist state. One such example can be found in the introductory text for *Umjetnost na tlu Jugoslavije od praistorije do danas*, a large-scale exhibition held both in Paris and Sarajevo in 1971, whose authors refer to local artistic production as belonging to a European cultural sphere. See: Savezna komisija za kulturne veze sa inostranstvom and Skupština grada Sarajeva, *Umjetnost Na Tlu Jugoslavije Od Praistorije Do Danas* (Belgrade: Beogradski Izdavačko-Grafički Zavod, 1971), n.pag, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

‘Europe’, (ex)-Yugoslav actors used symbolic geographies to denote their inclusion and the exclusion of others from this cultural community, and were a popular tool throughout the wars of Yugoslav dissolution to designate the ‘civilized’ parties from the ‘barbaric’.⁷¹⁸ In this way, Croat nationalist rhetoric positioned itself in opposition to Serb domination, as one centered in modern European identities.

In fact, it often functioned in contrast to the notion of the ‘Balkans’, representative of all things ‘uncivilized’, backwards, and ‘barbaric’ – and hereby undesirable. Predating the wars of Yugoslav dissolution, the fall of the Berlin Wall was already accompanied by a proliferation of two specific, contradictory narratives within intellectual and popular circles: that of a Europe reunited, and one heralding the “rebirth of the Balkans”.⁷¹⁹ In this way, the use of European identifications as a form of ethical signaling was ubiquitous not only throughout narratives produced externally to the siege, but also were built on local understandings of the concept.

References to a shared European culture introduced a lexicon that allowed local actors to discursively position themselves as equals to their ‘Western’ counterparts, capable of intervention, hereby making the argument that the violence inflicted upon them was inexcusable. This attitude has been attributed to the Sarajevo cultural scene by scholars such as Jelena Hadžiosmanović, who explains the emergence of a wartime culture in relation to a need of local actors to “revive their European identity”, necessary for acceptance as members of the ‘civilized’ world, and in direct opposition to non-European identities.⁷²⁰ Similarly, recent history of the region has both been credited by scholars with a tendency which supports more ‘primitive’ means of communication such as epical story-telling and like-wise narrative genres than to rational discourses”, which would have allowed for increased nationalist animosities in comparison to Central European spaces, while others have found “symptoms of European modernity” in the means of cultural communication which spread these same animosities.⁷²¹ In this way, the wars of Yugoslav dissolution were firmly anchored in a European discursive context that functioned within familiar dichotomies through the construction of specific,

⁷¹⁸ For constructions of European meanings within the Yugoslav sphere, see: Milica Bakić-Hayden, and Robert Hayden, “Orientalist Variations on the Theme ‘Balkans,’” 1992, 4–5.

⁷¹⁹ Wendy Bracewell, and Alex Drace-Francis, *Balkan Departures*, 16.

⁷²⁰ Jelena Hadžiosmanović, “How Is Culture Used as a Tool for Dissuasion in Conflict and Consensus: A Case of Sarajevo (1992-1995),” n.pag.

⁷²¹ Daniel Šuber, and Slobodan Karamanić, “Mapping the Field: Towards Reading Images in the (Post-)Yugoslav Context,” in *Retracing Images. Visual Culture After Yugoslavia* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012), 4.

universal, vocabularies. Although the processes behind the popularization of such narratives remain difficult to trace, the persistence of recurring imagery and meaning-carrying vocabularies associated with such identifications merit further elaboration when discussing international approaches to the Sarajevan siege.⁷²²

The discursive development of ‘European’ ideals as a signifier is deeply rooted in the history of the continent, hereby both existing within a strictly South-Eastern European and broader regional public imagination. The extensive memory politics of the European Union have done much to influence the entrenchment of a series of values representing European identities, namely relying on the primordial necessity of maintaining peace within the region, reflective of the destruction experience during the two World Wars. The abrupt end of the Cold War made divisions between the totalitarian East and the democratic West significantly less popular, and discussions surrounding the definition of ‘European values’ shifted primarily towards a rejection of warfare and active memorialization of the Holocaust, resulting in a publicly popularized narrative that symbolically rejected any aspects of racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia as a basis for European belonging.⁷²³ As a result, both politicians and regular citizens actively began to associate certain concepts, such as fascism and genocide, or historical conflicts, such as the Spanish Civil War, as inherently harmful.

Considering how the prevalence of discursive memory of the Holocaust has been tied to its rationalization as a “product of the Western cultural myth of human reason and progress”, denial of genocide has become central to the existence of the entire social construction of a European-based civilization.⁷²⁴ As such, references to the systematic extermination perpetrated by the Nazi regime were found in cultural texts written both by Sarajevan actors and foreign critics, interlocking ideals of European civilization (already in itself an interlocked concept) with the unequivocal rejection of fascism. The historical importance of a struggle against fascism, exemplified by the terrors of the Holocaust, is central to contemporaneous

⁷²² Similar language can be found, for example, in some of the coverage of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Employing nearly identical vocabularies as the ones discussed in this section, one journalist framed the exceptionality of the Russian invasion as due to the “relatively civilized, relatively European” nature of its victims, in contrast to the ‘uncivilized’ conflicts in Iraq or Afghanistan where such conflicts are seen as endemic, and therefore less worthy of attention or intervention. “CBS journalist apologizes for saying Ukraine more ‘civilized’ than Iraq, Afghanistan,” *The Huffington Post*, February 28, 2022. Published online: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/media-racism-ukraine-conflict-coverage_n_621c08ffe4b0d1388f16a3dc.

⁷²³ Aline Sierp, “Integrating Europe, Integrating Memories: The EU’s Politics of Memory since 1945,” in *The Transcultural Turn*, ed. Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson (DE GRUYTER, 2014): 108,110.

⁷²⁴ Franke Wilmer, *The Social Construction of Man, the State and War*, 241.

understandings of what it meant to be European: “atrocities, crimes against humanity, massive human rights abuses do not happen in Europe, and if they did, Europeans would hold the perpetrators accountable.”⁷²⁵ As has been noted previously and discussed by Franke Wilmer, “the maintenance of European identity *requires* the construction of the Holocaust as exceptional,” implying that behavior such as ethnic cleansing or extreme violence (particularly against civilians) could not be ignored by any actors who consider themselves European – and in turn, ‘civilized’.⁷²⁶ In this way, references to antifascist resistance or the Holocaust in the context of the siege of Sarajevo ties back to a vocabulary that functions within dichotomous framework that juxtaposed the exceptionality of modern European society, a marker for moral superiority and peaceful behavior, with the ‘backward’ nature of the non-European Other.⁷²⁷

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the antifascist legacy within the Sarajevan space also exists within a framework of Yugoslav memorial heritage. As a country, quite literally, founded on the premises of antifascism, associated discourses were familiar to local populations in association with their history distinct from broader European narratives.⁷²⁸ The imagery of civilian resistance to a powerful fascist enemy has hereby been noted by Ivana Maček as prevalent in the Sarajevan sphere, as existing vocabularies became transposed into the context of the Bosnian War, where resistance of “the People” of Yugoslavia became replaced by Bosnian Muslim, or Bosniak, resistance.⁷²⁹ In this way, Jasmina Gavrankapetanović-Redžić hereby argues that the image of Sarajevo under siege was both greatly influenced by this foreign presence and attention to the city, but also built on “pre-existing premises that promoted” the socialist Yugoslav state in contrast to other socialist countries as particularly

⁷²⁵ Franke Wilmer, 28.

⁷²⁶ Franke Wilmer, 64.

⁷²⁷ As such, it is also telling that the use of the term “genocide” in the context of the Bosnian War and the siege of Sarajevo, together with comparisons to the genocidal practices of the Nazi regime, predates the genocide committed by the Bosnian Serb Army in Srebrenica.

⁷²⁸ The 1946 Constitution of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia inscribes anti-fascist stance into the founding document of the state, with article 6 clearly stating: “The people exercise their authority through freely elected representative organs of state authority, the people's committees, which, from local people's committees up to the assemblies of the people's republics and the People's Assembly of the F.P.R.Y., originated and developed during the struggle for national liberation against fascism and reaction, and are the fundamental achievement of that struggle.” Presidium of the Constituent Assembly of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, “Constitution of the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia,” 1996, https://www.worldstatesmen.org/Yugoslavia_1946.txt.

⁷²⁹ Ivana Maček, *Sarajevo under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime*, 204.

Western, and therefore home to a progressive legacy.⁷³⁰ While it would be difficult to decidedly draw the line between external, ‘Western’, understandings of antifascism and their Yugoslav counterparts, some direct references to Yugoslav antifascist heritage can be found in art-historical critiques published throughout the siege, as was the case for Razija Lagumdžija’s review of the *Svjedoci Postojanja* show. Praising the staging developed by architects Tanja and Stjepan Roš for the exhibition, the author ties their engagement to the project to a directly political position:

*“At that opening, I listen to the words and through the beam of the reflector at the creators of the entire exhibition, Tanja and Stjepan Roš, and I think how the painter Vojo Dimitrijević would be happy that his daughter Tanja persisted in defending Sarajevo, as he once did in decisive moments for the freedom of this city.”*⁷³¹

Within this context, references to a European ideal became a discursive tool used by Sarajevo actors to frame their belonging to a cultural group worthy of defense, using characteristics deemed as European to denote the moral superiority of Bosnian actors. Positioning themselves as members of a European space, Sarajevo cultural actors used this shared identity as a means of communicating with foreign audiences capable of intervention.⁷³² At the same time, the continuation of artistic or cultural production was understood as a key to maintaining European identities, maintaining moral superiority over the attackers as artists and critics regularly referred to their work with vocabularies that emphasized their European belonging. For some like TRIO’s Bojan Hadžihalilović, the maintenance of a cultural sphere throughout the siege became a means of maintaining society, in order to avoid at all costs becoming part of the “constantly dark side of Europe.”⁷³³ In this case, Hadžihalilović contrasts the “rehabilitation of Western military systems” and unspecified European culprits of atrocities with the perceived “normality” of war in Bosnia, implying that such perceptions are built on the dichotomy of the

⁷³⁰ Jasmina Gavrankapetanović-Redžić, “Enjoy Sara-Jevo.”, 85.

⁷³¹ Vojo Dimitrijević, one of Bosnia’s most celebrated Yugoslav painters, was also a member of the overtly antifascist art group *Collegium Artisticum* banned due to its political leanings. Author translation: “Na tom otvaranju slušam riječi i gledam jednim plastom reflektora pokazane kreatore cjelokupne postavke Tanju i Stjepana Roš i mislim kako bi slikar Vojo Dimitrijević bio sretan što je, eto, njegova kćerka Tanja ustrajala u odbrani Sarajeva, kao što je i on nekada u presudnim trenucima za slobodu ovoga grada.” Razija Lagumdžija, “Svjedoci postojanja,” 7.

⁷³² The use of the “Europe” trope by Sarajevo’s cultural actors as a particular method of communication with Western audiences has been discussed, for example, by Larisa Kurtović in the context of general cultural production during the siege of the city. See: Larisa Kurtović, “Paradoxes of Wartime ‘Freedom’: Alternative Culture during the Siege of Sarajevo,” 220.

⁷³³ Author translation: “(...) konstantna tamna strana Evrope.” Nada Salom, “Sindrom daljinskog upravljača,” 7.

modern civilized actor and the non-European Other. Such associations are visible also in the public sphere, for example printed on the cover of the youth magazine *Dani*, which features a recognizable photograph of smiling Dachau camp survivors following their liberation and the subtitle “Sve prolazi” – “Everything passes”.⁷³⁴ Cultural workers, artists and critics in Sarajevo also regularly expressed their own doubts and fears through reference to Theodor Adorno’s reflections on the possibility of producing art after Auschwitz.⁷³⁵ Other cultural texts identify themselves within similar structures through directly referencing the role of the field in combatting what is discursively framed as a global rise in fascism. As such, Hanifa Kapidžić answers to the eternal question on the role of art in war as a political tool, able to connect the inhabitants of the city to a larger struggle shared by the Western part of the European continent.⁷³⁶ The sheer pervasiveness of European identifications and their associated discourses can be read into even the most unpolitical art critiques, where solitary concepts such as “urbanity” or “Eurocentricity” of the art in question find their way into the author’s vocabulary.⁷³⁷ The resonating impact of such discursive connections can also be felt decades after the conclusion of the Dayton Peace Agreement, for example in the re-opening of the destroyed National Library building as the new town hall, which took place on May 9th, 2014: the same date as Europe Day and the Day of Victory over Fascism are celebrated. In this way, Sarajevan officials sent a message “that the building stands as a symbol of European values – humanity, cosmopolitanism, tolerance, coexistence, and peace”.⁷³⁸

The geographic or cultural concept of Europe also found employ from external cultural actors as a means of expressing solidarity for the city and framing their own engagement with the conflict. The considerable media presence in the Sarajevan warscape encouraged the proliferation of new political attitudes abroad, allowing foreigners to forge a stronger emotional connection to the city while also creating opportunities for those in Sarajevo to shape the way

⁷³⁴ References to the Holocaust can be found in other articles published in the magazine, including a piece by Karim Zaimović titled “It was horrible in Auschwitz, see you soon in Sarajevo”. Karim Zaimović, “Strašno je bilo u Auschwitzu, dovidjenja u Sarajevu,” *Dani*, January 31, 1995, 14–15, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo; N.n., Front cover. *Dani*, January 31, 1995, 28 edition, Bosniak Institute, Sarajevo.

⁷³⁵ References to Theodor Adorno’s writings on the role of culture in light of the genocide of the Holocaust regularly appeared on the pages of art historical critiques and exhibition reviews. See, for example: Nermina Kurspahić, *WARum?*; Sadudin Musabegović, “Rasap Povijesti,” 10; Nermina Kurspahić, “Art...In Spite of Everything.”

⁷³⁶ Hanifa Kapidžić-Osmanagić, “Zašto kultura?,” *Oslobodjenje*, January 2, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁷³⁷ See, for example, Gradimir Gojer, “Zrelost i trijumf metjea,” *Oslobodjenje*, July 20, 1993, 5, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁷³⁸ Mirjana Ristić, *Architecture, Urban Space and War*, 164.

they were perceived. Dragana Obradović, whose study on the literary landscape of the Yugoslav Wars touches upon their relationship to the international community, suggests that the massive interest of international intellectuals for the region's conflicts stemmed also from their own moral preoccupations. Citing Phil Hammond's remark on the importance of cultural intervention, which "was animated by the desire to define what the West stood for", she suggests that the presence of foreign actors in the conflicts resulted from active bilateral exchanges.⁷³⁹ Writer Dubravka Ugrešić shared this view, seeing the interest in the Yugoslav dissolution as having "quickened the pulse of intellectual Europe", in a way revitalizing "forgotten phrases about political engagement" in European societies that held traditions of international solidarity.⁷⁴⁰ These types of discourses were also present in the language used by ex-Yugoslav academics condemning the Bosnian War and the siege of Sarajevo, as was the case for Predrag Matvejević:

*"It is difficult to determine the boundaries of memory, to name the events of the war. Some names are avoided: 'the largest concentration camp in the world.' Fifty years since the liberation of Auschwitz coincided with the 1,000 days of the siege of Sarajevo. (...) Everything has already been said about the solidarity of Europe. The European Union does not care much for 'another Europe'. Western powers today are looking primarily at what could happen in the former bloc – from there the constant danger used to come."*⁷⁴¹

The primordially of a European identification was hereby also seen as fundamental to the foreign actors who came to Sarajevo, using it to understand themselves what Sarajevans were going through. This is exemplified by Susan Sontag, who wrote extensively on her time in Bosnia:

"What my production of Godot signifies to them, apart from the fact that an eccentric American writer and part-time director volunteered to work in the theater as an expression of solidarity with the city (a fact inflated by the local press and radio and evidence that the rest of the world 'does care' – when I knew, to my indignation and shame, that it represented nobody but

⁷³⁹ Dragana Obradović, *Writing the Yugoslav Wars: Literature, Postmodernism, and the Ethics of Representation*, 1st edition (Toronto ; Buffalo ; London: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 2016), 143.

⁷⁴⁰ Dragana Obradović, 138.

⁷⁴¹ Author translation: "Teško je odrediti granice pamćenja, imenovati događaje u ratu. Neka se imena izbjegavaju: 'najveći koncentracijski logor na svijetu.' Pedeset godina od oslobođenja Auschwitz podudarilo se s 1000 dana opsade Sarajeva. (...) O solidarnosti Evrope sve je već rečeno. Evropska unija ne mari mnogo za „drugu Evropu". Zapadne sile danas gledaju prije svega na ono što se može dogoditi u dojučerašnjem istočnom bloku – otud je trajno dolazila opasnost" Predrag Matvejević, *Granice i sudbine*, 59.

*myself), is that this is a great European play and that they are members of European culture.”*⁷⁴²

Conversely, some foreign intellectuals like Jean Beaudrillard openly decried the position of their coworkers as hypocritical, claiming that the involvement of foreign cultural workers in solidarity projects as self-congratulatory, as the city’s citizens “were not in need of compassion” but of concrete aid and intervention.⁷⁴³ Furthermore, the fundamental futility of cultural support in the face of armed conflict has been noted by actors within and exterior to the ex-Yugoslav space. In this way, Dubravka Ugrešić does not condemn the well-meaning efforts of foreign intellectuals, but clearly places a limit on their positive impact: “the individual who rallies behind the cause of the dispossessed, is ‘superfluous’ in the ‘clinch’ between the subjugated and the empowered: neither “the aggressor nor the victim needs the intellectual.”⁷⁴⁴

While the very real awareness-raising potential of Sarajevan-based cultural projects abroad were supported by many actors within the city, others were more skeptical. This view is represented by curator Nermina Zildžo, who believed that “while the majority of intellectuals supported active cultural life and creativity, some of them believed this only anesthetized the public in the West, from whom help was so desperately awaited.”⁷⁴⁵ Some actors within the city resented foreign visitors, whose presence was divided between those whose stay was “encouraged by their conscience, dissatisfied with the indifference of their environment” and others, who came to the city “without any real reason, as on some type of safari (they would not shoot at lions, but they will still wear helmets and body armor)”, clearly underlining that it was easy to distinguish one from the other.⁷⁴⁶ This awareness of and disdain for foreign adventure seekers was quite firmly integrated also into the experiences of the visual arts scene, as it appears to be for the city as a whole.⁷⁴⁷ European lexicons were also employed by regular Sarajevans to express disappointment in the lack of foreign intervention, positioning themselves as having a stronger claim to European values than those who would otherwise

⁷⁴² Susan Sontag, “Godot Comes to Sarajevo.”

⁷⁴³ Jean Beaudrillard, “No Reprieve for Sarajevo,” trans. Patrice Riemens, 2017, *Libération*, January 8, 1994.

⁷⁴⁴ Dragana Obradović, *Writing the Yugoslav Wars*, 138.

⁷⁴⁵ Nermina Zildžo, “Burying the Past and Exhuming Mass Graves,” in *East Art Map. Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe*, ed. IRWIN (London: Afterall, 2006), 144.

⁷⁴⁶ Predrag Matvejević, “1001 Noć Opsade Sarajeva,” in *Granice i Sudbine* (Zagreb: VBZ, 2005), 59.

⁷⁴⁷ See for example: Nermina Kurspahić, “Umjetnički bijes,” *Oslobodjenje*, July 15, 1995, 10, Witnesses of Existence Carton, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

represent them. Journalist John Kifner quoted a Sarajevan woman using exactly this discourse to express her anger at the international community:

*“We are more civilized, more humane, more European than all of them,” she said. “Boutros-Ghali just watches all of this. He’s worse than the Serbs. We’re not illiterate. We’re educated civilized people. We can see what’s going on.”*⁷⁴⁸

Local actors integrated European ideals into their own lexicons and practices in order to adapt to internationally accepted vocabularies, while foreign cultural actors often responded to the conflict in the same terms as a means of positioning themselves in solidarity with the besieged city. The more the foreign audiences could identify with Sarajevan cultural actors, the more likely they were to offer support to the besieged city, explaining a recurring reference to a shared European culture also from within the country. References to ‘Europe’ or ‘European’ culture often went hand-in-hand with existing tropes based on the ‘civilized’ ideal, creating a complex web of meanings that were used interchangeably by foreign actors and local artists to denote moral and ethical divisions between victims and attackers. In particular, the multiple meanings and opinions on the value of ‘Europeanness’ resulted in a constant dialogue between foreign actors and local artists, at times also used simply as a signifier for the common rejection of the inherent evils of fascism, racial hatred and genocidal practices. However, the repeated use of a dichotomous language similar to the mobilization of ‘civilization’ and ‘resistance’ narratives contributed to the black-and-white series of oppositions that contrasted the Balkan violence to the European peace, and not always reflected the lived experiences for whom such narrow categorizations were insufficient.

⁷⁴⁸ John Kifner, “66 Die as Shell Wrecks Sarajevo Market,” *The New York Times*, February 6, 1994, Reprinted online: <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/02/06/world/66-die-as-shell-wrecks-sarajevo-market.html>.

5.2. RECONFIGURED NETWORKS BOTH LOCAL AND FOREIGN. THE PRESENCE OF EX-YUGOSLAV AND 'WESTERN' ARTISTS IN BESIEGED SARAJEVO.

The manifold contexts in which European discourses appear in siege-time visual arts make it an appropriate vector for studying the way in which Sarajevans presented themselves to their foreign peers, and in turn, how their peers interacted with Sarajevan artists. References to instances of shared history and heritage are hereby analyzed as both the result of local imaginaries and consciousness of their external meanings, and appear throughout the visual arts scene as markers of shared values and mutual understanding between the Sarajevan people and those in the international community supportive of their cause. This section approaches the presence of foreign artists in wartime Sarajevo through a distinctly local lens, focusing on the voices of Sarajevan actors in conjunction with those of their counterparts who had come to the city. At first, the somewhat marginalized interactions between Sarajevan artists and their colleagues from the former Yugoslavia will be discussed, arguing that their extensiveness can be framed within the context of enduring transnational networks developed within the scope of a transnational Yugoslav cultural sphere that functioned outside of state policies. It is followed by an analysis featuring the exhibitions of primarily European and American artists that took place within besieged Sarajevo, emphasizing the diverse reception of such events in the local cultural context.

5.2.1. UČINITI ZLO NERVOZNIM⁷⁴⁹: REVISITING IMAGINED SPACES THROUGH EX-YUGOSLAV ARTISTIC COOPERATION

The violent dissolution of Yugoslavia at the hand of nationalist fractions deeply affected social structures across the region, forcing the reconfiguration of social and professional networks that had relied heavily on movement between republics. While it seems that most have assumed that this transformation took the form of a complete breakdown of relations between cultural actors in the now-independent republics, evidence of continued cooperation in the now non-

⁷⁴⁹ Author translation: "To make evil nervous"

existent imagined space can be found in the wartime Sarajevan arts scene. During the siege of the capital, the local artistic community, contrary to what one would suspect, sustained and in some cases developed independent projects with cultural actors in neighboring republics, mostly but not exclusively with ones whose affiliated proto-states they were not actively at war with. These events varied in nature and often were dependent on the lack of active conflict between the republics in question, but when looked at closely, indicated a sustained presence of inter-personal professional networks which did not take directives from political elites, but instead sustained themselves organically.

As has been noted in Chapter I, the practical existence of a supranational Yugoslav cultural space hinged in part on its isolation from external art markets, resulting in regionally-minded art-scenes interconnected through a system of informal and formal networks. It is therefore unsurprising that the disappearance of these connections did not immediately follow the dissolution of the Yugoslav state, but gradually diminished in influence. As such, many artists did not abandon the relationships and networks they had so laboriously maintained throughout the region, even if some elements of the cultural sphere found comfort in the nationalist policies of their respective local governments. During the siege of Sarajevo, numerous artistic exchanges with artists and cultural actors from across the region were often overshadowed by the public consciousness of exhibitions by Western artists, but remained an important part of the siege-time creative landscape with both artworks and artists from Zagreb, Ljubljana, or even Belgrade making their way to or from the Bosnian capital. Within this category of actors, reference to European belonging was decidedly less popular than in conjunction with non-Yugoslav, primarily Western European and American actors, but was not entirely absent from texts that discussed art created by artists from the region.⁷⁵⁰

Although the newly independent states of Croatia and of Bosnia-Herzegovina were never involved in direct hostilities, the rising tensions and a series of armed conflicts between the proto-state of Herzeg-Bosna and its defending Bosnian Croat Army army on the one hand, and the Bosnian Army on the other, limited cultural cooperation between Zagreb and Sarajevo. Nevertheless, following the deeply divisive destruction on the Croatian coastline, the practical

⁷⁵⁰ One such example can be found in a text by Planinka Mikulić, whose review of a retrospective collection of works by Karlo Mijić (1887-1964), a Yugoslav painter primarily known for his depictions of the Bosnian landscape. Throughout her article, Mikulić returns to the artists' Croat and Bosnian roots, yet emphasizes his European education and connections in a way that creates a continuum between his experiences and his European belonging. See: Planinka Mikulić, "Neprolazno djelo," *Oslobodjenje*, August 9, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

networks that had been developed in previous decades remained at least partially intact. The JNA siege on the medieval fortress of Dubrovnik spurred cultural actors throughout the region to protect the art and artefacts under their care, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that this concern was initially extended beyond the borders of individual republics. In this way, in the weeks preceding the siege of Sarajevo, Nermina Zildžo recalls receiving a phone call from her colleague in Zagreb, who was busy securing the collections under his care in light of the ongoing war in Croatia. Although Zildžo remembers disregarding his advice, believing that war in Sarajevo was unlikely and additional preparation unnecessary, this type of continued professional communication in the face of a total breakdown of political cooperation indicates the strong position of a supranational cultural sphere even on the eve of war.⁷⁵¹

Shows of support in the period preceding the worst of the clashes between the Bosnian Army and Bosnian Croat Army, exemplified for example by the *Zašto Dubrovnik* show discussed in Chapter I, were clearly conceived for a regional rather than international audience. With the outbreak of the Croat-Bosniak War, fought with tacit support from the Croatian government, active cooperation between artists from the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina stalled, but were not entirely halted. Evidence of correspondence between cultural actors in Zagreb and Sarajevo, only literal days before the outbreak of the Croat-Bosniak War, suggests that elements of the artistic communities active in these cities saw value in maintaining cooperation across borders of two states. A letter to prominent Bosniak politician Adil Zulfikarpašić from Zagreb's Saida and Muhamed Trnka details the latter's efforts at hosting an exhibition in the *Kulturno-Informativni Centar BiH*, seeking support from Zulfikarpašić. Visibly intended to draw attention to the Bosnian Serb attack on multiple parts of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian territory, the exhibition featured graphic prints by the Sarajevo refugee Irfan Handukić that appeared under the name *Bosanska Guernica*. Accompanied by a poetry reading by Saida Makoč-Trnka of a piece titled 'Holocaust', the works that made up this exhibition actively engaged with vocabularies that referenced shared European memories of antifascism.⁷⁵² Drawing parallels between historical conflicts deeply associated with antifascist resistance, it is noteworthy that Croatian curators dedicated this show through informing their local public of the situation on the Bosnian front, and that they did so through employing a discursive framework specifically built on an idea of a common *antifascist* heritage.

⁷⁵¹ Nermina Zildžo, interview.

⁷⁵² Saida Trnka and Muhamed Trnka to Adil Zulfikarpašić, "Umjetnici Svjedoče o Bosni," October 16, 1992, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

Furthermore, the event manifests the endurance of inter-personal networks developed in the preceding decades considering the Zagreb government support of Bosnian Croat Army policies, which would most likely find little interest in an exhibition dedicated to the fate of the Bosnian people only days before the declaration of open war between Croat and Bosnian forces.

Exhibitions held in support of the Bosnian or Sarajevo plight remain difficult to trace at present thanks to their scattered and unsystematic nature, but can nonetheless be counted as a significant element of artistic cooperation across regional borders. The disconnect between government politics and regular citizens can be found also in the cultural spheres in states actively hostile to the Bosnian government, as was the case, for example, for Belgrade's Center for Cultural Decontamination (*Centar za Kulturnu Dekontaminaciju*), which hosted "an exhibition of art and material culture of Sarajevo under siege" in May of 1995.⁷⁵³ Private correspondence, irregularly received by family members of those who had remained in Sarajevo, was put on display together with what appear to be excerpts from newspaper articles, drawings of improvised siege artefacts by pre-teen sensation Dado Dragulj, posters and graphics by art group TRIO, documentation on Alma Suljević's *Kentauiromahija* project and Bojan Bahić' and Sanda Hnatjuk's prints from their *WARum?* show, some of which doubled as well as posters for editions of the *Sarajevo Winter* festival. The exhibition even featured a culinary demonstration featuring the Sarajevo invention of *pita* with nettle, a wartime adaptation of the popular pies usually filled with cheese, spinach or minced meat.

On a practical level, such exhibitions offered a space for refugee communities to gather and exchange information, but furthermore gave access to accurate information about the situation on the ground in Sarajevo in the context of censorship. While elements of the visual arts only represent a component of the show's entirety, they serve to humanize the conflict, offering a visualization of suffering imposed on the besieged city to an audience both familiar with its history but unable to access accurate information. Offering an uncensored view into the atrocities committed by the Bosnian Serb army in Sarajevo, supported by the Belgrade government, the exhibition also gave a glimpse into the difficulties of everyday life for those who had remained in Sarajevo, humanizing the conflict to an external audience, but also created

⁷⁵³ Centar za Kulturnu Dekontaminaciju (Center for Cultural Decontamination), "One Year in the Veljković Pavilion" (UNESCO Archival Fund, 1996), 11–13, B2ST06.3-51, AG 8 CI, INF, Carton 30, UNESCO Archives.

a space for those to those with links to the city to publicly mourn their loved ones. Furthermore, the mission of the CZKD clearly focuses on the maintenance and rebuilding of links across the former Yugoslav republics. Showing evidence of a willingness to revive a paralyzed supranational cultural sphere, the group also hosted exhibitions of Slovenian painting and sculpture together with numerous initiatives aimed at raising awareness and support against the war in Bosnia.⁷⁵⁴



Figure 1. *An Exhibition of Art and Material Culture of Sarajevo Under Siege*, exhibition view. Three visitors are seen discussing around reproductions of wartime posters and graphics, including ones designed by art group TRIO. Belgrade, Centar Za Kulturnu Dekontaminaciju, 1995. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Archive Centar za Kulturnu Dekontaminaciju.

⁷⁵⁴ Centar za Kulturnu Dekontaminaciju /Center for Cultural Decontamination, 11; 13–14.



Figure 2. *An Exhibition of Art and Material Culture of Sarajevo Under Siege*, exhibition view. Visitors were offered the opportunity to immerse themselves in Sarajevo wartime cultural production, for example by reading siege editions of the daily newspaper *Oslobodjenje*. Belgrade, Centar Za Kulturnu Dekontaminaciju, 1995. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Archive Centar za Kulturnu Dekontaminaciju.



Figure 3. *An Exhibition of Art and Material Culture of Sarajevo Under Siege*, exhibition view. Posters by the design group TRIO are exhibited together with prints by Bojan Bahić and Sanda Hnatjuk, recognizable from the 1994 *WARum?* show. Belgrade, Centar Za Kulturnu Dekontaminaciju, 1995. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Archive Centar za Kulturnu Dekontaminaciju.



Figure 4. *An Exhibition of Art and Material Culture of Sarajevo Under Siege*, exhibition view. Visitors enjoying a Sarajevan twist on a Balkan classic of *pita*, replacing traditional ingredients such as spinach or minced meat with wild nettle found in the hills surrounding the city. Belgrade, Centar Za Kulturnu Dekontaminaciju, 1995. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Archive Centar za Kulturnu Dekontaminaciju.

Back in Croatia, the signing of a final ceasefire between the Bosnian Croat Army and the Bosnian Army in February 1994 heralded an unexpectedly quick return of symbolic support exhibitions for the besieged city of Sarajevo. Even though such exhibitions are notably absent from documentation between late 1992 and early 1994, cultural cooperation was renewed almost instantly between Croatian and Bosnian centers. Zagreb became a popular stop for exhibitions of Bosnian artists that were already on tour, hosting, for example the first stop of

TRIO's *Greetings from Sarajevo* show as it embarked on its world tour in the summer of 1994, or a group exhibition featuring the works of 15 Bosnian artists under the name *Art-Rat Sarajevo* following its opening in Frankfurt in June 1994 (*Kulturni informativni centar BiH*).⁷⁵⁵

These events took place in a variety of exhibition spaces, from the aforementioned Cultural and Information Center of BiH to the Mimara Museum, suggesting that BiH artists in Croatia was not limited to the interests of single actors, but instead was part of a larger cultural network that facilitated such events. This can be seen in the reception to the *Svjedoci Postojanja* group exhibition, opened in the spaces of Zagreb's Society of Art Historians (*Društvo povjesničara umjetnosti*) in the summer of 1994. An overwhelmingly positive review of the show published by the Zagreb newspaper *Vjesnik* emphasized its international success and generally reserved only praise for the Sarajevo artists, omitting any mention of the political tensions between the two states in the preceding months. Particularly admiring regarding the professionalism of the Sarajevo artists, the text lauded their success as both logical and justified.⁷⁵⁶ While not necessarily shocking, it is interesting that Bosnian artists are so warmly received in Croatia so soon after putting down arms, without any mention of recent instabilities and conflicts. Therefore, Bosnian cultural actors found support in their Croatian counterparts for most of the Bosnian War, with close connections maintained even past the signing of the Dayton Accords, as exemplified by the opening of the Bojan Babić and Sanda Hnatjuk's *WARum?* in Dubrovnik's 'Otok' club during the winter of 1995-1996.⁷⁵⁷

The few instances in which Sarajevo artists speak of the interest in their city exhibited by their Croatian counterparts appear to frame such initiatives as indicative of political proximity and support. To this end, painter Mehmed Zaimović is quoted by Nada Salom to see the engagement of Croatian artists as based in a moral rather than material conditions:

"According to Zaimović himself, Croatian Artists, colleagues are also interested in the possibility of exhibiting in Sarajevo, not to "shift" their fame into our environment, but as an expression of the spiritual connection with this space and the desire for them to give their pain,

⁷⁵⁵ Meliha Husedžinović et al., *Mehmed Zaimović* (Sarajevo: National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2002), 205. Library of the Academy of Fine Arts, Sarajevo.

⁷⁵⁶ Zvonko Marković, "Planetarna slava 'Galerije Obala,'" 13.

⁷⁵⁷ "Artist Page - Bojan Babić," Diwan Magazine, accessed October 29, 2021, http://www.diwanmag.com.ba/redakcija/bojanb_eng.html.

to participate in defense of the moral, cultural and artistic identity of the city and our country."⁷⁵⁸

The inconsistent relationship between the Croatian and Bosnian cultural sectors can be said to be outright tumultuous in comparison to the steady stream of support which originated from the Slovenian neighbors, centered particularly around the capital city of Ljubljana. Within Sarajevo, this particular flow of collaboration was understood at least by some as existing in a spectrum of historical ties between the two cities, alluding to the supranational Yugoslav sphere without directly referring to it as such:

*"The collaboration of Sarajevo artists with Ljubljana is not limited to exhibitions. Many graphic artists studied in Ljubljana, formed their artistic image here, exchanged experiences with Slovenian artists and enriched the Slovenian art space with an extraordinary variety of formal and motif elements from their inexhaustible treasure and culture."*⁷⁵⁹

It is then unsurprising that some of the most intense instances of cross-border cultural cooperation was found in the Slovenian capital. One of the most impactful examples of this continued support can be found in the large-scale group show *Umjetnici Sarajeva za slobodnu BiH*, opened in Sarajevo under the support of the *Umjetnička Četa* and the Bosnian Army. First transported to Ljubljana (Nov. 1994) and later Maribor (Feb. 1995), the opening vernissage was presided over by Dževad Hozo, Edin Numankadić, Rasem Isaković, Mirsada Baljić and Alma Suljević, who traveled to Slovenia as emissaries of the Sarajevan cultural scene.⁷⁶⁰ Although most, if not all, of the traveling artists were excluded from military service and therefore free to leave the country, a journey outside of the besieged city necessitated robust personal connections and came with a certain dose of additional risk. It is therefore not surprising that particular importance was bestowed on a return with the exhibition catalogue printed in Slovenia for those who were unable to leave the city.⁷⁶¹ Illustrating the difficulties

⁷⁵⁸ Author translation: "Kako kaže sam Zaimović, hrvatski umjetnici, kolege se interesuju i za mogućnost izlaganja u Sarajevu ne da bi „pomakli” svoju slavu u našem ambijentu nego je to izraz duhovne veze sa ovim prostorom i želje da i oni daju svoj bol, da učestvuju u odbrani moralnog, kulturnog i umjetničkog identiteta grada i naše zemlje." Nada Salom, "Zaimović izlaže u Zagrebu," *Oslobodjenje*, February 23, 1995, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁷⁵⁹ Author translation: "Suradnja sarajevskih umjetnika s Ljubljanom nije ograničena na susrete prilikom izložbi. Mnogi su grafički umjetnici studirali u Ljubljani, formirali ovdje svoj umjetnički image, izmjenjivali sa slovenskim umjetnicima iskustva i obogatili slovenski likovni prostor izvanrednom raznolikošću formalnih i motivskih elemenata koje su zahvatili iz neiscrpne riznice svoje historije i kulture." Zoran Kržišnik, "Poruke," 10.

⁷⁶⁰ Muhamed Karamehmedović, "Upotreba umjetnosti," *Oslobodjenje*, January 24, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁷⁶¹ Maja Radević, "Vojnici iz ateljea," *Slobodna Bosna*, November 14, 2013, 888 edition, 49.

that accompanied movement in and out of the city as well as the importance of personal networks during the period, the artists that attended the event encountered difficulties in securing passage back to their city. After arriving at the Zagreb airport, the group was surprised to find that there was no more space on the airplane to the besieged city, worrying them that they would not be able to return home. Luckily, Edin Numankadić was able to “chase down” a small airplane thanks to his personal networks, allowing them to return promptly to Sarajevo.⁷⁶²

Whereas the artistic merit of the exhibition itself could be debated, its extensive presence in Slovenian cities is reflective of both geopolitical priorities and personal relationships amongst artists. Remaining open to the public for nearly a month following the opening, the logistical hurdles of transporting nearly 800 artefacts to Ljubljana necessitated official support from both Slovenian and BiH authorities, as well as the Bosnian presidency and UNPROFOR forces that controlled movement in and out of the city. The existence of this type of support can be found in documentation of the event: opened by Slovenian president Milan Kučan and the BiH ambassador to Slovenia, Uglješa Uzelac, the event was hereby officially approved by both states’ governing forces. The collective support offered by officials suggest particularly strong ties with the Slovenian state, as other artistic events in former Yugoslav spaces received comparatively little support. Furthermore, the varied documentation of this exhibition shows particularly strong ties between individual Sarajevo artists and the Slovenian cultural scene, most emblematic in the practice of printmaker Dževad Hozo. Invited to speak at the opening in Ljubljana, Hozo engaged closely with rhetoric based on a common defense of civilizational and European values:

“As the first year-long soldier, defending the honor of Man, his forefathers, the tradition of institutions that hold the continuum of an integrated Bosnia. It is a constant form of struggle for existential survival, a resistance in which defiance is evident in the most inhumane conditions since Goya's Disaster's - and it does not mean just a mere struggle for survival. The third echelon is a cultural form of struggle for human dignity, for the principles of universal creative rights and universal values of proclaimed, i.e. idealized civilization and general European spirituality - lasting, probably until the factual turning point of Bosnia and Sarajevo,

⁷⁶² Maja Radević, 49.

not only during our days of apocalypse and the Magnum Crimen, its nations and individuals.”⁷⁶³

Combining a series of mystical, esoteric images, such as those of the apocalypse or the Magnum Crimen, with bilaterally recognizable concepts of universal values and European spirituality, Hozo mentions well-known artistic references such as Francisco Goya’s *Disasters of War* to create a discursive framework that simultaneously denotes a logical alliance between the two artistic communities based on a shared cultural heritage, and hereby shared ethical authority. In this way, a discourse based on the concept of European values is present also in the ex-Yugoslav landscape, but makes up only a part of the discursive explanations of artistic cooperation between the two capitals.



Figure 5. Excerpt from *Oslobodjenje* article, featuring copies of numerous Slovenian press articles that covered the *Umjetnici Sarajeva za Mir* exhibition. Image reprinted from “Ambasadori kulture” by Nermina Omerbegović, Sarajevo: *Oslobodjenje*, January 5, 1994, 10. Courtesy of *Oslobodjenje*.

⁷⁶³ Author translation: “Kao prvi višegodišnji oružani, kojim se brani čast Čovjekova, djedovina, tradicija institucija kontinuiteta integralnog bosanstva. To je višegodišnji vid borbe za egzistencijalno preživljivanje, otpor u kojem je evidentan prkos u najneljudskijim uslovima od Goyinog Desasteresa – a ne znači samo puku borbu za preživljivanje. Treći ešalon je kulturnjački vid borbe za dignitet čovjeka, za načela univerzalnih prava stvaralašva i univerzalnih vrednota proklamovane, odnosno idealizirane civilizacije i opšte evropske duhovnosti – trajajuće, vjerovatno do činjeničke prekretnice Bosne i Sarajeva, do ne samo naših dana apokalise i Magnuma crimena nad jednom državom, njenim narodima i pojedincima.” Nermina Omerbegović, “Ambasadori kulture,” 10.

The exhibition in question was not only a space of rhetorical exchange, but a practical arena used for networking and planning of future joint projects. Reportedly leading to the “directors of all Slovenian galleries expressing readiness to come with their projects to Sarajevo and BiH,” the group show facilitated several artistic exchanges that resulted in fruitful collaborations.⁷⁶⁴ Almost immediately, an offer from acclaimed art collective IRWIN to exhibit in Sarajevo and subsequently gift their works to the city was made, while the *Obalne Galerija Piran* planned a show in the Collegium Artisticum gallery that was to be held in January of 1996.⁷⁶⁵ These declarations of solidarity did in fact go beyond simple lip service – members of IRWIN made their way to the besieged city in February 1995, presenting their work to the students at the Academy of Fine Arts in the scope of a larger series of events organized by the *Neue Slowenische Kunst* collective.⁷⁶⁶ Discussing the NSK movement, the group presented their project “*Država vremena*”, centered around the idea of the futility of states in the contemporary landscape, to the up-and-coming generation of artists.

IRWIN reportedly enjoyed great popularity amongst the Sarajevo public: according to one source, the “Office for NSK Passports” that was handing out documents to those “who wanted to have a passport of a state of utopia, but also a state of reality, reality of spirit” was swamped with lines of Sarajevans who wanted one for themselves.⁷⁶⁷ Beyond their appearance at the ALU, the group also presented a video-projection of their work in the Collegium Artisticum gallery, opening their practice to the greater Sarajevo public. Furthermore, the Slovenian powerhouse announced its intention of collaborating with local artist Amila Smajović, whose production of *Država Amila* mirrored IRWIN’s theoretical state-building interests.⁷⁶⁸ The team of Slovenian cultural ambassadors was joined by curators Igor Zabel and Zdenka Badinovac, who traveled with the UNPROFOR-chartered ‘Maybe Airlines’ from Zagreb and stayed with a local family. Recounting her stay in Sarajevo in a recent interview, Badinovac speaks of her

⁷⁶⁴ Nermina Omerbegović, 10.

⁷⁶⁵ Nermina Omerbegović, 10.

⁷⁶⁶ Srdjan Vuletić, “Maybe we’ll come back,” *Dani*, December 1995, 65, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁷⁶⁷ Author translation: “Ispred ureda za pasoše NSK države bili su redovi onih koji su željeli imati pasoš države utopije, ali i države realnosti, realnosti duha.” Nermina Omerbegović, “Učiniti zlo nervoznim,” *Oslobodjenje*, November 24, 1995, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁷⁶⁸ An. Šimić, “‘IRWIN’ u Sarajevu,” *Oslobodjenje*, February 25, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

personal experiences, specifically mentioning the conversations that led to her support of the (still unfulfilled) Ars Aevi museum project.⁷⁶⁹

*"We were there during a short cease-fire agreement, but there were snipers in the hills around the city. I remember crossing a bridge and feeling tension in the air. Afterward, they told us there was a sniper shooting at us; the shots had gone above our heads. But Sarajevo was not all misery. Bosnians have such pride, and a fantastic sense of black humor. I remember those things too. Anyway, we discussed with people there, and decided to help build an art collection for a future museum in Sarajevo. That collection later became part of an existing initiative, Ars Aevi."*⁷⁷⁰

The symbolic and practical effects of these types of exchanges were manyfold: the presence of famous artists and curators familiar to the Sarajevan public strengthened perceived and actual regional networks while also creating spaces for new exchanges created by the war. Following her stay in Sarajevo, Badovinac invited Edin Numankadić to participate in an exhibition called *Kuća u Vremenu* (A House in Time), which deals with the subject of migrations related to the wars of Yugoslav dissolution, hereby contributing to the circular maintenance of links between the Ljubljana and Sarajevo art-space.⁷⁷¹ Critical reporters also recognized the 'normal' attitude of the NSK delegation, which treated their presence in Sarajevo much in the same way as they would any other concert or event. This view is expressed by Srdjan Vuletić in the following manner:

"The NSK did not treat us as stars out of pity (which was commonly the case) nor did they humiliate us (an even more common case) just because we are from Sarajevo. And that is what

⁷⁶⁹ Briefly mentioned previously in this text, the Ars Aevi project was conceived in June 1992 by a group of intellectuals headed by Enver Hadžiomerspahić with the aim of founding a contemporary art museum in Sarajevo. Reliant on the help and cooperation of international artists, curators and institutional partnerships, the collection founded during the war includes works by artists such as Stephan Balkenhol, Jan Dibbets, Jannis Kounellis, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Marina Abramović, or IRWIN. A project for the yet-to-be-built museum was created by renowned architect Renzo Piano. The permanent collection is currently on view in the Sarajevan Vijećnica town hall. See, for example: Silvia Maria Carolo, "Narrating Ars Aevi Re-Envisioning and Re-Shaping the Contemporary Art Museum of Sarajevo in the Urban Space"; Zdenka Badovinac, Azra Begić, Enrico R. Comi, Bruno Corà, Midhat Haračić, Enver Hadžiomerspahić. *Museum of Contemporary Art Sarajevo 1994-1997. Sarajevo: Direction of the International Cultural Project ARS AEVI 2000, 1997.*; "Muzej u vojnoj komandi," *Oslobodjenje*, August 7, 1995, 11, *Mediacentar Sarajevo*.

⁷⁷⁰ Zdenka Badovinac, "Zdenka Badovinac, in Conversation with J. Myers-Szupinska," 24.

⁷⁷¹ Nada Salom, "Svjedok u 'Kući vremena,'" *Oslobodjenje*, April 9, 1995, 12, *Mediacentar Sarajevo*; Zdenka Badovinac, "Zdenka Badovinac, in Conversation with J. Myers-Szupinska," 23.

we want and need. Amsterdam, Moscow, Berlin, Ljubljana, London, Minsk, Sarajevo - it doesn't matter. Only in this way can Sarajevo be included in the map of Europe's world cities."⁷⁷²

In this case, the need for normality is emphasized in tandem with a European identity, albeit one much broader than would normally be promoted by traditional Western European actors. The willingness for external actors to participate and develop projects that originated in the besieged city, can hereby be taken as indicative of the concrete maintenance and development of cultural networks within former members of the Yugoslav state.

The close relationship between Bosnian and Slovenian artists was concurrently influenced by individual personal networks that pre-dated the dissolution of Yugoslavia, facilitating wartime cross-border cooperation. Dževad Hozo was one of the actors who actively emphasized his personal relationship to the Slovenian neighbors, prominently featuring joint exhibitions in his professional monographies.⁷⁷³ His extensive presence at cultural events featuring Slovenian artists has been recorded in one monography, for example in the form of reprinting numerous opening speeches Hozo had been asked to give. One such speech, given on the occasion of the *vernissage* of a group show titled *Slovenska Grafična Poslanica (Slovenian Graphic Message)*, regularly references pre-war links between Bosnian and Slovene artists for the occasion of a series of Slovenian graphics opened in the National Gallery of BiH in 1994. Referencing Sarajevan participation in an exhibition organized in support of Slovenian independence, he appears to refer with nostalgia to a period "and in hope that the Yugoslav problem will be resolved in a civilized way, that bridges and that spiritual ties between nations unborn will remain whole."⁷⁷⁴

Indicating that both Slovenia and Bosnia clearly belong to independent entities (necessitating a bridge between the two states), the two countries are nevertheless portrayed by Hozo as belonging to a shared Yugoslav heritage due to their "spiritual ties". In this speech, the artist

⁷⁷² Author translation: "NSK nas nije patetično kovao u zvijezde (što je čest slučaj) niti nas je ponižavao (još češći slučaj) samo zato što smo iz Sarajeva. I to je ono što mi hoćemo i trebamo. Amsterdam, Moskva, Berlin, Ljubljana, London, Minsk, Sarajevo – svejedno je. Samo tako Sarajevo se može uključiti u mapu evropskih svjetskih gradova." Srdjan Vuletić, "Maybe we'll come back," 65.

⁷⁷³ N.n., *Vernis Sage - Dževad Hozo* (Sarajevo: Collegium Artisticum, 2001); n.n., *Dževad Hozo. Monografija 1961-2001*. Library of the Academy of Fine Arts, Sarajevo.

⁷⁷⁴ Author translation: "(...) u času in upanju da se bo jugoslovanski problem na nek civilizacijski način uredil, mostovi ostali celi, duhovne vezi med narodi nenaćete." N.n., *Dževad Hozo. Monografija 1961-2001.*, 193.

emphasizes the need for cross-cultural cooperation as a means of breaking down artificially erected barriers between the two countries:

*“Art, that is, artists perform this complex social function: original graphics break through barricades, destroy sieges and negate borders and find a sublime place in our hearts, especially for those who are divided between Slovenia and Bosnia.”*⁷⁷⁵

Hozo is amongst the few Sarajevo artists to employ a vocabulary based on a common denial of the purportedly ‘Balkan’ nature of violence sweeping the region. Referring in an interview to the Pandora’s box “opened with the force of (Balkan) violence, under pressure from social crises”, the Sarajevo artist characterizes his position as in opposition.⁷⁷⁶ Although not directly referring to a shared European heritage or culture, the use of imagery that placed himself and his work as rival to a ‘Balkan’ narrative.

Individual artists from Sarajevo such as Edin Numankadić were specifically invited to participate in major Slovenian exhibitions. Most likely the result of connections made during his stay in Ljubljana for the *Umjetnici za Slobodu BiH* exhibition, Numankadić was featured in a major group show at the *Moderna Galerija* amongst world-renowned names such as David Hammons, Ilya Kabakova, Christian Boltanski or Sophie Calle, the latter two of whom also exhibited in besieged Sarajevo. Including an accomplished Bosnian artist in such a selection discursively granted access to BiH artists in an international art space, to which Sarajevo artists had lost nearly all access due to the conditions associated with the siege. Numankadić treated his contribution to the show as an act of witnessing, but not of his own situation, but “of the spiritual condition of people, without any political, ideological connotations”, including the whole world in this approach.⁷⁷⁷

Inside the uncertain borders of the new Bosnia & Herzegovina, Sarajevo artists had difficulties maintaining the previously active professional relationships with other BiH cultural centers. Whereas connections to what is now Republika Srpska were entirely severed with the

⁷⁷⁵ Author translation: “Umjetnost, odnosno umjetnici obavljaju tu složenu društvenu funkciju; originalna grafika probija barikade, ruši opsade, negira granice i nalazi uzvišeno mjesto u našim srcima, posebno onih koji su rascijepljeni između Slovenije i Bosne.” Nada Salom, “Slovenska grafična poslanica,” 6.

⁷⁷⁶ Author translation: “ (...) otvorene sa svom silinom (balkanske) violencije, pod prinudom društvenih kriza.” Miloš Jeftić and Dževad Hozo, “Intervju Za Radio Beograd,” in *Dževad Hozo. Monografija 1961-2001*. (Sarajevo: National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 2002), 193. Library of the Academy of Fine Arts, Sarajevo.

⁷⁷⁷ Author translation: “(...) o duhovnom stanju ljudi, bez ikakvih političkih, ideoloških konotacija”, “Nada Salom, “Svjedok u ‘Kući vremena,’” 12.

domination of the Bosnian Serb government, a condition which remains relatively stable until today, the cultural actors from other cities in Bosnia exhibited signs of wanting to work together with artists in the capital despite never truly achieving any regularity. The archives of the Bosniak Institute preserved a series of posters published by the *Muzej Grada Zenice* (Museum of the City of Zenica) which reference exhibitions held in different cultural spaces – an exhibition on “Sarajevan cultural heritage” (*Kulturna Baština Sarajeva*) in 1992, and what appears to be a displaced exhibition organized under the auspices of the XI Sarajevska Zima Festival in 1995, from a show hosted in *Galerija Gabrijel*.⁷⁷⁸ Furthermore, there was at least one exhibition organized in tribute to the destruction of the famous Mostar bridge held in Sarajevo during the period of the blockade, indicating a willingness within Sarajevan circles to artistically engage with other atrocities being committed on BiH soil.⁷⁷⁹ These artistic initiatives were not entirely removed from the economic and political context, but instead seem to have been representative of Sarajevan attempts at re-establishing and maintaining contact with other Bosnian metropolises, perhaps as part of a plan of “preserving idea of integral Bosnia and Herzegovina”.⁷⁸⁰

The available literature offers some hints that could explain the complicated ways through which artists interacted in the fragmented post-Yugoslav space. In her study on popular music in wartime Croatia, Catherine Baker asserts that Bosniaks had “retained an ambiguous status in Croatian cultural and public life”, partially sustained by the Croatian state’s emphasis of the “religious boundary between the two groups”. As such, the outbreak of the Bosniak-Croat war resulted in the absence of Bosnian folk music on the Croatian cultural scene, until it became the target of a conscious revival effort in 1995-1996.⁷⁸¹ No such studies have been made with regard to the visual arts, but the influence of individual states’ cultural policies cannot be discounted. While support for Sarajevo in the arts was found even in Belgrade, a Council of

⁷⁷⁸ Muzej grada Zenice and XI Internacionalni Festival Sarajevska Zima, “Izložba ‘Pozorište u Zeničkoj Kaznionici’” (*Galerija Gabrijel*, March 1995), Bosniak Institute Sarajevo; Muzej grada Zenice, “Izložba ‘Kulturna baština Sarajeva’” (*Čitaonica Narodne Biblioteke u Zenici*, June 16, 1992), Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁷⁷⁹ Meliha Husedžinović et al., *Mehmed Zaimović*, 206.

⁷⁸⁰ For example, starting 1994, a number of programs were initiated by the Sarajevan Chamber of Commerce with the aim of facilitating exchanges on the economic developments in the country during the war. While not necessarily linked to the visual arts scene’s activities, this indicates a generalized inclination towards re-establishing relations between different Bosnian cities that spanned across various disciplines. See Kemal Grebo and Rasim Rapa, eds., *Privreda u opkoljenom Sarajevu. Economy in Besieged Sarajevo* (Sarajevo: Privredna komora regije Sarajevo ; OKO, 1998), 14–19.

⁷⁸¹ Catherine Baker, *Sounds of the Borderland: Popular Music, War and Nationalism in Croatia since 1991* (Routledge, 2016), 179.

Europe report clearly outlined a complete break in collaboration between the *Republika Srpska* and Federation museums and a tenuous unwillingness to go back to working together.⁷⁸² The relationship between Sarajevan and Slovenian artists remained strong throughout the conflict, which can be attributed to state policy as much as to the strength of personal connections between the two spaces. Within the ex-Yugoslav sphere, cultural actors rarely referred to European vocabularies or identified as European, a difference which becomes stark when compared to the literature surrounding international actors. While not in any way definitive, it appears that Sarajevan artists felt less need to include such lexicons when interacting with their colleagues from the ex-Yugoslav sphere than those from abroad. Similarly, no mention of the much-disliked ‘safari tourist’ coming from the ex-Yugoslav sphere can be found in archival material dating from or after the period of the siege of Sarajevo.

5.2.2. EUROPEAN SARAJEVANS AND EUROPEANS IN SARAJEVO. THE RECEPTION OF INTERNATIONAL VISUAL ARTISTS IN BESIEGED SARAJEVO

Although pre-war Sarajevo might very well be described as a provincial city, its inhabitants were also not entirely unfamiliar with foreign visitors. Events such as the Sarajevo Winter Festival, initiated for the occasion with the 1984 Olympic Games, had become a part of the local landscape and helped to promote the republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the international cultural scene. Nevertheless, the legacy of international cooperation engendered by the Games was decidedly overshadowed by the Yugoslav dimensions of such initiatives, leaving Sarajevan artists with relatively modest opportunities for entry into a broader, global scene (and market).⁷⁸³ Therefore, the outbreak of the siege and its extensive media coverage placed Sarajevo on the international artistic map in a manner it in which had not been previously present. The resulting interest coming from abroad was palpable: even Damien

⁷⁸² ADOC7740, “Tenth Information Report on War Damage to the Cultural Heritage in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina Presented by the Committee on Culture and Education,” 16–17.

⁷⁸³ Čedo Kisić, “Festival Umjetnosti,” in *Dvadeset godina Internacionalni Festival Sarajevo - Sarajevska Zima 1984-2004*, ed. Ibrahim Spahić (Sarajevo: Medjunarodni Centar za Mir, 2005), 13; Tvrtko Kulenović, “Dvije decenije nemogućeg ili dvadeset godina ‘nema problema,’” in *Dvadeset godina Internacionalni Festival Sarajevo - Sarajevska Zima 1984-2004*, ed. Ibrahim Spahić (Sarajevo: Medjunarodni Centar za Mir, 2005), 7.

Hirst, by now a household name, had pledged to exhibit in Sarajevo (a promise that was, according to available documentation, never fulfilled).⁷⁸⁴

The cultural connections that emerged throughout the siege were almost exclusively the result of three types of mobilities: initiatives resulting from pre-war international contacts, invitations issued by Sarajevan curators to specific foreign actors, and independent projects developed by unaffiliated foreign artists with the support of NGOs.⁷⁸⁵ Artists made up only a small percentage of foreign activists traveling to Sarajevo, limited to a dozen or so persons, but were better represented by the over fifty exhibitions of artworks by foreign artists that took place throughout the conflict.⁷⁸⁶ Furthermore, it should be noted that the majority of foreign cultural actors that intervened in the Sarajevan space came primarily from ‘Western’ states, specifically from Western Europe and, in some cases, the USA. However, the disparate diplomatic and humanitarian policies of individual states impacted how these individuals interacted with the Sarajevan conflict, meaning that the essentialization of this group can obscure some of the heterogenous approaches towards the Bosnian situation, often intertwined with their country of origin. In this way, French artists, whose compatriots dominated the UNPROFOR forces active in the city, exhibited a divergent *modus operandi* from their Catalan, Italian, or German counterparts.

The structures put in place to provide the besieged city with humanitarian aid were quickly adapted to allow journalists and diplomatic personnel to travel in and out of Sarajevo with relative ease, and similarly became instrumental to transporting artists and their artworks into the capital. Whereas most visitors tended to stay for shorter periods of time, ranging from a few days to a few weeks, setting up shop in the infamous Holiday Inn hotel from which the first shots of the war had been fired, cultural actors relied on the knowledge gathered by the journalists based there to move around the city and set up support networks.⁷⁸⁷ Some of the

⁷⁸⁴ An. Šimić, “Nada iz svijeta apokalipse,” *Oslobodjenje*, September 12, 1994, 6, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁷⁸⁵ The internationalization of the siege was also not exclusively a Western phenomenon, with a significant percentage of humanitarian and military aid towards BiH originating from Muslim-majority states. However, only one exhibition has been located featuring material support from a non-Western state, namely an exhibition of artworks by students of the local high school for applied arts, sponsored by the Humanitarian Organization of Qatar (Humanitarna Organizacija Katar). National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina, “Izložba Radova Učenika Škole Primjenjene Umjetnosti - Sarajevo” (Sponzor Humanitarna Organizacija Katar, May 1995), Poster carton, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁷⁸⁶ Data compiled by author.

⁷⁸⁷ Kenneth Morrison and Paul Lowe, *Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo*, 134.

artists that traveled to the city did so with the support of foreign NGO's active in the region, as was the case for French painter Casimir Ferrer, who came to Sarajevo in December of 1995, opening his solo show only four days following the official signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Representing his native town of Albi and receiving support from the French division of the International Rotary Club, he notably brought a significant number of art-supplies from the high-end brand *Lefranc Bourgeois* to be donated to the ULUBiH association.⁷⁸⁸ The International Peace Center also received donations in the form of art equipment courtesy of UNESCO, accepting four packages meant as support for the 1995 edition of the Sarajevo Winter Festival, containing 10 photography papers each, 1000 watercolor papers, six photographs by unknown artists and an unknown number of video cassettes.⁷⁸⁹

These objects notably escaped accepted definitions of humanitarian aid that made them impossible to bring into the city through official channels yet constituted vital elements of maintaining standards in any creative industries. Through navigating official channels, or in the case of individual artists, presumably smuggling in everything from letters, foodstuff to photography film, the international community also provided practical support for the Sarajevo cultural scene. As art materials became scarce early on in the war, many artists experienced a temporary halt in their work due to the practical shortage and the psychological shock of warfare, making such small-scale donations a concrete help to the local community.⁷⁹⁰ Conversely, artists at the Academy of Fine Arts were rumored to have converted wood from donated caskets into drawing boards and wood-printing materials – auto-allocating official humanitarian aid for the purposes deemed more urgent at the time.⁷⁹¹

The mobilization of foreign cultural actors in support of the besieged city resulted in the successive, partial implementation of a bilateral 'cultural corridor' or 'cultural bridge' between Sarajevo and the outside world, visibly easing international collaboration after the summer of 1994. The irregular appearance of these terms in a variety of contexts makes them difficult to

⁷⁸⁸ Nermina Omerbegović, "Svjetlost i pokret," *Oslobodjenje*, December 3, 1995, 11, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibrahim Spahić, Sarajevo Winter Festival to Maria Helena Henriques Muller, UNESCO representative for BiH, "Receipt for Material," Receipt, February 22, 1995, FC005-35/5, AG 8, DRG OPS, Carton 26, UNESCO Archives.

⁷⁹⁰ See, for example: Petar Finčić, "Slikao sam mrtve na Skenderiji," *Dani*, March 28, 1993, 40, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁷⁹¹ Personal conversation with anonymous source, 2021.

accurately trace, which appear to have been introduced under the auspices of local UNESCO officials. In this way, the concept of a ‘cultural air link’ first appears in reference to a Parisian showing of the *Sarajevo '93* graphic prints collection that took place in the official UNESCO headquarters under the title ‘*Les images pour la paix*’.⁷⁹² Notably consisting of a collection already exhibited in the Bosnian capital under a different name, their showing in Paris became central to the conceptual development of the *Sarajevo '92, '93, '94* project discussed in Chapter II. As such, Irfan Ljubijankić, serving as Foreign Minister of BiH, includes his experiences opening the vernissage in a text for the collection’s catalogue, in which he speaks of “addressing the people of Europe and its intellectual and political elite” instead of a more general international community. For him, “the grandeur and the magnetic appeal of the struggle of Bosnia and Herzegovina against fascism, has made us a lighthouse amidst an indifferent contemporary world of consumption and production”, a statement specifically printed in the catalogue but undoubtedly influenced by its reception in the French capital.⁷⁹³ Addressing an imagined yet exclusively European public, the aggression on BiH is framed here within a shared historical experience of fascism, used to denote alliance through a common, if abstract, enemy. In this way, references to European discourses made their way also into the Sarajevan reception of this UNESCO-organized exhibition.

With the assistance of UNPROFOR structures, the establishment of a formal infrastructure for cultural exchange allowed fifteen people from Bosnia-Herzegovina to attend the show’s opening, including some of the artists, paving the way for similar projects. For the first time since the beginning of the conflict, artists were allowed to leave the city to participate in the inauguration of their exhibition together with the government officials that represented them.⁷⁹⁴ Nevertheless, according to an official contact in Sarajevo, only two of the originally invited artists had a valid passport, and “the rest would probably not be allowed to leave Sarajevo.”⁷⁹⁵ Archival documents suggest that organizers within UNESCO were willing to go above and beyond to facilitate the Bosnian presence in Paris, with one official firmly having said that “he

⁷⁹² Nermina Kurspahić, “Cultural Institutions and Monuments in Sarajevo,” n.pag.

⁷⁹³ N.n., *Sarajevo Devedesetdruge Devedesettreće Devedesetčetvrtre*, 5.

⁷⁹⁴ N.n., “The Situation of the Cultural and Architectural Heritage of Educational and Cultural Institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina - 145 EX/36” (UNESCO, October 7, 1994), 3, B2ST06.3-51, AG 8 CI, INF, Carton 31, UNESCO Archives.

⁷⁹⁵ Rok Vogrić, Office of the Director General, UNESCO Paris to Anna Marie Corazza, Civil Affairs, UNPROFOR Zagreb, “CAB/94/67,” Fax, April 1, 1994, FC005-35/5, AG 8, DRG OPS, Carton 26, UNESCO Archives.

could do the necessary with or without the agreement of the Bosnian side,” which in practice was extrapolated to the possibility of sending “a very firm letter to the Prime Minister of Bosnia asking him to deliver valid passports to these persons.”⁷⁹⁶ The drafting regulations that were in place at that time, affecting all males under 45, meaning that all “requests for groups travelling are out of the picture” if the UNESCO authorities were to be “successful in other areas which are, at least, of same importance to their work here.”⁷⁹⁷ As such, only a small minority of the originally invited artists were able to partake in the exhibition opening.⁷⁹⁸ Internal documents suggest that the transport of Sarajevan artists outside of the city was further complicated by the unreliability of UNPROFOR flights, as Žiga, Finci, Ramić and Konstantinović were forced to extend their stay in France in light of the dangerous conditions that had cropped up surrounding the airport, and subsequent UNPROFOR inability to guarantee safe passage.⁷⁹⁹ In this way, the cultural airbridge was indeed functional following its inauguration, but its efficacy was heavily constrained by the conditions on the ground and the decision of the BiH authorities. Nevertheless, the program did have some success: by March of 1995, the cultural air link had facilitated exchanges to and from Sarajevo ranging from theatre performances to round-table discussions that involved roughly 500 persons.⁸⁰⁰

The initiative also facilitated the entry of artworks and artists into the besieged city, and although often unmentioned, most likely became the key infrastructural point that allowed for exhibitions of foreign artists to take place in Sarajevo. The scale on which this adapted humanitarian infrastructure functioned deserves special mention, as the logistical support

⁷⁹⁶ Rok Vogrić, Office of the Director General, UNESCO Paris to Anna Marie Corazza, Civil Affairs, UNPROFOR Zagreb.

⁷⁹⁷ Maria Helena Henriques Muller, UNESCO representative for BiH to Rok Vogrić, Office of ADG/DRG, “Answers to Your 23 January Fax,” January 26, 1995, B2ST06.3-51, AG 8 CI, INF, Carton 31, UNESCO Archives.

⁷⁹⁸ The original invitation to the Parisian exhibition included invitations for Nusret Pašić, Sead Čizmić, Dubravko Terzić, Adnan Begić, Fedja Isaković, Lejla Zahiragić, Petar Waldegg, Fikret Libovac, Mirsad Konstantinović, Avdo Žiga, Izet Alečković, Marina Finci, Affan Ramić, Salim Obralić, who all had works shown during the event. Only Konstantinović, Žiga, Alečković, Finci, Ramić and Obralić were able to make their way to the French capital. Esad Muftić and Zoran Bogdanović were also reportedly at the opening, traveling from a different origin-point than their colleagues. Rok Vogrić, Office of the Director General, UNESCO Paris to Anna Marie Corazza, Civil Affairs, UNPROFOR Zagreb, “CAB/94/67,” April 1, 1994; N.n, “Discours d’inauguration de l’exposition ‘17 gravures our la paix: Sarajevo 1993’. UNESCO, 13 avril 1994. (Ref. unknown),” Speech, April 13, 1994, FC005-35/5, AG 8, DRGOPS, Carton 26, UNESCO Archives; Rok Vogric, Office of the Director General, UNESCO Paris and Ratimir Kvaternik, UNESCO Zagreb, “Letter Pertaining Travel Arrangements.” Fax, April 8, 1994, B2ST06.3-51, AG 8 CI, INF, Carton 31, UNESCO Archives.

⁷⁹⁹ Letter to Hervé Bourges, “CAB/94/82,” Fax, April 18, 1994, B2ST06.3-51, AG 8 CI, INF, Carton 31, UNESCO Archives.

⁸⁰⁰ Nermina Kurspahić, “Cultural Institutions and Monuments in Sarajevo,” n.pag.

required for some included projects far exceeded any symbolic gestures. One such exhibition promoted by the Parisian UNESCO offices featuring some 150 poster prints by 140 French artists, was transported to Sarajevo with the help of the French UNPROFOR battalion.⁸⁰¹ Opened in the *Collegium Artisticum* Gallery and eventually gifted to the city, the exhibition is an example of the type of morale-boosting shows curated abroad that were then exhibited in Sarajevo. Fuad Hadžihalilović, referring to what was most likely this event in an interview conducted shortly after the end of hostilities, described the initiative within a framework that placed his city within a broader, European context, as a “wonderful selection of posters showing Sarajevo as a representative of European culture”, noting the importance of such contributions: “that kind of gesture is something people never forget”.⁸⁰²

Many of the artists who came to Sarajevo did so on the invitation of local artists and curators. The Obala Art Centar, one of the most innovative cultural hubs in the city, was responsible for majority of such invitations, bringing truly world-class artists to exhibit in their wartime spaces.⁸⁰³ While the gallery reserved most of its focus for mid-career photographers, many of whom had already accrued significant global recognition, painters and sculptors were also amongst those invited to show their work by the Obala Art Centar. Miriam Cahn, now considered to be amongst the ranks of Switzerland’s most celebrated contemporary artists, was one of the visual artists was present at her wartime *vernissage*, which took place during a ceasefire preceding the finalization of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Working with a variety of mediums, Cahn’s practice predominantly favors bold imagery and techniques that range from woodworking to large-format painting, often reflective of the artist’s personal politics. As an artist and individual, Miriam Cahn has always paid close attention to globally developing conflicts, leaving her interest in anti-nuclear and pacifist movements to shape her eventual distaste for the constant media presence that transferred the carnage of the Yugoslav wars to

⁸⁰¹ French artists and intellectuals were amongst the largest foreign demographic interested in the Sarajevan cause, both considering solidarity projects organized in France and the number of French artists who came to exhibit in Sarajevo. Beyond socio-political reasons, this could be in part explained by the pre-war popularity of specifically French modernism, actively fostered by Yugoslav state as an alternative to socialist realism, the dominance of French soldiers within the ranks of the UNPROFOR facilitating logistics, and the increasing public support at home. See, for example: Nevenka Stankovic, “The Case of Exploited Modernism. How Yugoslav Communists Used the Idea of Modern Art to Promote Political Agendas,” *Third Text* 20, no. 2 (March 2006): 151.

⁸⁰² Fuad Hadžihalilović, “Cultural Corridor France-Sarajevo,” in *The Siege of Sarajevo 1992-1996*, by Suada Kapić (Sarajevo: FAMA International, 2000), 728.

⁸⁰³ The artists who exhibited thanks to the initiative of the Obala Art Centar include Miriam Cahn, Christian Boltanski, and photographers such as Jean-Christian Bourcart, Josephine Guattari, Sophie Ristelhueber, Annie Leibovitz, Paul Lowe. The gallery also hosted editions of World Press Photo competitions in 1994 and 1995.

Western audiences.⁸⁰⁴ Primarily identified as a feminist artist and comfortable with political commentary, her practice is nevertheless rooted in the labor of her own internal turmoil.

In response to the violence of the Yugoslav dissolution but also the violence of its representation by the media she consumed, Cahn created a series of paintings through which she explored her own connection to the conflicts, placing them within a discursive continuity of violence that ranged from the Iraq War to the 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Her *Sarajevo* series merged personal and external artistic associations of conflict, through which Cahn discusses her work through a shared framework of European cultural heritage: referring to Picasso's "weeping women" of *Guernica*, her exercises in automatic writing connect her feminist reading of wartime violence with her personal understanding of the same, "sure that it matched this situation spot on this European situation of this shameful disgrace at me."⁸⁰⁵

At the same time, Cahn's pragmatic approach to the curatorial process corresponded to the Obala Art Centar's emphasis on the maintenance of professional standards, with the artist herself visibly associating her invitation to the city as related to the need for normality under extreme circumstances.⁸⁰⁶ Seemingly impressed by the 'normality' of having Mirsad Purivatra, the Center's director, come to her Basel studio to select works to be transported to Bosnia and the treatment of her own presence in Sarajevo, Cahn is amongst the few foreign artists that directly connects wartime artistic production to psychological necessity of such everyday practices:

"Doing an exhibition meant normality meant inviting international artists. out of nothing they had constructed an attractive functional exhibition space in the academy by the river after their first had been destroyed by shell fire. carefully they unpacked my things, every smallest little bit of sticky tape was peeled off, preserved, every piece of packing material was folded up. subsequently we installed the exhibition just as fast professionally as anywhere else in the world. the opening was set for 13.00 because of the soldiers and the electricity; the invitations were delivered by hand direct to the houses and flats. at the opening i had a nice conversation

⁸⁰⁴ Marta Dziewańska et al., *Miriam Cahn: I as Human* (Warsaw: Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, 2019), 85–86.

⁸⁰⁵ Marta Dziewańska et al., 85–86.

⁸⁰⁶ Miriam Cahn, "re-considered escape ways," accessed June 11, 2022, <https://miriamcahn.com/re-considered-escape-ways/>; Miriam Cahn, Press Release *sarajevoarbeit/le travail sarajevo/ the sarajevo work*, interview by Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, 2011, http://www.galeriewolff.com/medias/pdfs/MC_public_doc__engl.pdf; Miriam Cahn, "re-considered escape ways."

in french about art with the serbian general of the defending army. it was a pleasantly intensive and brief opening. it was fine.”⁸⁰⁷

Spending a week in Sarajevo to attend her own vernissage after traveling with UNPROFOR’s ‘Maybe Airlines’ from Zagreb, Cahn returns to the normality of her situation in further texts.⁸⁰⁸ In doing so, she remained in a discursive framework that created a moral divide between the rural and violent attacker, and the multiethnic and urban defender, while additionally entering the concept of *international belonging* as part of desired characteristics:

*“The cultural policy at Obala-center was that of normality, which meant (if I simplify) “don’t care about the war, don’t care that the Chetniks want to bombard Sarajevo and make an international and multiethnic city into an ethnic village, don’t care about this idea of national culture anyhow, we are making an international film and exhibition festival with international artists. So they invited me, which still moves me today...”*⁸⁰⁹

Although the reception of Miriam Cahn’s work amongst the Sarajevo public remains unclear, her own relationship to the city exemplifies a deeply empathetic connection at its base. However, the vocabularies mobilized by Cahn also show how her understanding of the Bosnian War is filtered through her complex relationship to violence, specifically based in the violent heritage of the Holocaust and the actuality of gender-based violence. Her interest and presence in Sarajevo are not to be understood as a primary result of her own experiences – however, her conscious and public mobilization of narratives based in ‘European’ cultural aspects suggests how non-Bosnian artists intellectually connected to a city at war.

The Obala Art Centar regularly invited European artists to exhibit in their spaces, mobilizing their scant resources to host exhibitions by some of the art world’s rising stars. Conceptual artist Christian Boltanski was amongst the most recognizable of such invitees, presenting a series of delicate installations placed throughout the Academy of Performing Arts, whose spaces were borrowed by Obala as a temporary exhibition space. The Obala curators navigated their limited wartime strategies by sending Boltanski’s invitation through the proxy of Sophie

⁸⁰⁷ Miriam Cahn, “re-considered escape ways.”

⁸⁰⁸ Miriam Cahn, “re-considered escape ways.”

⁸⁰⁹ Miriam Cahn, Press Release “sarajevoarbeit/le travail sarajevo/ the sarajevo work.”

Reichswiller, a photographer who herself had been to Sarajevo.⁸¹⁰ Boltanski himself interacted with similar processes of adaptation by choosing his works in part due to their transportable format, adapting his practice to fit the wartime conditions. The French sculptor and painter was generally positively received in the Bosnian capital – a reaction indebted in part to local appreciation for his 1993 entry to the Venice Biennale.⁸¹¹ Featuring a curated collection of pre-WWII photographs intended to question and humanize sources of violence, his Sarajevoan reviewers saw his interaction with historical elements of antifascism as reflective of his political stance to the Bosnian War, seeing him as “one of the few who with their works warned the coming of fascism.”⁸¹² While the works shown in Sarajevo were not of the same series, his reputation as a Western cultural actor who had used his work to condemn the fascist tendencies, a concept which held so much meaning within the Sarajevoan context, might also have affected the positive views held of him by the city’s arts scene.

Boltanski’s works intimately interacted with their surroundings without relying on archetypal themes often associated with the siege. One of the installations, titled *Enfants de Dijon*, featured intricately crafted figurines hung with wires from a small frame, surrounded and illuminated by a circle of spotlights and candles that cast ominous shadows on the walls.⁸¹³ As many of the artists’ works, the piece intimately treats the subject of death through referencing the fleeting nature of impressions and images, and was gifted to the city after the exhibition’s closing. Another one of Boltanski’s installations was specifically conceived for the show, featuring large paper sheets hung on wires stretched across the roof of the building, their dark backgrounds featuring unsettling figures and uncertain dates.⁸¹⁴ Unlike Miriam Cahn’s event, the vernissage did not take place during ceasefire, meaning that the many visitors who came to

⁸¹⁰ It is likely that the photographer in question was misnamed in the source article, and that it was Sophie Ristelhueber who had extended the invitation, having exhibited her works in the besieged city a month earlier. Mathieu Braunstein, “Les villes sont devenues des lieux de pèlerinage’ L’artiste Christian Boltanski, qui a fait don d’une oeuvre créée spécialement pour Sarajevo, commente l’initiative,” *Libération*, July 2, 1999. Published online: https://www.liberation.fr/arts/1999/07/02/christian-boltanski-les-villes-sont-devenues-des-lieux-de-pelerinage_278615/, Online.

⁸¹¹ Although, once again, reception of the event is difficult to gauge on a global scale, cultural actors have repeatedly referred to Boltanski’s exhibition as one of the more influential shows to have taken place during the siege. Srdjan Vuletić, interview.

⁸¹² Author translation: “(...) jedan od malobrojnih koji su svojim radovima upozorili na dolazak fašizma.” N.n. “Emocije - cilj umjetnosti,” *Oslobodjenje*, June 24, 1994, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁸¹³ Mathieu Braunstein, “Les villes sont devenues des lieux de pèlerinage’ L’artiste Christian Boltanski, qui a fait don d’une oeuvre créée spécialement pour Sarajevo, commente l’initiative.”

⁸¹⁴ Nermina Kurspahić, “Boltanski u Sarajevu,” in *Likovna kazivanja* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 2001), 282.

see the works also willingly exposed themselves to sniper fire.⁸¹⁵ Nevertheless, photographs of the opening and limited witness accounts suggest that the jovial atmosphere of the evening and the high turnout was reflective of the exhibition's impact on the city's artistic scene.

At the same time, documentation of the event suggests that Boltanski saw his Sarajevo exhibition through the framework of a shared cultural community. Explaining his enthusiasm for exhibiting in a besieged city, he emphasizes his admiration for the professionalism of the Obala Art Centar, the high standards of curators reflective of Sarajevo's position as one of the "cultural centers of Europe."⁸¹⁶ Unlike some of the other foreign artists who had exhibited in the city, Boltanski has offered little further insight into his personal connection to the event he was asked to host. As a result, it is unlikely that his choice of vocabulary resulted from a conscious political choice, but was rather reflective of his individual relationship to a European cultural heritage (as exemplified by his previous works), making a framework based in similar associations a comfortable way of understanding and discussing the siege of Sarajevo.

Despite his overwhelming popularity, Boltanski's works were also critiqued for the disconnect between artistic ideal and the practical reality of life in a city under siege. In a review of the exhibition, critic Nermina Kurspahić clearly acknowledges and appreciates the outstanding artistic merit of the art-objects and installations curated by the Obala Art Centar. However, she reserves her full praise of the exhibition, explaining that the overwhelming presence of death, a concept so central to Boltanski's *oeuvre*, was inappropriate in a context where the exhibition's visitors lived under its constant threat. Kurspahić does not attack the artist for this, but seems to rather note the disconnect between an artistic rejection of political violence and the visceral destruction of its consequences:

"And as the situation weren't the way it is,, that there is peace here and that we live in a normal, pleasant, southern European city, and that Sarajevo does fulfill all of these assumptions, the intellectual, spiritual and cultural potential, the exhibition of Christian Boltanski would have been a first-rate cultural event. But everything that Sarajevo is now, with all of its dead, wounded, tortured inhabitants, overcrowded cemeteries, half-destroyed hospitals, damaged and destroyed buildings, cultural monuments, makes us feel bitter, hopeless, anxious and

⁸¹⁵ Srdjan Vuletić, interview.

⁸¹⁶ N.n., "Emocije - cilj umjetnosti," 7.

absurd. Awareness of all of this now determines our lives, its contents, our perception of reality, and even of art."⁸¹⁷

As such, the participation of Christian Boltanski in the Sarajevo arts scene reflects a somewhat marginalized aspect of siege-time cultural production: whereas the international presence in and support for the besieged Bosnian capital (particularly when offered by "capable" professionals) was generally seen in a positive light, some Sarajevo actors perceived a sort of disconnect between their own experiences and how these were understood by external actors.



Figure 6. "Les Enfants de l'École", exhibition view. Drawing relatively large crowds, the opening of the show appears to have been popular amongst the city's population. Obala Art Centar, 1994, Roof of the Academy of Performing Arts, Sarajevo. Image reprinted from "Emocijom protiv smrti" by Aida Kalender, Sarajevo: *Oslobodjenje*, July 22, 1994, 10. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Oslobodjenje. Artwork rights to Christian Boltanski.

⁸¹⁷ Author translation: "I da situacija nije kakva jeste, da je ovdje mir i da živimo u normalnom, privlačnom južноевропском gradu, a upravo to je Sarajevo po svim svojim pretpostavkama, intelektualnim, duhovnim i kulturnim potencijalima, izložba Christiana Boltanskog bila bi prvorazredni kulturni događaj. Ali sve ono što Sarajevo sada jeste, sa svim svojim mrtvim, ranjenim, izmučenim građanima, prepunim mezarjima, polurazrušenim bolnicama, oštećenim i srušenim građevinama, spomenicima kulture, tjera nas na osjećanje gorčine, beznadja, tjeskobe i besmisla Svijest o svemu tome determinira sada naše živote, njegove sadržaje, recepciju stvarnosti, pa i umjetnosti." Nermina Kurspahić, "Boltanski u Sarajevu," 282.



Figure 7. “Théâtre d’ombres”, exhibition view. Image reprinted from “Christian Boltanski”, Aida Kaleandar, ed. Izeta Gradjević, Sarajevo: Obala Art Centar, 1994, 15. Photography by Željko Filipović. Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Artwork rights to Christian Boltanski.

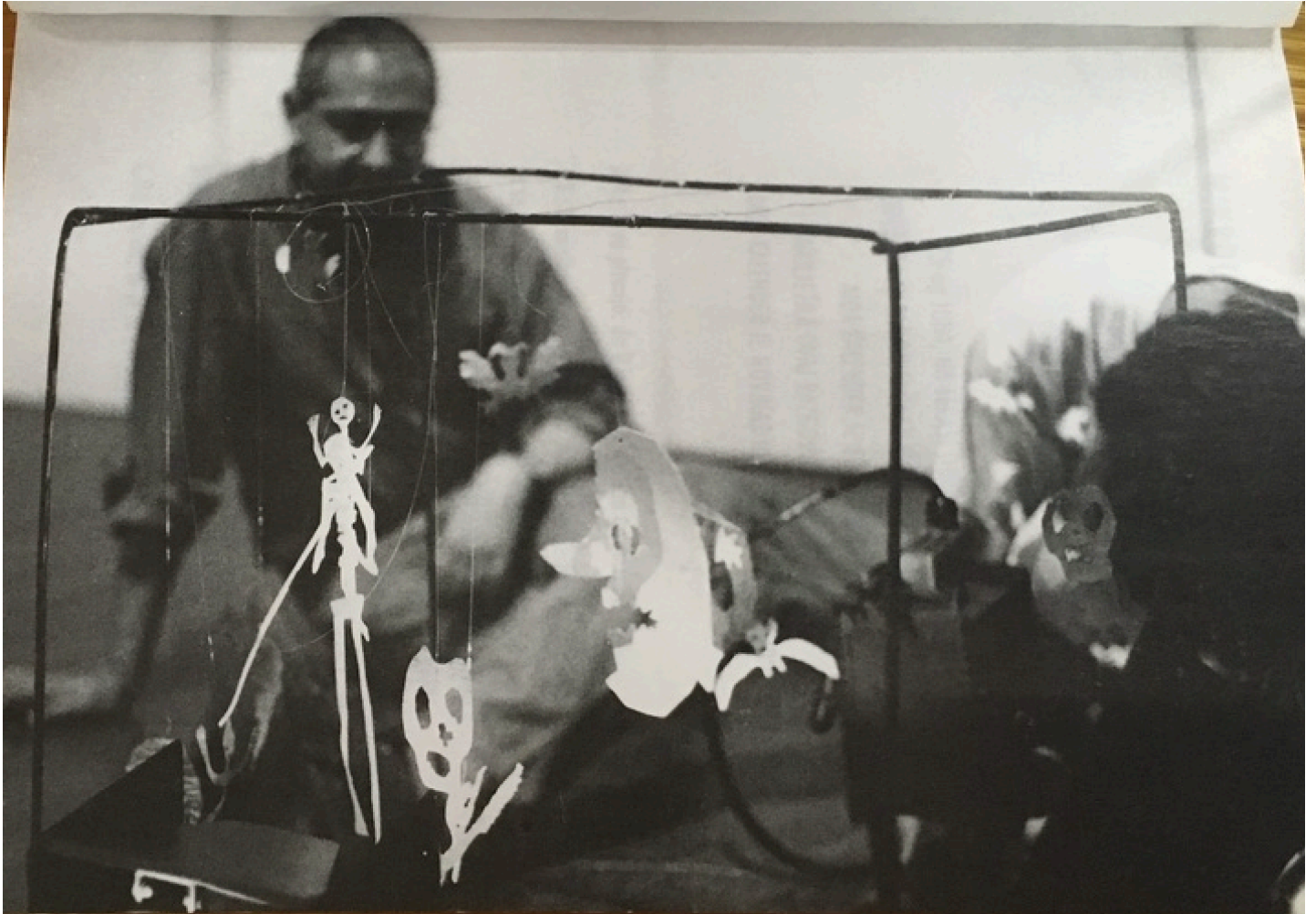


Figure 8. “Théâtre d’ombres”, exhibition view. Image reprinted from “Christian Boltanski”, Aida Kaleandar, ed. Izeta Gradjević, Sarajevo: Obala Art Centar, 1994, 4. Photography by Dejan Tasnaković. Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Artwork rights to Christian Boltanski.



Figure 9. “Christian Boltanski with friends from the Obala Art Centar”. Image reprinted from “Christian Boltanski”, Aida Kaleandar, ed. Izeta Gradjević, Sarajevo: Obala Art Centar, 1994, 35. Photography by Željko Filipović. Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Photographer Sophie Ristelhueber, also from France, was amongst the first foreign artists to set foot in wartime Sarajevo. The artist first gained popularity amongst the city’s cultural community thanks to the circulation of catalogue of her *Aftermath* series, brought to the city by a *Liberation* journalist as a gift for *Obala*’s Mirsad Purivatra.⁸¹⁸ Considering the near-complete absence of recent (professional) publications in the city, an additional consequence of the blockade, the gallery’s circles appear to not just have appreciated the novelty of viewing a recent catalogue, but identified themselves with the images depicting the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War. As has been previously noted, Ristelhueber chose to exhibit her series in an adapted format, traveling to Sarajevo with 27-large-format photocopies (measuring

⁸¹⁸ Nada Salom, “Rez u naše meso,” 6; Sophie Ristelhueber, interview.

100x130cm) that replaced original prints of her photographs. This wartime adaptation was tied in part to her own reflections on her role as an outsider, as her awareness of the extreme conditions of everyday life moved her to adapt her practice to Sarajevan realities:

*"I didn't bring them because I'm not sure if it makes sense to use so much useful space on the plane to bring such bulky things, to a city where there is already a shortage of everything, although in my country they pretend that everything is fine here. That's why I chose photocopies from my book, because I think it makes sense here to exhibit pictures that will be taken down like an ordinary poster after the exhibition."*⁸¹⁹

The pieces exhibited were part of a collection of images taken during the Gulf War, a similarly recent war notably remembered as the first conflict fully televised by global media. By exposing the lives of people with similar experiences of violence, Ristelhueber offered a connection to the inhabitants of two geographically removed spaces through her allegorical treatment of wartime suffering. Ristelhueber remembers how this resonated with the Sarajevan audience, many of whom saw their own struggles reflected in that of others, "because they speak of violence which is not theirs, but on which they could nevertheless project their own emotions".⁸²⁰ In this way, they did not impose external meanings or associations on the Sarajevan population, but provided a visual expression of a wartime violence that is otherwise difficult to articulate. Nermina Kurspahić, who had been critical of Christian Boltanski's treatment of death, therefore praised Ristelhueber's sensibility and sensitivity as part of a universal language that defined her *oeuvre*:

"The Gulf War, the 'dolled-up' war, could 'make sound' and 'speak' through art even after its end. The war that is going on in Bosnia and Herzegovina is of a different kind and manner. It has already made BiH a work of art similar to the sad and tragic ancient dramas, or 19th century novels. I believe that an artist with the sensibility of Sophie Ristelhueber would know, if she wanted to know, to extract valuable images of wartime scenes in BiH, without violating

⁸¹⁹ Author translation: "Nisam ih donijela zbog toga što nisam sigurna da li ima smisla iskoristiti toliko korsinog prostora u avionu da bi se donijele tako glomazne stvari, u grad u kome nedostaje gotovo sve, mada se u mojoj zemlji prave kao da je ovdje sve u redu. Zato sam izabrala fotokopije iz moje knjige jer mislim da ovdje ima smisla postaviti slike koje će nakon izložbe biti skinute kao obični plakat." Nada Salom, "Rez u naše meso," 6.

⁸²⁰ Author translation: "(...) Parce que ça parle de la violence qui n'est pas la leur, mais sur lequel ils pourraient quand meme projeter leurs propres emotions." Sophie Ristelhueber, interview.

her ethical dignity. Her artistic well-meaning gives her the right to create her art even of the bloody war in Bosnia.”⁸²¹

While it is unclear whether this text was published as part of the exhibition catalogue or in the form of a review, the familiarity and fondness that is expressed towards Ristelhueber also indicates the personal dimensions of transnational cooperation, or rather, the impact made by foreign cultural workers on their personal connections. In this sense, it should also be noted that the presence of foreign artists in Sarajevan circles was not uniformly welcomed nor able to overcome the daily struggles of the city’s inhabitants. For artist Ognjenka Finci, her impressions of a *vernissage* of works by world-class portrait photographer Annie Leibovitz were overshadowed by her everyday predicaments and struggles:

*“I remember the exhibition of portraits by Annie Leibovitz in the BH Gallery it was a gloomy, damp October day. Late afternoon I think. That was my impression, although I was glad that it was one of the first exhibitions in the gallery, which until almost that moment had been full of refugees so I was happy that it was returning to its old function as an exhibition place. But I remember that day a being exceptionally damp and dark. Of course the photographs of Annie Leibovitz are wonderful black-and-white excellently composed. But my memory of that opening is somehow dark and sad. I don’t really know why it was just like that. Although I was happy to see so many people I hadn’t seen for a long time, but somehow everything was black-and-white. Tones of gray. That was my memory of that 2nd October.”*⁸²²

This particular testimony points out the discursive duality of foreign presence in besieged Sarajevo: while international support was both ideologically important and contributed in practice to the well-being of the cultural scene, its position did not necessarily suppress the psychological consequences of living under constant threat. The ambiguous impact of foreign cultural presence in besieged Sarajevo can also be found in other spaces, whose scale sometimes exceeded expectations but gave dubious concrete results.

⁸²¹ Author translation: „Zaljevski, "našminkani" rat, mogao je i po svom završetku da "zvuči" i "govori" umjetnički. Rat koji u Bosni i Hercegovini traje drugačije je vrste i načina vođenja. On je već sada od BiH načinio umjetničko djelo na način tužnih i tragičnih antičkih drama, ili romana 19. stoljeća. Vjerujem da bi umjetnica sa senzibilitetom Sophie Ristelhuber, znala, kad bi htjela, izdvojiti vrijedne slike iz ratnih prizora u BiH, a da pri tome ne naruši njen etički dignitet. Njena umjetnička dobronamjernost daje joj za pravo da stvara svoju umjetnost i od bh. krvavog rata” Nermina Kurspahić, “Slike Rata,” in *Likovna kazivanja* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 2001), 281–82.

⁸²² Ognjenka Finci, “An Exhibition of Portraits by Annie Leibovitz,” in *The Siege of Sarajevo 1992-1996*, by Suada Kapić (Sarajevo: FAMA International, 2000), 494.

The presence of foreign artists in Sarajevo was not limited to UNESCO or Obala Art Centar initiatives, but also resulted from much more unstructured and accidental positions. The semi-professional artistic duo of Carol Mann and Andreas Pfeiffer, who had come to Sarajevo primarily to help rebuild a school in Dobrinja and, in the case of Pfeiffer, work as a war photographer, is perhaps exemplary of such accidental involvement. Throughout the siege, Mann exhibited her photographs both individually and together with Pfeiffer's computer works, yet describes her cultural contributions as secondary to her primary preoccupation of providing schooling for children in the destroyed suburb of Dobrinja.⁸²³ In fact, the few photojournalists who exhibited in the besieged city were often already there on assignment, as was the case for Paul Lowe, who had been invited in 1994 to present in the Obala Art Centar.⁸²⁴ Other artists mobilized their external networks to organize an exhibition in the besieged city, as was the case for Jeanloup Sieff, who had found support from the French government-affiliated group APAA (Association française d'action artistique).⁸²⁵

This same group was also involved in an exhibition of work by Louis Jammes, a French artist and photographer who spent several months in Sarajevo over the course of multiple, independently organized stays. Engaging directly with the ravaged urban landscape through site-specific installations, the most recognizable works from his Sarajevan series are made up of large-format collages consisting of photographs of local winged children, many possibly part of the sizeable Roma community native to the region, fastened to the ruined façades found around Sarajevo's urban landscape. Furthermore, during his time in Bosnia, Jammes also developed a series of photographs shot in the local morgue, depicting the victims of the siege.⁸²⁶ A monography treating the artist's work in Sarajevo, printed in Paris, offers some insight into the conceptual background of this series in which the bodies of siege victims are presented as witnesses to the atrocities committed to them, their suffering visually represented through their silence – but simultaneously appearing as strange, overly still, alien to the viewer. Writer Michel Surya proposes a theoretical placement of these pieces in his accompanying text,

⁸²³ Carol Mann, *La Résistance Des Femmes de Sarajevo* (Bellecombe-en-Bauge, Éditions du Croquant, 2014); Carol Mann, interview by Ewa Anna Kumelowski, December 17, 2017.

⁸²⁴ "Preživjeću," *Oslobodjenje*, January 21, 1994, Mediacentar Sarajevo, 5; "Pokušaj dokumentovanja duha," *Oslobodjenje*, January 22, 1994, 6, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁸²⁵ N.n. "Pariz umjetnika," *Oslobodjenje*, June 14, 1994, 10, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁸²⁶ Louis Jammes, Michel Surya, and Daniel Dobbels, *Sarajevo n'est En Réalité Le Nom de Rien Qui Puisse Être Représenté* (Paris: Flammarion 4 / Galerie du Jour - Agnès B./ Yvon Lambert Association Française d'Action Artistique, 1994). Institut National de l'Histoire de l'Art, Paris.

focusing on the symbolic meanings produced through processes of the aestheticization of war, questioning how external audiences can truly understand of the all-encompassing nature of violence in conflict. However, an emphasis on the symbolic transformation of human bodies throughout Surya's text creates a secondary problem, through which the persons whose bodies are employed as symbols are simultaneously erased of their individuality and intrinsic humanity, resulting in a critical analysis that omits the agency of Sarajevans in their own conflict. As a result, Surya interprets the lives of the young subjects of Jammes's winged montages through his own experiences and understandings:

*"Do they resist? What should they be resisting to? It's not sure anymore if they know. And why should they? For themselves? Nothing is for them and because there is nobody else left who would like to try it in their place."*⁸²⁷

While Surya's theorization of Jammes's *oeuvre* hinges primarily on questions of aesthetics, the manner through which the subjects of his works are treated as an embodiment of violence whose corporality is relegated to their symbolic value transforms them into exceptional, yet voiceless victims. Arguing that the transposition of a living child into the archetypal angel erases individual biographies and replaces them with the all-encompassing destruction of war, Surya's contextualization of Jammes's work results in some curious conclusions. As such, the practice that the artist developed in besieged Sarajevo, exemplified by a solo show held in Collegium Artisticum in 1993, is eerily reminiscent of Dragana Obradović's discussion of the representation of victims in the post-Yugoslav context: "grieved to the extent that their appearance in the media is conditioned by numerous factors: they are Europeans whose civilization has been destroyed yet who remain passive, voiceless victims to be spoken for by a range of Western intellectuals," Jammes's anonymous winged children become a symbol to be manipulated but are deprived of their integral humanity.⁸²⁸

The uncomfortable disconnect between Sarajevans themselves and their external supporters, while in no way universal, in this way can also be recognized in the visual arts. Critic Nermina Kurspahić confirms the presence of such a misunderstanding in one of her wartime texts aimed

⁸²⁷ Author translation: "Résistent-ils? A quoi faut-il qu'ils résistent? Il n'est plus sur qu'ils le sachent. Et pourquoi le faudrait-il? Pour eux? Rien que pour eux et parce qu'il n'y a plus personne a le vouloir ni a l'essayer a leur place." Louis Jammes, Michel Surya, and Daniel Dobbels, n.n.

⁸²⁸Obradović, *Writing the Yugoslav Wars*, 58.

directly at a French readership, referring to specific exhibitions of foreign artists who had come to her hometown in a less than flattering tone:

*“Conscious that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, isolated, shut in and having become martyrs in different ways are an artwork in themselves (and maybe in spite of themselves). Following this realization, some artists of the world, pushed by completely honorable reasons, come here, create and make artworks. And so, some of them, when they come to Sarajevo profit consciously from the media presence. Some are even malicious or unaware of the fact that what they are doing is mocking the reality in Bosnia-Herzegovina. They exhibit in Sarajevo photographs of madmen in Greece, the starving, the miserable, the dead of Ethiopia or Biafra, alongside the horrors of Bosnia-Herzegovina, without a doubt to compare them. In a country where Islamic culture and civilization have been dominant since centuries, we have baptized precious cultural moments in preserving those of other cultures. Now we erase them, we destroy all trace, and as if a mockery, flying angels appear with the faces of our fellow citizens.”*⁸²⁹

For some, foreign artists and cultural actors were unable to fully comprehend the struggles of local populations, and were perceived in part as insensitive or even as actively harmful for the morale of the city. It appears that this feeling of frustration with international actors was embedded in the Sarajevan cultural community at least to some extent, as recurring criticisms can be found amongst members of the scene. As such, Ibrahim Ljubović dryly comments on the presence of international support for his city, framed by him in a distinctly European context: “And in Europe some cretin lords boasted and played humanists. We constantly wondered what do I need a lord for? We are dying. And who sent them, who invented them. Nothing is clear to me.”⁸³⁰

⁸²⁹ Author translation: “Enfermés et martyrisés de différentes manières ils sont une oeuvre artistique en soi (peut-être malgré soi). Suite à cette prise de conscience, certains artistes du monde, poussés par des raisons tout à fait honorables, viennent ici, créent et réalisent des oeuvres. Ainsi, certains, quand ils viennent à Sarajevo, profitent-ils consciemment de la concentration médiatique. Certains sont même malicieux ou inconscients du fait que ce qu’ils font se moque de la réalité en Bosnie-Herzégovine et à Sarajevo. On expose à Sarajevo des photographies de fous de Grèce, d’affames, misérables, morts d’Ethiopie ou du Biafra, à côté des horreurs de Bosnie-Herzégovine, sans doute pour les mettre en rapport. Dans un pays où la culture et la civilisation islamiques sont dominantes depuis des siècles, on a bâti de précieux monuments culturels en préservant ceux des autres cultures. Maintenant on les efface, on détruit toutes ces traces, et comme par moquerie, les anges volants apparaissent avec les visages de nos concitoyens. “Nermina Kurspahić, “L’esthétique sous l’angle de l’éthique,” in *Hommage à Sarajevo*, ed. Rada Iveković and Dunja Blazević (Paris: Colloque du Mans - La Fonderie, 1993), 88.

⁸³⁰ Author translation: “A po Evropi su se šepurili i izigrali razne humaniste neki kreteni lordovi. Stalno nam se pitao šta će mi lord? Mi umiremo. A ko njih posla, ko ih izmisli. Ništa mi nije jasno.” Ibrahim Ljubović, “Stalno petak,” *Oslobodjenje*, December 26, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

Some of the more overt mis-characterizations of the conflict on the global scene also resulted in perplexing blunders by international actors who sought to involve themselves with Sarajevo's plight. This was also the case for the curators of the Edinburgh Theatre Festival, who had included the *Witnesses of Existence* show as part of their 1995 program, inviting a small delegation of artists, actors and film-makers to Scotland. Videographer Srdjan Vuletić offers his scathing criticism for the organizers of the event, pointing out the insulting absurdity of including four films from Serbia in the festival's 'Sarajevo' program. Vuletić actively describes this oversight as the result of a lack of true interest in the realities of the Bosnian War, which for him are characterized in part by the dehumanization of the victims of the war:

*"I think that the main problem, which is what I said there, is that they don't take this war seriously at all. They generally don't believe that people are dying here, that they are dying an artificial death which is a product of "war actions". They think it's a dispute between two smaller gangs. Anything that could open their eyes and shake their conscience is undesirable. Therefore, it was normal for them to put four films from Serbia that have nothing to do with Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the "Sarajevo" program!"*⁸³¹

Despite the overwhelmingly dominant narrative that externally framed European cultural support as a meaningful symbol of solidarity and an expression of concrete aid, some of these initiatives fell short of their intended goals, at least in the eyes of some parts of the cultural community. While some local artists welcomed foreign artists into their city, others exhibited critical views of the visitors, often doing so through the invocation of the divide between the perceived "European" and imagined "Other. This is not to say that the Sarajevan arts scene did not benefit or welcome foreign artists: the contribution of numerous international actors on the Sarajevan scene has been noted and cherished by the local community. The rigorous standards of local curators meant that not just anybody could exhibit in Sarajevan spaces, as most foreign solo shows took place specifically by invitation, meaning that their presence was both requested and of a high quality. Whereas the dominant narrative that depicts cooperation between Sarajevan and non-Sarajevan artists as almost exclusively resulting from the initiative of foreign artists, who were uncritically received by the local public, does not entirely fit with

⁸³¹ Author translation: "Mislim da je osnovni problem, to sam tamo i rekao, da oni ovaj rat uopšte ne uzimaju ozbiljno. Oni uopšte ne vjeruju da ovdje ljudi ginu, da umiru vještačkom smrću koja je produkt „ratnih dejstava“. Oni ne razumiju da je ovdje rat. Misle da je riječ o sporu dvije manje bande. Sve što bi moglo otvoriti njihove oči i uzdrmati savjest je nepoželjno. Stoga je za njih bilo normalno da se četiri filma iz Srbije koji nemaju veze sa Sarajevom i Bosnom i Hercegovinom stave u program 'Sarajevo'!" An. Šimić, "Nada iz svijeta apokalipse," 6.

the realities of the siege, the presence of international artists in besieged Sarajevo had a tremendous impact on the functioning of this scene.

5.3. EXPORTING THE SARAJEVAN NIGHTMARE. BESIEGED ART BEYOND THE CONFINES OF THE SIEGE

As has been demonstrated, Sarajevan visual artists were not entirely isolated from the international arts scene of the 1990s, despite the extensive limits placed on exchanges of information and people. While clearly experiencing the limitations of embargoes, travel restrictions and draft orders, they were able to circumvent the obstacles put on them by prevailing military conditions to participate in meaningful artistic exchanges with the external world, navigating wartime circumstances and adopting adapted practices. As a result, Sarajevan artists were not only passive recipients of foreign artistic production, but were also actively involved in projects featuring international artists in their space. This section focuses primarily on the presence of Sarajevan artists beyond the confines of their city, aiming to address how such events were practically organized and discursively framed by the local artistic community. This will be done through framing a category of international exhibitions as ones conceptualized as a form of collaborative practices, through which Sarajevan actors actively participated in and co-organized exhibitions with their foreign peers. Then, exhibitions of Sarajevan artists outside of their regional sphere will be addressed as a specific category of transnational communication, discussing their practical characteristics and the narratives that accompanied them.

5.3.1. BLURRING WARTIME BOUNDARIES: COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS DURING THE SIEGE OF SARAJEVO

Although interest in the international dimensions of the Sarajevan wartime cultural community converged mostly around foreign productions in the city, events organized jointly between local artists and international actors were amongst some of the most logistically impressive

ventures to take place during the four years of the siege. Large-scale efforts at raising awareness, money or support for the besieged city took place throughout the conflict through the efforts of international groups, NGOs, or the involvement of individual actors in the cause. Often overlooked, many of these events took place with the active help and support of Sarajevan artists and curators, facilitating collaboration between the two groups. Whether appearing in the form of truly co-curated events or the result of continuous cooperative projects that involved exhibitions of Sarajevan artists abroad or of international artists in Sarajevo, addressing these types of art events as the result of conscious collaboration provides new avenues for addressing the relationship between Bosnian and foreign artists.

One of the most innovative projects built upon mutual cooperation involved rather creative solutions to practical problems of everyday life under siege, while simultaneously mobilizing professional networks halfway across the world. In 1995, an ephemeral show called *Houston-Bridge* brought together some of the city's most successful artists with their Texan colleagues through the implementation of available technology: instead of showing works in the traditional fashion, the pieces circumvented the blockade by being sent by fax to and from Sarajevo. Transmitting the artworks across the Atlantic, the curators of the *Collegium Artisticum* and the Davis/McClain Gallery in Houston, Texas responded to the difficulties in transporting artworks by creating a video-link between their two cities. Those in Houston were hereby able to enjoy artworks by Bosnian stars such as Dževad Hozo, Affan Ramić, Mehmed Zaimović, Edin Numankadić; at the same time, a handful of Texan artists were on display in the Collegium Artisticum gallery.⁸³² The works of younger artists such as Amer Bakšić, TRIO or the duo of Bojan Bahić and Sanda Hnatjuk were also included in the selection, as were the works by a handful of visual artists who had only rarely (if ever) exhibited in siege-time Sarajevo beforehand. The event was conceived with the help of the Sarajevan International Center for Peace and the PEN Center, who were joined by a Texas-based organization called A.R.M. – Artist Rescue Mission Festival Sarajevo.⁸³³

Curiously absent from contemporary scholarship on the siege, the exhibition in question offers multiple points through which one can address the mechanisms that ruled cultural production of the period. Unsurprisingly, the exhibition did not exist in a temporal vacuum, but was most

⁸³² Divna Pervan, "Trajanje u slikama," 12.

⁸³³ Dan Allison, "Sarajevo-Houston," *Why. Publication for Human Rights and Peace Sarajevo '95. War Issue Special Supplement*, 1995, 58, Carton "Culture," Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Amer Bakšić, interview by Ewa Anna Kumelowski, September 26, 2019.

likely the result of pre-war connections between Sarajevan artists and one of the show's main organizers, Dan Allison. The Houston-based painter was no stranger to the Yugoslav art space, having participated in the 1987 edition of the prestigious Biennial of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana, even receiving the exhibition's grand prize.⁸³⁴ Three years later, Allison was invited to showcase his aquatints and collagraphs in the National Gallery of BiH, during which he most likely came into further contact with Yugoslav and Sarajevan artistic circles.⁸³⁵ Although this pre-existing relationship goes unmentioned in recovered archival material, it is highly likely that it was one of the catalysts behind the organization of such a cross-border exhibition. In this way, the importance of pre-war networks and the continuity maintained within regional and global circles appears to be crucial to understanding how and why international artists involved themselves with the Sarajevan wartime scene. Furthermore, such events counter accepted narratives that paint the artistic community of the siege as operating exclusively in a space of creative caesura forced by the siege, and encourage the inclusion of various continuities in analyses of art created during this time. Moreover, the practical improvisation that resulted in a decidedly uncommon fax-exhibition is reflective of the adaptive spatial practices that have been discussed recurrently throughout this text. By approaching the problem of Sarajevo's cultural isolation through creative solutions, even those employed by 'traditional' institutions such as the *Collegium Artisticum* or the International Peace Center were willing to lend their support to experimental projects taking place in the city. The use of unusual curatorial tools based in available technology further represent an example of innovative adaptations that emerged as a reaction to limitations imposed on the besieged, arguably fitting into the same analytical category of other wartime practices, such as the reconfiguration of urban exhibition spaces or the proliferation of works featuring elements of the destroyed landscape.

Despite having found little space in current scholarship on the period's visual arts, the unique format of the event has been noted by local artists to have been impactful for their individual practice. Nedžad Begović is one of the few artists who have spoken on the event, remembering his involvement in a post-war interview in which he discusses both the practical aspects of his participation and the private influence the event had on his practice:

⁸³⁴ "DAN ALLISON," Flatbed Press, accessed June 13, 2022, <https://flatbed-press.myshopify.com/collections/dan-allison>.

⁸³⁵ N.n *Den Elison. Dokumenti Novog Sveta. Grafike*. Belgrade, Skoplje, Sarajevo: Galerija Sebastian, Narodni Muzej Beograd, Muzej na Sovremenata Umetnost Skoplje, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarajevo, 1990. Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

*“We didn’t have any other way to communicate except by fax. We send something and they call us by satellite phone and tell us what the exhibition looks like. It was very important for me because then I was creating my fantasies. They tell us, now we’re in a park, lots of people round us, there’s light. Everything in complete contrast to Sarajevo. No trees, no lights, no parks and there they have everything. That exhibition affected me deeply, as if I’d been there where it’s completely different. And it had a great effect on my imagination, what was the place like. I think it’s rare for an artist to communicate in that way with a foreign location and with his exhibition and with other people. Especially it was important that there were people, artist on another planet from a different ambience who wanted to give us some kind of support what we called a movement for spiritual support.”*⁸³⁶

Other Sarajevo artists have echoed Begović’s impressions of the event, like Amila Smajović, for whom the communicational aspect of the show was crucial to her memory of the initiative:

*“We were so freezing in the collegium it was not a good plan, atmosphere. But we wanted to send a message. As I remember I only sent some words if that. It was short, but it was very important for us, because we open the connection with the world.”*⁸³⁷

The transplicative effect of a type of exploratory virtual exhibition meant that the participating artists were given a brief moment of insight into a different world, facilitating communication between persons and a positive aspect of the so-called “movement for spiritual support” that had found itself often under fire. Whereas one of the Sarajevo artists focused primarily on the personal aspects in his recollections, Dan Allison more readily engaged with larger discourses in his treatment of the show. In fact, he directly frames the initiative as an attempt at maintaining cultural relations in spite of war, an act which he associates with resistance to the global rise of fascism identified by other artists involved with the Sarajevo community: “What if someone had acted as this ‘bridge’ in Germany during the 1930s? Could we help now before another Holocaust become history?”⁸³⁸

The use of a “bridge” concept, despite most likely having no involvement with the official airlift conducted by the UNPROFOR, the need for communication is readily identified as a form of political action, and thereby explains the need and use of a fax-exhibition. To this end,

⁸³⁶ Nedžad Begović, “Fax-Contact with Artists from Houston,” in *The Siege of Sarajevo 1992-1996*, ed. Suada Kapić (Sarajevo: FAMA International, 2000), 1046.

⁸³⁷ Amila Smajović, interview by Ewa Anna Kumelowski, February 19, 2022.

⁸³⁸ Dan Allison, “Sarajevo-Houston,” 58.

Allison's text was followed by a short citation by Achille Bonito Oliva, who had presided over the 1994 Venice Biennale: "(...) of course art does not defeat war but it can produce a strong moral resistance to violence."⁸³⁹ In this way, the exhibition was framed, at least from the outside, as an active stance against the evils of fascist ideologies through the power of culture. Although the concept of Europe is not invoked, the comparison to historical fascisms is clearly used to accord an ethical quality to the artistic act.

Other instances of collaborative efforts took the form of Sarajevo involvement in existing international projects, conceived abroad but actively integrating local artists into the curatorial processes through which they were constructed. One example of this type of involvement can be found in an exhibition series hosted by a cross-cultural and international initiative aptly called Project for Europe, which sought to connect cultural actors throughout the European sphere. As part of a three-part series organized by the international group, a group show under the title "Art, Resistance and the English Garden" was opened in late 1995 only shortly before the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords. With the material conditions having improved slightly in the city, the exhibition featured works by 62 international artists, combining the collection previously shown in Copenhagen under the name "Europe Rediscovered" (1994) with pieces by new participants from Turkey, Iceland, Antarctica, Ireland and BiH, whose contributions were to "offer their vision of history, their account of ongoing European events".⁸⁴⁰ The Bosnian artists chosen to participate represented a mix of creative characters: hard-hitting names such as Milomir Kovačević Strašni or Edin Numankadić who had remained in the capital during the period of the war, influential artists-in-exile such as Jusuf Hadžifejzović or Mirsad Jazić, as well as the unlikely contributions of two local high-schoolers Adla Isanović and Ermin Bravo.⁸⁴¹ As such, the curatorial basis of this exhibition clearly emphasized both the professional and social qualities of the project, furthermore most likely necessitating close cooperation between local and international actors that would permit such a selection.

The reception of the event generally followed the discursive patterns outlined in this text: framing the show as a form of "recognition of the extraordinary moral and physical resistance

⁸³⁹ Dan Allison, 58.

⁸⁴⁰ Nikki Diana Marquardt, *Umjetnost, Otpor i Engleski Vrt* (Sarajevo: Kamerni teatar '55, 1995), n.pag. Galerija Gabrijel Archives.

⁸⁴¹ Galerie Nikki Diana Marquardt, *Art, Resistance and the English Garden*, 1995, n.pag., National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina; B. Ostojić, "Umjetnici kao animatori javnosti," *Večernje Novine*, December 12, 1995, n.pag., Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

as well as the braveness of Sarajevan citizens”, a sentiment that figured in *Večernje Novine* and that was later reprinted in the French *Journal du Soir*.⁸⁴² Another article quotes the organizer of the association, gallerist Nikki Diana Marquardt, as recognizing the moral imperatives of including the city of Sarajevo in their efforts maintaining cross-cultural cooperation in a post-1989 European context. Quoting Marquardt, another article featured in the women’s magazine *Žena* discusses the event through a vocabulary inclusive of civilization narratives: “Sarajevo is the last chance and warning to civilization to wake up and take responsibility” – a sentiment which was similarly reproduced in a variety of mediums, including the exhibition catalogue.⁸⁴³ Created as an answer to rising “fascism, xenophobia and racism”, the event responded to the war in Bosnia & Herzegovina through creating a space that allowed Western artists to express their solidarity while, crucially, also protesting the politics of their own countries in regards to the Western Balkans.⁸⁴⁴ In this way, the exhibition in question was firmly rooted in a European narrative, relying on related and interconnected concepts to discursively position the show within a political and ethical framework.

At the same time, it should be remembered that the Sarajevan exhibition was only one element of a three-part series that actively involved itself with the problems facing European societies in the 1990s. Extending far beyond the confines of the ex-Yugoslav sphere, the first edition was devoted to the commemoration of the fall of the Berlin Wall, celebrated in Copenhagen, and was followed by a planned art-event simply titled “Bridge” projected to take place in Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1996, nearing the end of The Troubles.⁸⁴⁵ From the outset, the exhibition was clearly framed as a European event for European audiences, creating a discursive link between the suffering of the Bosnian people and the idleness of the international community. The language that was used to discuss this show did emphasize the European qualities of the event, but did so through mobilizing vocabularies tied to defense, civilization, and antifascist resistance. By doing so, the collective literature on this exhibition identifies the abstract European identity with that of the civilization, even if Bosnia itself was never actively justified as belonging to this space, giving the impression that such explanations would be

⁸⁴² B. Ostojić, “Umjetnici kao animatori javnosti,” n.pag.

⁸⁴³ Author translation: “(...) posljedna šansa i upozorenje civilizaciji da se probudi i preuzme odgovornost.” Dika Kapić, “Gradjani svijeta,” *Žena*, December 1995, 13 edition, n.pag., Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

⁸⁴⁴ Nermina Kurspahić, “Umjetnički biješ,” 10.

⁸⁴⁵ Author translation: “(...) izražavaju priznanje izvanrednom moralnom i fizičkom otporu kao i hrabrosti gradjana Sarajeva.” B. Ostojić, “Umjetnici Kao Animatori Javnosti,” n.pag.

superfluous. In this way, such a project discursively integrates Sarajevan experiences into the European political continuum through framing the siege of Sarajevo as part of a historical continuum spanning from Berlin to Belfast.

Other instances in which Sarajevan artists were readily involved in international projects can be found in a series of cultural exchanges between specific cities or countries that took the form of extensive cultural programs, exhibitions and other events involving reciprocal actions. One of the most successful of these exchanges was chiefly catalyzed by Catalan art historian Maria Lluïsa Borràs i Gonzàlez, who invested herself in the plight of her hometown's sister-city through the organization of a number of artistic projects between 1993-1995.⁸⁴⁶ On the one hand, Borràs organized artistic events in the city of Barcelona with the aim of informing the public about siege of Sarajevo and its human consequences, in this way bringing the conflict closer to Catalan audiences. One example of this type of event can be found in a large-scale group exhibition organized in Barcelona, featuring some 165 Spanish and Catalan artists whose works were shown in an unidentified space. Opened in 1993, the show was conceived as an opportunity for artists to "protest against what was going on in Bosnia and what was being done to Sarajevo" through the medium of their artworks."⁸⁴⁷ As part of a greater trend of similar solidary cultural events organized around the world, the few exhibition texts available framed the exhibition as part of a pattern of pluralist transnational cooperation based on common moral codes, described within the context of the European dimension of the conflict. To this end, when speaking of the exhibition, academic José Vidal-Beneyeto alluded to the peaceful and multinational nature of European cultures while formulating his opposition to the Bosnian War as integral to the maintenance of European values:

⁸⁴⁶ Although the exact scale of exchanges between the Catalan and Bosnian circles remains difficult to accurately assess, their extensive presence in documentation suggests that the relationship between Barcelona and Sarajevo were heavily supported by actors from both cultural communities. This relationship was supported, on the Catalan side, by Maria Lluïsa Borràs i Gonzàlez, who was involved in the promotion of the *Witnesses of Existence* catalogue and an exhibition of TRIO posters in her city, provided backing for the publication of a Sarajevan art-historical magazine titled 'Razlik', and proposed the candidacy of Sarajevan artists for the Joan Miró Prize and the UNESCO Picasso Medal. Another large-scale group show known under the name "Barcelona per Sarajevo", featuring Mehmed Zaimović, was opened by the Association of Architects of Catalonia before traveling to Sarajevo, most likely also with the support of Maria Lluïsa Borràs i Gonzàlez. See: An. Šimić, "Teritorij zajedništva i slobode," *Oslobodjenje*, February 27, 1995, 12, Mediacentar Sarajevo; Meliha Husedžinović et al., *Mehmed Zaimović*, 205.

⁸⁴⁷ Author translation: "(...) svojim radovima protestiralo protiv onoga što se dešava u Bosni i što se radi Sarajevu." An. Šimić, "Teritorij Zajdenišva i Slobode," 12.

*“Peace cannot be delayed. Firstly because of humanity and solidarity, and finally because the future of Europe is being built there. Europe, just like Bosnia, has a multinational character and is a package of many different peoples and cultures.”*⁸⁴⁸

In this way, audiences in Barcelona were both confronted with artworks originating in a conflict they might otherwise be largely unfamiliar with, while also identifying the war in Bosnia as part of a common European struggle they could identify with. Similarly, other events curated by Maria Lluïsa Borràs can be found to promote similar European lexicons, appearing in different forms when transposed to the Bosnian capital. Serving as one of the main protagonists of one of the most improbable wartime exhibitions, Borràs lent her support to an exhibition of “Contemporary Spanish Prints” (“Savremena španska grafika”) that took place in the *Galerija Mak* in February of 1995.⁸⁴⁹ A project initiated by the Sarajevan International Peace Center, it received, at the very least, nominal support of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and was organized once again with endorsement of the European Agency of Culture.⁸⁵⁰ The event took place under the auspices of that year’s *Sarajevska Zima* program – a yearly cultural festival organized by the IPC, this time under the theme “Sarajevo – A crossroad of cultures”.⁸⁵¹ Featuring the works of thirteen contemporary Spanish artists, the collection transported to Sarajevo also included ten graphic prints by the world-renowned Joan Miró.⁸⁵² The inclusion of such valuable works had a practical and discursive effect on the curatorial concept of the exhibition: whereas the inclusion of pieces by a globally renowned artist, the exhibition itself gained in prestige, bringing valuable artworks to be shown in a city in which mortars regularly decimated the urban landscape sent a powerful message to the isolated local population.⁸⁵³ By organizing such an exhibition, with the cooperation of local Sarajevan actors, Spanish and Catalan supporters of the Sarajevan cause showed that the imposition of the siege was not

⁸⁴⁸ Author translation: “Mir se ne može odlagati. Prvo zbog humanosti i solidarnosti i konačno jer se tamo gradi sutrašnjica Evrope. Evropa, baš kao i Bosna ima, višenacionalni karakter i predstavlja snop mnogobrojnih i različitih naroda i kultura.” An. Šimić, 12.

⁸⁴⁹ An. Šimić, 12.

⁸⁵⁰ Carmen Alborch, José Vidal-Beneyeto, and Maria Lluïsa Borràs-Gonzàlez, *Sarajevo Raskršće Kulture / Sarajevo Encrucijada Multicultural* (Sarajevo: National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1994), MACBA Archive.

⁸⁵¹ An. Šimić, “Teritorij zajedništva i slobode,” 12.

⁸⁵² Carmen Alborch, José Vidal-Beneyeto, and Maria Lluïsa Borràs-Gonzàlez, *Sarajevo Raskršće Kultura / Sarajevo Encrucijada Multicultural*, n.pag.

⁸⁵³ Following current art market prices, prints by Joan Miró are valued somewhere between 10,000\$ and 25,000\$ on average. Although these prices would have been lower in 1994, the caliber of the artist makes it likely that the collection transported to Sarajevo was valued at around 100,000\$, a significant cost for works that were to be exhibited in a literal warzone.

enough to isolate the Bosnian cultural communities from the rest of the global art world, of which they are part. At the same time, it is highly likely that the involvement of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs also can be credited with making this event possible, reflecting the practical results of political support. Nevertheless, the danger associated with exhibiting in Sarajevo meant that the show was only open for one night, before being spirited back to Barcelona soon after the *vernissage* was open.⁸⁵⁴ In Sarajevo, this exhibition was understood directly through a lens of reciprocity, as a “part of a broad solidarity and our commitment to peace” promoted by artists and other cultural actors.⁸⁵⁵

The Catalan solidarity efforts were also, unsurprisingly, reflective of patterns in which a common European history was used as a tool for framing and understanding the Bosnian conflict. In a text written for the catalogue of the *Mape Grafika 92, 93 i 94* exhibition, which she invited to be exhibited in Barcelona, Maria Lluïsa Borràs i González recalls her experience in the besieged city where she had met with students of the ALU, noting that “not only is art not dead in Sarajevo, but I can wish it and predict bright moments in the future.”⁸⁵⁶ Her involvement with local youth is telling of her attachment to the city which exceeded a simple symbolic political statement, but also indicates a different approach of foreign cultural actors requiring long-term involvement. In this case, Borràs does refer to Europe, but only in reference to the waning interest in the arts – contrasting it to Sarajevo, where the exhibition in question had “attracted the attention of the entire city.”⁸⁵⁷ The case discussed above does not necessarily fit the category of collaborative exhibitions, but the reciprocal nature of these events and the sustained cooperation between cultural actors from Barcelona and Sarajevo nevertheless qualifies these initiatives as part of a broader bilateral curatorial concept. In this way, neither party dominated the exchanges that took place, but instead built long-term collaborative structures based on shared values and goals.

Another example of collaborative exchanges can be found in the extensive cultural programming that involved Sarajevo artists in the Czech cultural scene, manifesting in the

⁸⁵⁴ Aleksandar Ljiljak et al., eds., *40 Godina - Muzej Književnosti i Pozorišne Umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine* (Sarajevo: Muzej Književnosti i Pozorišne Umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, 2001), 33; An. Šimić, “Teritorij zajedništva i slobode,” 12.

⁸⁵⁵ Aleksandar Ljiljak et al., *40 Godina - Muzej Književnosti i Pozorišne Umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine*, 33; An. Šimić, “Teritorij zajedništva i slobode,” 12.

⁸⁵⁶ Marija Luisa Boras, “Gluhoća nije spriječila Betovena,” 10.

⁸⁵⁷ Marija Luisa Boras, 10.

form of reciprocal exhibitions in Sarajevo and in Prague. A group show of Czech artists in the *Galerija Gabrijel* in 1995 was followed closely by a so-called “Week of Czech Culture” in Sarajevo, which showcased Czech culture to the Bosnian public, which was not entirely foreign to the Sarajevo public: many earlier generations of artists had finished their studies in Prague.⁸⁵⁸ These events were reciprocated by a month-long cultural program of Sarajevo culture, which featured a dense program that showcased a wide variety of cultural products from the besieged city, taking place under the political patronage of Alija Izetbegović and Vaclav Havel.⁸⁵⁹ Allegedly costing benefactors some 230,000 DM, the organizers of the event invited over 180 cultural actors from besieged Sarajevo, with the participation of 99 Czech and 29 Bosnian organizations.⁸⁶⁰ The intensity of these initiatives is reflected in the extensive coverage found in Sarajevo media, which greatly favored the involvement of their own arts scene with that of the Czech Republic.⁸⁶¹ The relationship between the two states was framed in the press through a vocabulary of solidarity that was felt by both Czech and Bosnian actors. In this way, one Czech artist qualified the exhibition of his countrymen in Sarajevo as not “just an expression of solidarity of these graphic artists and their gift to your city”, but “an expression of solidarity of all Czechs in my country towards you.”⁸⁶² This idea is echoed by prof. dr. Tarik Kupusović, who paints the exhibition as a reflection of the universal importance of culture: “Sarajevo, despite the blockade, killing and destruction did not lose its sense and need for spiritual creation and this is that nucleus of humanism that honors this city and the people in it. The city that loses this sense stops being a city and becomes a *palanka*.”⁸⁶³ Only one Sarajevo newspaper goes into detail about the Czech reception of the event, which was seen characterized by a difference in ideas between prime minister Vaclav Klaus and president Vaclav Havel, the former of which “did not understand why President Havel had only invited

⁸⁵⁸ Filip Tesar, and Igor Blažević, “Bosna nije samo rat,” *Dani*, November 1995, 46, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁸⁵⁹ Filip Tesar and Igor Blažević, 46.

⁸⁶⁰ Filip Tesar and Igor Blažević, 46.

⁸⁶¹ Nada Salom, “Između Odabira i Zbira,” 12; N.O., “Česi na tlu BiH,” *Oslobodjenje*, September 17, 1995, 11, Mediacentar Sarajevo; Jan Urban, “Prezentacija ponosne zemlje,” *Oslobodjenje*, September 20, 1995, 11, Mediacentar Sarajevo; Nada Salom, “Kuća, sahan, trag...,” *Oslobodjenje*, October 8, 1995, 12, Mediacentar Sarajevo; Filip Tesar and Igor Blažević, “Bosna Nije Samo Rat,” 46–47.

⁸⁶² Author translation: “Ove grafike nisu samo izraz solidarnosti ovih grafičara – rekao je Sozdanski na otvorenju izložbe – i njihov dar vašem gradu nego su izraz solidarnosti svih Čeha u mojoj zemlji prema vama.” An. Šimić, “Praha Sarajevo,” *Oslobodjenje*, March 5, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁸⁶³ The term *palanka* refers to a smaller sized town with a particularly provincial mentality. Author translation: “Sarajevo uprkos blokadi ubijanju i razaranju nije izgubilo smisao i potrebu za duhovnim stvaralaštvom i to je taj nukleus humanizma koji oplemenjuje i ovaj grad i ljude u njemu. Grad koji izgubi taj smisao prestaje biti grad i postaje palanka.” An. Šimić, 7.

representatives from one of the sides to Prague” and a vastly varied attendance of events. According to the journalist, the exhibition openings were mainly attended by the same core group of viewers who also previously had shown interest in the plight of the city.⁸⁶⁴ It is interesting to note that the ambivalence of Czech reception of this initiative does not figure in other Sarajevan reviews, although it remains difficult to clearly delineate a reason for this absence.⁸⁶⁵

The establishment of the French cultural center in the Bosnian capital can also be classified as a reflection of sustained bilateral flows, and is thereby deserving of a brief mention. Although primarily involved in the organization of film screenings and book promotions, the center itself appears to have positioned its role as an intermediary of bilateral cultural relations between Bosnia and France, to be sustained even in times of war. However, the center also hosted visual arts shows, as was the case for an exhibition of Ivica Propadalo organized with the cooperation of the local Napredak association. For the occasion, Henry Jacolin French ambassador to BiH, discussed the center as a bridge between the two country’s cultures, reiterating the importance of the UNESCO cultural corridor.⁸⁶⁶ This sentiment was confirmed from the Bosnian viewpoint by Franjo Topić, director of Napredak, who saw the exhibition as the “beginning of collaboration and the creation of bridges between two countries”, but explaining the importance of such ideas through a lexicon that frames European belonging as central in their existence: “living in this darkness we won’t be able to find a way out without the help of European states, and France is a European country whose culture is on a high level.”⁸⁶⁷ In this way, even smaller institutions can be seen as contributing to international exchanges, presenting them as crucial to the maintenance of relations between Bosnia and other European states.

The involvement of Sarajevan artists in the various stages of conceiving and curating international exhibitions is perhaps one of the aspects of the wartime arts scene which best illustrates the interconnected ways in which those in the besieged city interacted with those outside of it. Vocabularies referring to shared European heritage were not essential elements of curatorial concepts that involved Sarajevans in existing projects, but were often integrated

⁸⁶⁴ Author translation: “(...) što je kulminiralo izjavom da ne shvaća zašto je predsjednik Havel u Prag pozvao predstavnika samo jedne od zaraćenih strana.” Filip Tesar and Igor Blažević, “Bosna Nije Samo Rat,” 47.

⁸⁶⁵ Filip Tesar and Igor Blažević, 47.

⁸⁶⁶ An. Šimić, “Oči istine,” *Oslobodjenje*, April 18, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁸⁶⁷ Author translation: “(...) živeći u ovom mraku nećemo moći naći izlaz bez pomoći evropskih zemalja, a Francuska je evropska zemlja čija je kultura na visokoj razini.” An. Šimić, 7.

into their concept as a means of expressing (the often emotional) affiliation felt by actors on both sides of the blockade. In this way, the mobilization of a lexicon that uses the concept of BiH proximity to Europe, often through a civilizational lens, allowed the city's cultural actors to simultaneously address their foreign counterparts on equal footing, while expressing their gratitude for shows of solidarity. Conversely, some foreign actors used this vocabulary to explain their interest in and solidarity with the besieged city, arguing that a shared heritage and historical knowledge makes it their duty to intervene in the way they know how – through the creation of living cultural networks. Furthermore, a lack of archival sources in Bosnia pertaining to these events make it difficult to truly judge the scope of involvement of international actors, suggesting that further research can shed further light on the nature of these instances of bilateral cooperation.

5.3.2. SARAJEVAN ARTISTS ABROAD. THE EVERYDAY POLITICS OF MOBILITIES WITHIN BESIEGED SARAJEVO

Although documentation about Sarajevan artworks exhibited beyond the confines of the city remains fragmented, Bosnian artists from the besieged city regularly participated in cultural events beyond the borders of the blockade. Navigating the porous structures that largely defined daily life in the city, whether those imposed by local politics or by the presence of the UNPROFOR, many artists succeeded in bringing their artworks, and sometimes themselves, to international exhibitions. In this way, at least twenty exhibitions that were opened in Sarajevo were also made available to publics abroad, whereas at least twenty-three shows held internationally featured artworks by Sarajevan artists.⁸⁶⁸ While many of these events have been referenced in previous sections of this chapter, the indicative scale on which Sarajevan artists were presented on a global art scene is by extrapolation non-negligible, and should therefore also be addressed as an independent phenomenon. Once again, the scarcity of source material available within Bosnian archives makes it difficult to produce a clear image of the scale and materiality of such events, yet their very presence suggests an already relevant practice of showing Sarajevan artworks outside of the city. It should be noted that discussions on the

⁸⁶⁸ As before, this data only includes exhibitions of artists actively living in Sarajevo between 1992-1996, and should be considered to be an indicative number. Data compiled by author.

quality of works being exported and the messages sent by them were at the very least present in besieged Sarajevo, undercutting some of the accepted narratives that praised any type of artistic production as worthy due to the circumstances of their creation.⁸⁶⁹ Generally accepted to fulfil the role of cultural emissaries, influencing global public opinion with the hope of encouraging intervention and an end of the siege, such exhibitions were discussed in Sarajevo primarily from the point of view of those who were able to travel to their vernissages. However, Sarajevo actors rarely, if ever, appear to speak of such events with registers tied to European narratives, offering a different perspective on the relationship between such associations and the Bosnian public.

Whereas the cultural air-link program offered a way out of the city for some of the city's artists, many others were unable to travel to exhibit their artworks abroad, as the siege conditions made it difficult, if not impossible, for most Sarajevans to travel outside of the confines of the capital. In general, communication with the outside world was heavily limited, and few civilians were able to leave unless they were journalists in possession of special permits.⁸⁷⁰ The progressive expansion of military drafts, which by 1995 had been extended to all males under the age of forty-five, meant that male artists also needed special permits to avoid service on the front lines.⁸⁷¹ As a rule, soldiers were not allowed to leave the city, for fear of desertion, meaning that many of the younger artists were prohibited from attending their exhibitions abroad. In this way, it was not uncommon for cultural actors who had been invited to present abroad to be denied the possibility to do so on grounds of their inability to travel.

Despite the difficulties in transporting people, artworks were easier to get across the border, resulting in a relatively steady stream of Sarajevo exhibitions in foreign galleries. From exhibitions held in Barcelona and Paris, all the way to New York and Tokyo, Bosnian artists used their art to communicate with the outside world with hopes of swaying both public and political opinion. Those who remained in the city appear to have held these exhibitions in particular regard, as sudden detachment from the "outside world" constituted a physical and emotional barrier for many: in the words of critic Divna Pervan, "all of these places around the

⁸⁶⁹ See, for example; Damir Hrasnica, "Priča o slici," *Dani*, June 15, 1994, 60, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁸⁷⁰ Kenneth Morrison and Paul Lowe, *Reporting the Siege of Sarajevo*, 88; Davor Diklić, *Teatar u Ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva*, 186.

⁸⁷¹ Maria Helena Henriques Muller, UNESCO representative for BiH, "Fax to Rok Vogrić from Maria Helena Henriques Mueller," January 26, 1995. UNESCO Archives.

world are so close and so far.”⁸⁷² Seeing as the majority of the city’s population was inhibited from traveling outside of their hometown, or in some cases, their neighborhoods, information about their colleagues and their work abroad appears to have carried a truly morale-boosting capacity. This attitude can be found in press coverage of such events, for example, in the words of Divna Pervan:

*“We can’t go even to Ilidža, and here, our artists, and actors, and musicians, and writers, even if not physically, with their works we travel all around the planet, all to show that our city is alive.”*⁸⁷³

A similar argument is made by Nermina Kurspahić, for whom the Sarajevan cultural programs and their presence abroad exemplifies the Bosnian need for communication with foreign audiences as integral to the scene’s existence. In a report for UNESCO, Kurspahić argues that “Sarajevo’s surviving cultural programs prove the strong spirit and determined creativity of its artists and people, showing the rest of the world that they – and indeed human beings in general – ‘need bread, but they need roses too’.”⁸⁷⁴ Going further, she argues for the importance of cultural exchanges in the context of both intellectual and practical dimensions:

*“This kind of cultural exchange is beneficial not only to Sarajevans, who in this state of siege are virtually cut off from the outside world, but to the international community as well, for it gives the world a chance to experience the values and creative expressions of Bosnian-Herzegovinian culture. It also allows opportunities for direct contact with potential sponsors of ongoing and forthcoming cultural programs in Sarajevo.”*⁸⁷⁵

In this way, as has been noted previously, the interest of Sarajevan actors in the international cultural scene was in essence both practical and theoretical. On the one hand, the necessity of communicating to an outside world generally unfamiliar with the region of the “humanity” of the Sarajevan population, or the “values and creative expressions of Bosnian-Herzegovinian culture”, is intrinsically tied to the results of such communication: material support in the form of “potential sponsors”, and, eventually, an envisioned foreign intervention.⁸⁷⁶ Notably,

⁸⁷² Divna Pervan, “Sarajevo - Umjetnost Otpora,” 7.

⁸⁷³ Divna Pervan, 7.

⁸⁷⁴ Nermina Kurspahić, “Cultural Institutions and Monuments in Sarajevo,” 9.

⁸⁷⁵ Nermina Kurspahić, 9.

⁸⁷⁶ Nermina Kurspahić, 9.

belonging to a European cultural sphere does not figure in Kurspahić's plea for UNESCO involvement in the siege-time cultural sphere.

The interest paid to the generation of emerging artists studying at the Academy of Fine Arts, exemplified by lectures by visiting international artists such as IRWIN or Suzanne Meszoly, also found its expression in international efforts at including young Sarajevans in the global artistic community. The efforts of Sarajevan groups such as the IPC resulted in concrete opportunities for young artists: for the first time, emerging Bosnian artists such as Ahmed Ajdin, Amer Bakšić, Haris Džerković, Alma Suljević and Adnan Begić, were able to participate in the Lisbon Biennale, heralded as a meeting of Young Mediterraneans of Europe.⁸⁷⁷ The European qualification of the Mediterranean region, unclear in its origins, is perhaps not entirely relevant to Sarajevan auto-classifications, but the presence of Bosnian artists at such an event does reflect emerging patterns that highlighted the importance of continued communication with the global artistic community.

For many of the artists that were able to leave the besieged city, their presence on the international arts scene was articulated within a framework that emphasized the need for communication with the external world as a practical solution for the more intimate effects of the siege-imposed isolation. As such, some of those who had this opportunity to exit their wartime reality, even for a short time, described their journeys as a nearly surreal experience. In this way, Nedžad Begović discussed his presence at a vernissage of works by himself, Affan Ramić and TRIO organized in 1995 in Paris:

*"Of course, this is in some way a futuristic exhibition. An artistic warning, sounding the alarm, raising awareness amongst the people. We are trying to give an example of what is happening around the world. At least on some global level of the fight against fascism, Bosnia has to be important to them and because of this they all need to know about what is happening here."*⁸⁷⁸

Once again, the adaptation of the artistic medium as a tool of communication with the outside world is primary to the artist's understanding of his presence abroad. Denoting the attack on Sarajevo as a primarily fascist attack, Begović speaks of the utility of his art in a lexicon that

⁸⁷⁷ Svjetlana Mustafić, "Od ljudskih prava do galerije," *Oslobodjenje*, January 4, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁸⁷⁸ Author translation: "Naravno, ovo je na neki način i futuristička izložba. Umjetnička opomena, budjenje alarma, svijesti kod ljudi. Pokušavano plasirati exemplum onog što se dešava u svijetu. Barem sa te neke globalne ravni borbe protiv fašizma, Bosna treba da im bude važna i zbog toga moraju svi imati svijest o tome šta se ovdje dešava." S. Mustafić, "Umjetnička opomena," *Oslobodjenje*, May 9, 1995, 6, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

is equally recognizable amongst former Yugoslavs as much as inhabitants of a broader European cultural space. Although information about the reception of these works is currently difficult to identify, the fact that such discourses functioned in Sarajevan understandings of artistic events organized abroad points to a simultaneous interiorization of European, or rather antifascist ideals, whose origin is not necessarily rooted in external perceptions of the former Yugoslav region.

The importance of the visual arts as a messenger of the indescribable experiences of life under siege is often emphasized by Sarajevan artists themselves, for whom communication with foreign audiences unfamiliar with both the region's history and the brutality inflicted on the Bosnian capital was particularly difficult. The meaning-carrying capacities of the visual arts, whose qualities are often minimized or misunderstood by historians of the Yugoslav conflicts, should hereby not be seen as entirely negligible in a framework where the truly devastating psychological effects of life under a long-lasting siege can have on a population. In this way, Affan Ramić, perhaps one of the most iconic painters of his generation, explained how he was only able to truly communicate with those outside of the city through the medium of his art:

*"I remember when I went to Paris, that it was clear to me that these people, no matter what I told them, could not understand where I was coming from. But they could probably understand my art. And then after the exhibition they ask me to tell them about Sarajevo, and I think about how to put together a sentence and then say 'We are living there in abundance of nothing, but we are still living from a scarcity of evidence.' That is all that I tell them."*⁸⁷⁹

People who had no experience with war were unlikely to truly understand the difficulties of life under constant siege, but they were instead able to view and process the internal effects that such experiences had on a person through viewing Ramić's paintings. On the other hand, the artist himself, perhaps unwittingly, admits to not being able to truly talk about what his life in the besieged city was like – allowing his artworks to become the primary tool of communication of difficult emotions. Conversely, traveling artists provided those unable to leave the city with the opportunity to understand how the outside world saw them and their struggles, at times becoming a reflection of an unfavorable view of the international community

⁸⁷⁹ Author translation: "Ja se sjećam kad sam otišao u Pariz, da mi je bilo jasno da ti ljudi, bilo šta da im kažem, ne mogu shvatiti odakle ja dolazim. Ali su vjerovatno mogli shvatiti moju umjetnost. I onda me poslije izložbe pitaju da im kažem o Sarajevu, i ja se mislim kako da sklopim rečenicu pa kažem: 'Mi tamo živimo u izobilju ničega, a još smo uvijek živi iz nedostatka dokaza.' To je sve što sam im rekao." Davor Diklić, *Teatar u Ratnom Sarajevu 1992-1995. - Svjedočanstva*, 207.

that also existed within the city's population. Upon returning from Paris, Ramić was questioned upon his return to Sarajevo from his first trip to Paris by his entourage, curious to know about life outside of the siege. His response was as follows:

*"I told them that this nation is becoming suspicious to me. "Why?" I say: "They do not know how to be happy." "How can they not know?" "You go out – there's lights outside. You go inside – light, water, heating. Traffic lights are working. In the café – they have whiskey. They even have ice! Everything is normal! And here a glass of water is wealth, abstraction. They go into a bathtub filled with hot water – they don't care. They don't know how to be happy. And we don't even have a glass of water."*⁸⁸⁰

It is clear that Ramić does not describe the French public with animosity, but instead remarks upon the disconnect felt between the artist and his public, who, while sympathetic, lacked the capacity to fully understand the consequences of constant life under siege. This disconnect can account at least in part for the complicated relationship between Sarajevans and foreign cultural actors that involved themselves with their plight, which rarely was openly contentious but sometimes reflected a mutual difficulty in communication.

These individual recollections detailing how Sarajevan cultural actors experienced the outside world are contrasted by the more global reception of large-scale artistic projects abroad. Exhibitions like the iconic *Svjedoci Postojanja* traveled around the globe with the support of innumerable foreign actors, finding their way to unexpected audiences. Popular amongst "metropolises and international gallery spaces", the collection and a few of its artists first opened in the New York Kunsthalle venue following the failure to transport the works to the 1993 Venice Biennale.⁸⁸¹ All in all, *Svjedoci Postojanja* was shown in New York (1994), Biel-Bienne (1994), Edinburgh (1994), Milan (1994), Zagreb (1994), Innsbruck (1995), Prague (1995).⁸⁸²

On a logistical level, the exhibition is perhaps the best illustration of the complicated landscape which cultural actors (as well as ordinary citizens) had to navigate in order to travel in and out

⁸⁸⁰ Author translation: „Kad sam ja prvi put otišao u Pariz, i kad sam se vratio, pitaju me opet ovi ovdje kako je tamo. Ja im kažem da mi ta nacija postaje sumnjiva. 'Zašto?' Kažem: 'Oni ne znaju da se raduju.' 'Kako ne znaju?' 'Izadješ – napolju svjetlo. Udješ – svjetlo, voda, topla. Rade semafori. U kafani – ima viski. Ima i leda! Njima sve to normalno! A u nas čaša vode je bogatstvo, apstrakcija. Oni tamo udju u kadu tople vode – njima svejedno. Ne znaju da se raduju. A mi nemamo ni čašu vode.'” Davor Diklić, 209.

⁸⁸¹ An. Šimić, "Nada iz svijeta apokalipse," 6.

⁸⁸² Data compiled by author.

of the besieged capital. Originally intended as the Bosnian entry for the 1993 Venice Biennale, the transport was refused by the UNPROFOR forces controlling the airport, despite the alleged involvement of Alija Izetbegović himself.⁸⁸³ Whereas the failure was thoroughly broadcast over the next years, Sarajevans appear to have been initially surprised by the lack of support from the military— and convinced until at least late April that the exhibition would take place. The show was meant to “extend a hand to the world and on it so that before their eyes the artistic statement would shine through the true and indestructible Sarajevo.”⁸⁸⁴ The artworks were only able to make their way out of the city after the intervention of “U.N. officials who were impressed by the art and began to frequent the gallery”, which resulted in permits for the transport of the artworks as well as the gallery director and a handful of exhibiting artists. This was also the first time that the UNPROFOR had “agreed to transport any cultural artefacts,” and can perhaps be considered as the beginning of a long-standing yet tenuous relationship between Sarajevo cultural actors and the UN forces that controlled entry and exit to their city.⁸⁸⁵ Combined with the extensive logistics required for the transport, storage and coordination while already outside of the country coupled with the foreign support invested in this event shows how the reception of culture from within the siege shifted along the conflict.⁸⁸⁶ The choice for where the exhibition would go is somewhat more difficult to address, but pre-war networks played a role in Edinburgh, where the gallerist Richard Demarco organized an opening after having already had previous contact with the Collegium Artisticum, the Sarajevo Winter and the Obala Art Centar.⁸⁸⁷

The foreign press acknowledged that the tour of the exhibition was at least partially intended to keep the public informed and interested in the situation in Bosnia. Foreign actors were hereby aware of the necessity of maintaining a flow of information about the Bosnian conflict in an increasingly volatile media landscape, as exemplified in an article published in the aptly named Edinburgh-based newspaper, *The Scotsman*:

⁸⁸³ Petar Finci, “Daleka obnova,” *Dani*, July 30, 1993, 54, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

⁸⁸⁴ Author translation: “(...) projekat ‘Svjedoci Postojanja’ sa kojim ovaj grad odlazi na Venecijanski biennale, pruža ruku svijetu i on njemu da bi pred njegovim očima likovnim iskazom zablistalo ono prvo i neuništivo Sarajevo.” H. Arifić, “Odgovor na destrukciju,” 5.

⁸⁸⁵ Jamey Gambrell, “Sarajevo: Art in Extremis,” 100–101.

⁸⁸⁶ Container lists of Witnesses of Existence shipping information: Obala Art Centar, Izeta Gradjević, and Lejla Begić, “Izložba ‘Svjedoci Postojanja’ / Exhibition ‘Witnesses of Existence,’” date unknown, Library and Documentation Center, National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

⁸⁸⁷ Zl. K., “Škoti u ‘Kolegijumu,’” *Večernje Novine*, December 8, 1987, n.pag., Collegium Artisticum Archive.

*“The exhibition also plays an important role in keeping the plight of Bosnia in the public eye as media attention wanders to more “newsworthy” conflicts. The show represents the spirit of multi-ethnic co-operation which still exists in Sarajevo – despite attempts to obliterate it – as Serb, Croat and Muslim exhibit here side by side.”*⁸⁸⁸

On a discursive level, this excerpt shows how the emphasis on multi-ethnic cooperation within the visual arts deconstructed perceived notions of the Balkans as a uniquely conflict-ridden area, instead emphasizing the multi-cultural, and in a way, “civilized” nature of the Sarajevo community from which the exhibition itself emerged. At the same time, the practical use of the traveling vernissage is not lost to its Scottish audiences, who are aware of its organizers’ intentions in using it to generate publicity to keep the Bosnian War in the press, keeping alive the hope of foreign intervention. Other gallerists and critics also discussed the exhibition as a way for Sarajevo artists to position themselves within an international arts scene, both as individual artists but also representatives of the besieged city and all of its inhabitants.⁸⁸⁹

The *Svjedoci Postojanja* show also reflects the sometimes blatantly paternalistic attitude of foreign cultural organizers shown towards Bosnian artists abroad. On December 1994, the *Witnesses of Existence* were transported to Milan and exhibited as part of a large-scale event titled “Riscopriamo l’uomo partendo da Sarajevo”, a show of solidarity meant to raise funds for the reconstruction of the shelled National Library of Sarajevo, whose destruction was widely considered to be one of the greatest tragedies inflicted upon the city by the Bosnian Serb Army.⁸⁹⁰ The program repeatedly names Achille Bonito Oliva as the curator of *Witnesses of Existence*, even though his involvement in the traveling exhibition only began months after the show was first conceived and exhibited, in his role as director of the 1993 Venice Biennale. The Obala Art Centar is not directly named as the organizer of the exhibition, instead only mentioned as “the group from Obala”, most likely in reference to the exhibition artists (who are only mentioned by surname, while Ante Jurić and Radoslav Tadić are not included in the selection of works that went abroad).⁸⁹¹ The short exhibition text also includes references to familiar linguistic frameworks, proposing a specific view of the conflict to the reader:

⁸⁸⁸ Giles Sutherland, “Art from the Dark Side,” n.pag.

⁸⁸⁹ Niklaus Baschung, “Wenn Ironie zur Überlebensstrategie wird,” 7.

⁸⁹⁰ Interestingly, the event was co-sponsored by the Finninvest conglomerate, controlled by the Berlusconi family.

⁸⁹¹ Finninvest Communications, “Riscopriamo L’Uomo Partendo Da Sarajevo. Progetto per la ricostruzione della biblioteca di Sarajevo,” Program, July 1994, B2ST06.3-51, AG 8 CI, INF, Carton 31, UNESCO Archives.

*“The exhibition curated by Bonito Oliva is part of the logic of the concept of transnationality and multiculturalism and opposes intolerance and barbarism by acting on the level of the coexistence of ethnic groups”*⁸⁹²

Leaving the reader with a distinct impression that a major Italian curator conceived an exhibition based on multinational and multicultural values fighting against barbarity— as a result suggesting that the “multiethnic” cooperation was in fact the result of foreign, perhaps even Western, intervention, discursively turning the Bosnian artists into pawns of foreign cultural actors. However, such approaches abroad were relatively rare, with the team of the Obala Art Center regularly receiving credit for their work. In this way, an article in the New York Times also clearly stated that the exhibition was offered by Mirsad Purivatra, Obala’s director, indicating again the active role played by Sarajevo artists in the dissemination of their art abroad.⁸⁹³

The popularity of the *Witnesses of Existence* project is reflected in subsequent invitations of participating artists to exhibit their work abroad. Whereas a comprehensive overview of such events remains difficult to assess, certain artists such as Edin Numankadić were warmly received in foreign galleries during the siege of Sarajevo. An exhibition of Numankadić’s “Ratni Tragove” series in Lugano’s *La cornica* gallery, was positively reviewed by the Italian press, whose praises were relegated to the Sarajevo public through a reprinted article in the local *Oslobodjenje* journal. The author of the article firmly positions his review in a political understanding of the conflict in which the artworks were produced, referring directly to the atrocities committed by “Serbian nationalist and Arkan’s bands” against Muslims and their cultural heritage.⁸⁹⁴ The emphasis on the violence committed against a peaceful society, embodied by the painter himself and his works, focuses on his position as a victim of nationalist violence, while recurrently referencing his simultaneous belonging to an “European” and a South-Slavic artistic sphere. To this end, the article also quotes Numankadić’s own position on

⁸⁹² Author translation: “La mostra curate da Bonito Oliva, si iscrivo nella logica del concetto di trasnazionalità e multicultural e si oppone all’intolleranza e alla barbarie agendo sul piano della coesistenza delle etnie.” Finninvest Communications.

⁸⁹³ Carol Vogel, “Inside Art,” *New York Times*, March 18, 1994, Reprinted online: <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/03/18/arts/inside-art.html>.

⁸⁹⁴ Piero del Guidice, “Dnevnik neizvjesne svakidašnjice,” trans. Tonko Maroević, *Oslobodjenje*, May 25, 1995, 12, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

the subject, in which he clearly delineates the personal importance of his position as a victim of aggression.

Through looking deeper at the experiences of Sarajevan artists who had the opportunity to either travel abroad or to exhibit their works outside of the city, it is possible to further understand both the practical mechanisms that Sarajevan cultural actors navigated in interacting with their foreign counterparts, and the personal importance of such exchanges for the artists themselves. While the general Sarajevan public understood cultural interventions as a way of reaching international audiences and spreading awareness about the plight of the city, the artists who were able to travel also saw them as opportunities to communicate with the world outside the siege on a more intimate level. Therefore, the capacity of the visual arts to provide an avenue of communication with the outside world appears to have been crucial to the practice of those who chose to exhibit abroad. It is interesting however, that while the importance of sharing the Sarajevan experience with the world was actively integrated into discourses, few artists actively chose to use vocabularies that engage with the European unity when looking inwards.

5.4. RECONFIGURED NETWORKS: THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF SIEGE-TIME ART

The relationship between foreign cultural actors and Sarajevan artists was forged within a context which tied together the internal discourses which were circulating at the time, through which the “international community” and local cultural elite framed their positions in a multifaceted conflict. Just as the bestowment of foreign literary awards for Karadžić’s abysmally mediocre poetry in the 1990s was used by Russian and Montenegrin actors to improve the Bosnian Serb leader’s failing image, the presence and involvement of the “international community” in the siege-time cultural scene engaged with the diplomacy of “cultural symbology”.⁸⁹⁵ However, the extensive interest in the Sarajevan visual arts was not only limited to the theoretical production of symbols, but was the result of their own lived experiences as victims of aggression. Mobilizing their position as cultural actors in interacting with foreign publics, they often employed discourses based on shared historical experiences of

⁸⁹⁵ Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 215.

antifascist struggle as a way of identifying their position in a culturally translatable manner. In this way, the use of lexicons featuring references to European identities and a shared cultural memory of fascist atrocities became one of the ways in which Sarajevan artists positioned themselves as victims in a conflict imposed upon them, and hereby also offering avenues for identification for audiences largely unfamiliar with the South-Eastern European sphere. At the same time, it appears that references to a shared European culture were less important within a local context, as few texts intended directly for local publics found it necessary to argue for Sarajevan inclusion in a European cultural community. In this way, while many Sarajevan artists undoubtedly understood their own position as belonging members of European sphere, this aspect of their wartime expression primarily gained discursive importance when interacting with an international public.

CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSION: ARTWORKS IN THE LION'S DEN

*If you're looking for hell, ask the artist where it is.
If you can't find the artist, then you are already in hell.*

Avigdor Pawsner 1783 – 1993 Dean J. Toumin

*Quotation printed on the former Skenderija site of the Ars Aevi – Sarajevo Museum for
Contemporary Art*

The State of Amila, founded in February of 1995, represents perhaps the most impartial state-building project to have emerged from the ashes of the Yugoslav Federation. A party-less government ruled in tandem under the singular authority of art and her sister nature, the imagined country was created in besieged Sarajevo by Amila Smajović, the executor of this unique entity. The domain of this state was not negligible, nor were its defensive capabilities: the territory of the state of Amila encompassed the entire world, and its army was made up of works of art, including twelve dragons, re-emerged from medieval Bosnian mythology, that acted as guardians.⁸⁹⁶ Defined in visual terms by repetitive geometric patterns that reconfigured the name Amila into physical objects, such as passports, and illustrative artworks, the project is heavily influenced by the artists' design background.

Heralded by the accompanying catalogue as a multimedia project rather than an exhibition, Smajović's project has so far largely been omitted from scholarship on Sarajevo siege-time art, yet merits brief consideration, if only on the last pages of this study. Although discursively divergent, in form and concept, from the individual narratives that are defined in this text, Smajović's work is further detached from its context of creation than it might seem on the surface. Through creating her own state, one in which violence was inconceivable (as nobody would dare challenge an army of artworks and dragons), Smajović rejected her everyday experiences defined by the siege in favor of her own, better, world. In fact, the show is

⁸⁹⁶ Jasenka Cico, "Sav svijet i Amilanci," *Dani*, April 1995, 62, Bosniak Institute Sarajevo.

dedicated to her son Jasmin, who was born during the war, as well as to the other children who had been brought into the world in conflict. The project was conceived as a refusal of the dehumanization that accompanied the long-lasting struggle, an attitude that relegated the suffering citizens of Sarajevo into numbers devoid of individuality, and intended as a reaffirmation of her own, and others', humanity.⁸⁹⁷ Following the 1995 massacre at the Markale marketplace, in which 43 people were killed by a Bosnian Serb Army shell, the artist was moved to create this fictional state as an affirmation of her right to live and be free.⁸⁹⁸ In this way, it was an emotive yet radical response to the continuous violence experienced by the inhabitants of the city of Sarajevo.

In writing about the State, Azra Begić references the *oeuvre* of Catalan artist Zush, the only other country-founding artist that Begić was familiar with. In her text, discussing this similar project and its circumstances of creation, it is telling that a comparison is made between the works created in "extraordinary circumstances": the latter following Zush's hospitalization in a psychiatric clinic, and the former "in the midst of the aggression on Bosnia-Herzegovina". While not quite an analogy comparing besieged Sarajevo to a mental health clinic, the correlation of these two artistic projects does suggest a shared escapist foundation. It also tells us something on a more practical level: as Zush, also known as Alberto Porta, is not a particularly recognized international artist, it is most likely that Begić first came across his work during the daring exhibition of Spanish graphic prints held in the *Galerija Mak* in 1995. Her qualification that she is only aware of Smajović's and Porta's forays into state-building is of note as well: the IRWIN collective, which had collaborated with Smajović during their stay in the besieged city, also created their own country. Despite the extreme isolation of the Sarajevo population, this exhibition exemplifies the improbable ability of its members to communicate with the outside world in spite of the restrictions imposed on them. As such, even a cultural event that avoids active employment of the discourses studied in this text can be placed within their structural universe.

This study originally emerged from a desire to document and contextualize the visual arts scene of besieged Sarajevo, on which little is still known, yet took on a secondary dimension over time: to address this community of actors as representatives of a city at the center of a multiplicity of defining discourses and narratives. Through the delineation of a series of

⁸⁹⁷ S. Mustafić, "Ja nisam broj," *Oslobodjenje*, January 26, 1995, 7, Mediacentar Sarajevo.

⁸⁹⁸ Jasenka Cico, "Sav Svijet i Amilanci," 62.

dominant imageries, those of a (non)-existent Yugoslav sphere, ones positioning Sarajevo as a civilized, modern city, and its inhabitants as actively resisting their oppressors, and those that positioned the fight for the city as a fight for distinctly European values, this study treats the wartime visual arts community as representative of the multiplicity of experiences that accompanied life under siege.

In this way, the perceived disintegration of trans-regional networks within the former Yugoslavia can be shown to not be as definite as recognized, as continuities in collaboration suggest the maintenance of long-standing politically independent parallel structures beyond state-driven initiatives. Similarly, through addressing the specificities of a discourse that positions Sarajevo as a modern, civilized city, the dichotomous nature of framings that accompanied the Bosnian War can be better understood as one that rested on numerous definitions of what it meant to be ‘civilized’. Furthermore, the existing binary understandings of the nature of urbanity can help contextualize and explain some of the artistic and spatial practices developed in the cultural community during the siege of Sarajevo, and on a broader scale, amongst its larger civilian population. A discussion of the nature of ‘cultural resistance’, which in itself also produces binary concepts, likewise produces a more nuanced understanding of armed resistance, showing that while culture was a crucial element for survival for many, others discounted it as secondary to their physical survival. Finally, a renewed review of the discursive position of European belonging within a Sarajevan context offers insight into the ways in which foreign interest in the conflict was received, as well as how such identifications served as tools in actively reciprocal cultural exchanges. In all, these collective lines of questioning reveal two crucial elements often forgotten when discussing the human impact of the Bosnian War: that those living under it were actively involved in the production of narratives that define the conflict up until today, and that some of those who did so were not always in agreement to their nature or value.

Once again, it should be underlined that the categories constructed in this study are exactly such: constructed by an external observer and not reflective of any true demarcation between individual discourses. Serving primarily as an analytical tool for addressing various aspects of the wartime visual arts scene, the interconnected quality of the narratives used to speak about the siege is hereby somewhat clouded by their differentiation into individual chapters, but can easily be traced from the recurring nature of actors, events, and lexicons that appear throughout this text. The demarcation of discourses treating a supranational Yugoslav cultural

sphere, narratives of civilization, artistic resistance and European belonging does not reflect any true separation of ideas, but instead offers pathways for addressing individual wartime experiences and the modes used to express these experiences, underlining the agency of those whose lives were affected by the conflict.

Indirectly, this text represents a unique chronicle of the Sarajevan wartime visual arts community that offers, for the first time, a broad overview of the artistic developments of the 1990s taking place in the Bosnian capital. The altered spatial practices, curatorial norms and artistic reactions that dominated the period are juxtaposed with the personal experiences of individual artists that were active during the siege of Sarajevo, in this way introducing many understudied aspects of this artistic generation into academic scholarship. Furthermore, a methodology based on extensive archival documentation, much of which has not been previously accessed, has allowed the author to introduce events and actors into a global analysis independently of the fragmented memories of first-person accounts. The extensive empirical research on which this study is based allows for an unprecedented global account of the community irrespective of individual accomplishments or social position, in this way writing a history not of the art, but of the artists themselves. In this way, this text presents the most complete history of the visual arts scene active during the siege of Sarajevo available, and hereby a crucial contribution to current art historical scholarship of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the ex-Yugoslav region in general.

More broadly, understanding more about the wartime visual arts scene in Sarajevo can offer insight into the global study of the role of art in conflict. Considering that many, if not most, instances of wartime art production have historically taken place either temporally or geographically removed from active conflict, and almost never in the context of extended military violence, the Sarajevan example provides an excellent case study for studying the ways in which artists react to war. In this case, this study poses more questions than it answers: does it make sense to speak of artistic quality in the context of active warfare? In what ways does the intimate expressive act of art interact with its more practical mobilizations? Is there such a thing as a politically independent artistic production in times of war? And if so, does that necessarily, as a rule, always diminish its value? In this context, a few remarks can be gleaned from this text. In besieged Sarajevo, the persons who made art did so as a means of maintaining a semblance of normality in their lives, and those who continued to consume their art did so for similar reasons. However, many also mobilized their work with distinct goals in mind: to

influence public opinion, to provide practical support to governing structures, or simply as a tool of communication when words fail at expressing the horrors imposed upon them.

This text is also very much part of a social history of the siege of Sarajevo. With the hope of diminishing the monopoly of abstract images often associated with such experiences, this study offers concrete examples of adaptive practices and survival strategies adopted by the Sarajevo population, underlining their uses within this highly specific context. Although the persons in question represent a limited community built around an uncommon shared interest and a similar educational and professional background, they also do not constitute a homogenous group: its members diverged in age, gender, political affiliations, and embeddedness within this community despite their shared interest in the visual arts. It is therefore not superfluous to remind the reader that, despite their specific position, the experiences of those discussed in this dissertation have much in common with those of ‘ordinary’ Sarajevans. In this way, many of the tools used by citizens of the city to navigate the horrors of the siege can be found in this text, challenging the notion of a passive, faceless, victimhood that obscures their position as reactive targets of nationalist violence. Furthermore, by addressing visual artists, but by extension cultural producers, as active contributors to a series of dominant historical narratives, the agency of Sarajevo actors within their own struggle is returned to the foreground.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this text proposes a new reading of the social history of the siege of Sarajevo, offering new avenues for discussion on how those subjected to the blockade navigated these extraordinary circumstances. Through questioning accepted narratives that have come to define the conflict in popular memory, it becomes possible to place individual actors, and regular people, at the forefront of the siege’s history, by comparing how their experiences matched and diverged from accepted understandings of the Bosnian War. It is not the role of the historian to attribute identities to their subjects: therefore, it is only for the actors themselves whether they viewed themselves as Yugoslavs, Europeans, civilized or part of a resistance. Instead, this dissertation focuses on instances in which commonly understood readings of such categories do not quite fit the experiences of those which they describe, laying bare the mechanisms used in their construction to offer a platform for reticent voices that do not necessarily find a space in their structures, or whose interpretations of the same do not match accepted definitions. It is therefore not the intention to discredit any of the discourses presented in this text – after all, many of the artists whose work is discussed here used or identified with familiar lexicons – but to better understand how and to what purpose

these vocabularies were constructed, often with the participation of visual artists themselves. In this way, this text argues that Sarajevan cultural actors not only consumed but also actively contributed to the production of wartime memory, and, crucially, that their reasons for doing so were much more diverse than they usually receive credit for.

A short mention should be made of what this text does not intend to achieve, in order to limit unintended interpretations. The dissertation in question does not pretend to present a study on what it is like to survive a siege, a feat impossible for those who do not share the experience, only discussing the narratives used to frame and express this experience. It also does not constitute a typical quality-focused analysis, instead allowing the discursive guidelines of its structure to direct the inclusion or exclusion of artists and cultural events. As a result, while some of the works and exhibitions described in these pages certainly should be remembered for their quality and innovation, many other meaningful contributions are regrettably omitted from analysis due to constraints imposed by methodology, time and space. Similarly, it is entirely probable that some of the views analyzed in this text do not reflect current opinions of the actors that expressed them, or might find themselves entirely contradictory to their current beliefs. This is an unfortunate factor of research in the field of contemporary history, and apologies are extended for any misrepresentations or misinterpretations that might affect those still active. In light of these limitations, the reader is invited to view this study not through the lens of individual views and contributions, but to treat the visual arts community active in besieged Sarajevo as an exemplary object of collective practices.

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ANNEX I

Partial List of Exhibitions in Sarajevo, April 1992- April 1996

The following list contains the 174 verified exhibitions that took place during the siege of Sarajevo. Each entry contains the name of the exhibition (when available), whether it was a group show or solo show, the artist name, the exhibition space, and date. Due to the irregularity of sources, some of this information is unavailable or currently missing. In the case of diverging spellings, names have been homogenized in this text. When no clear corresponding name or spelling can be found, the original spelling will be conserved. Because of this, the list can also only be considered to be partial and to be completed.

1992

Collegium Artisticum '92

Group Show
Collegium Artisticum
21.04.1992 – 1993

Spirituality and Destruction

Group Show
Zoran Bogdanović, Predrag Čančar, Ante Jurić
Former Post Office Building 02.05.1992 –
Unknown

Solo Show

Kenan Hašimbegović
Galerija Paleta
Summer 1992 – Unknown

Ratne likovne zabilješke

Solo Show
Amer Bakšić
Galerija Paleta
09.1992 – Unknown

Solo Show

Mario Landek
Galerija Paleta
09.1992-16.09.1992

Solo Show

Enver "Enjo" Hadžiomerspahić
Sarajevo
09.1992 – Unknown

Umjetnici Sarajeva Za Slobodnu Bosnu I Herzegovinu

Group Show
Nedim Arifović, Mirsada Baljić, Smail Bostandžić, Dragan Čulić, Stijepo Gavrić, Seid Hasanefendić, Dževad Hozo, Ivan Kalcina, Husein Karašik, Mile Kasapović, Ana Kovač, Fikret Libovac, Edin Malović, Esad Muftić, Hamzalija Muhić, Saida Mujezinović, Nina Acković-Čišić, Edin Numankadić, Salim Obralić, Nusret Pašić, Afan Ramić, Sead Čizmić, Mustafa Skopljak, Hasan Sućeska, Alma Suljević, Radoslav Tadić, Elma Vrana, Petar Waldegg, Mehmed Zaimović, Avdo Žiga
Kamerni Teatar 55,
10.1992 - Unknown
National Gallery Ljubljana, 22.11.1994 - 15.12.1994
Trst, 02.02.1995 – Unknown
City Gallery of Maribor,
1995 - Unknown

Group Show

Sead Čizmić, Kemal Hadžić
Sarajevo
07.11.1992 – Unknown

Solo Show

Jasmin Pehlivanović
Press-Centar Dobrinja
18.11.1992 - Unknown

Solo Show

Izet Alečković
Sarajevo
08.12.1992 – Unknown

Ratna dokumenta '92 (Dokumenti rata 1992)

Solo Show
Afan Ramić
Sarajevo
30.12.1992 – Unknown

Mene je strah da su se neki prilagoili ovom užasu, da čak i uživaju

Solo Show
Mehmed-Mešo Čičeklić
Unknown improvised gallery space
12.1993- Unknown

Svjedoci postojanja / Witnesses of Existence

Group Show
Zoran Bogdanović, Sanjin Jukić, Ante Jurić,
Edin Numankadić, Nusret Pašić, Mustafa
Skopljak, Radoslav Tadić, Petar Waldegg
Obala Art Centar, Kino Sutjeska, 12.1992 –
04.1993
Kunsthalle, New York, 25.02.1994 –
03.04.1995
Pasquat Gallery, Biel-Bienne, 27.05.1994-
03.07.1994
Demarco European Art Foundation,
Edinburgh, 12.08.1994 – 03.09.1994
Kunsthalle II, Innsbruck, 02.03.1995 –
Unknown
Schwarzenberg Palace, Prague 05.09.1995 –
20.09.1995

Ratni Tragovi '92

Solo Show
Edin Numankadić

Sarajevo, 12.1992 - Unknown State Hospital
Sarajevo, 03.02.1993 - Unknown
La Cornica Gallery, Bellinzona, 29.05.1995 –
29.06.1995

Agresija na BiH

Group Show
Galerija Paleta
1992 – Unknown

Solo Show

Ekrem Čizmić
Galerija Paleta
1992 – Unknown

Survival Art Museum '92

Group Show
Nedžad Begović, Amra Zulfikarpašić Scout's
Hall Sarajevo
(Dom Izvidjaca)
1992 – Unknown

Ranjene slike

Solo Show
Petar Perica Vidić
Shelled Church of St. Vincent
1992 – 1993

Aukciona izložba za Armiju BiH

Group Show
Mehmed Zaimović, others.
Galerija Gabrijel
1992

Mene je strah da su se neki prilagoili ovom užasu, da čak i uživaju

Solo Show
Mehmed-Mešo Čičeklić
Improvised exhibition space
1992

Solo Show

Affan Ramić
Sarajevo
1992

1993

Znakovi Rata

Group Show

Zoran Bogdanović, Ante Jurić, Edin

Numankadić, Nusret Pašić, Mustafa Skopljak,

Petar Waldegg

Group Show

Sarajevska Zima

Galerija Paleta

01.1993 – 20.01.1993

Group Show

Mustafa Skopljak, Petar Waldegg Obala Art

Centar,

Unknown Space

20.01.1993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Amra Zulfikarpašić

Galerija Gabrijel

14.02.1993 – Unknown

Geto-Spektakl

(Sarajevo Ghetto Spectacle)

Solo Show

Sanjin Jukić

Obala Art Centar, Unknown Space,

17.02.1993 – Unknown

Neue Galerie Graz,

07.12.1994 - 15.01.1995

Solo Show

Ivan Kalcina

Galerija Gabrijel

07.03.1993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Suzanne Cerić

Galerija Gabrijel

08.03.1993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Mehmed Zaimović

Galerija Gabrijel

05.04.1993 – Unknown

Sarajevski Plakat 1992

Group Show

National Gallery of BiH

11.04.1993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Ljubo Lah

Sarajevo

04.1993 – Unknown

Mapa Grafika Sarajevo '92

Group Show

Sarajevska Zima

Sarajevo, 1993 - Unknown Barcelona,

29.12.1993 –Unknown Seattle Convention

Center, 04.1994 – 06.1994

Ne ponovilo se

Solo Show

Jasmin Pehlivanović

Press-Center Dobrinja

09.05.1993 – Unknown

Ratni Tragovi / Počitelj, Ćasa, Sahan

Group Show

Edin Numankadić, Salim Obralić

Galerija Gabrijel

29.05.1993 – Unknown

Dokumenti – Mapa slovenske grafike '71

Group Show

Sarajevo

05.1993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Kemal Hrustanović

Galerija Gabrijel

01.06.1993 – Unknown

Sarajevo, nepokoren grad

Solo Show

Sead Hadžimuhović

Galerija Paleta

09.06.1993 – Unknown

Group Show

Ana Kovač, Zrinka Vilić-Melin, Samra

Mujezinović, Danko Merin, Darko Vulić

Galerija Gabrijel

09.06.1994 – 11.06.1994

Solo Show

Hajrudin Zagora
Galerija Paleta
06.1993 – Unknown

Ratna Ekspresija 92 – 93

Group Show
Izet Alečković, Zoran Bogdanović, Seid
Hasanefendić, Alija Kučukalić, Fikret
Libovac, Ibrahim Ljubović, Esad Muftić, Edin
Numankadić, Salim Obralić, Nusret Pašić,
Enes Sivac, Mustafa Skopljak,
Alma Suljević, Mehmed Zaimović.
Galerija Gabrijel
24.07.1993 – 10.08.1993

Bosna-Art

Solo Show
Maid Hadžiomerađić
Galerija Paleta
15.07.1993 – Unknown

Neuništivi Duh Bosne

Solo Show
Naim Kaljanac
Galerija Paleta
14.08.1993 – Unknown

Tito in War

Solo Show
Milomir Kovačević
Collegium Artisticum
Summer 1993 - Unknown

Akvareli starog Sarajeva

Group Show
Assmann, Rudolf Brent,
E.E. Gotorbea, J. von Harya, Anadolac
Mustafa Juzbaša, Viekoslav Karas, A.
Kerestesija,
Kirchner, Ladislav Eugen Petrović, E.
Petrovitića, T. Taylor,
Teodor Valeriji,
Sarajevo City Museum
09.09.1993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Milan Vasiljević
Galerija Mak
12.09.1993 – 20.09.1993

Staro Sarajevo i Saraljiije

Group Show
Galerija Mak
25.09.1993 – Unknown

**Pokloni likovnih umjetnika galeriji
"Merhamet" organizirana u okviru 80
godina muslimanskog dobrotvornog
društva "Merhamet"**

Group Show
Galerija Gabrijel
27.09.1993 – 07.10.1993

Solo Show

Annie Leibovitz
National Gallery of BiH
01.10.1993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Petar Šain
Galerija Paleta
08.10.1993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Petar Perica Vidić
Galerija Gabrijel
16.10.1993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Ferid Prčić
Galerija Mak
05.11.1993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Roman Petrović
Galerija Paleta
11.11.1993 – Unknown

Vrijeme nestajanja

Solo Show
Muhamed Ćeif
Galerija Paleta
18.11.1993 – Unknown

**Tišinom Stolica / By the Silence of the
Chairs**

Group Show
Adi Ćorović, Marijela Margeta, FAMA
International
Sarajevo
28.11.1993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Mehmed-Mešo Čičeklić
Offices of the ARBiH 1st. Light Artillery
Division
11.1993 – Unknown

Apokalipsa Now

Solo Show

Milomir Kovačević

Sarajevska Zima

Obala Art Centar, Unknown Space 11.1993 –
Unknown

Barselona za Sarajevo / Barcelona Per Sarajevo

Group Show

Gol. Legi d'Arquitectes de Catalunya,

29.12.1993 – 15.01.1994

Academy of Fine Arts, Sarajevo

01.02.1994 – 28.02.1994

Dizajn- Način Preživljavanja / Design - A Way to Survive

Solo Show

Amra Zulfikarpašić

Collegium Artisticum

1993 - Unknown

Sjećanje na Arhipelag

Solo Show

Planinka Mikulić – Cucić

Galerija Mak

1993 – Unknown

Zaustavimo barbare

Solo Show

Šukrija Džidžović

Sarajevska Zima

Collegium Artisticum 1993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Dragan Čulić

Sarajevska Zima

Galerija Mak

1993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Kemal Hadžić

Sarajevska Zima

Sarajevo

1993 – Unknown

Ekvilibrista

Solo Show

Enes Sivac

Sarajevska Zima

Sarajevo

1993 – Unknown

**Ratna Grafička Mapa Mladih Autora
(Collection of War Prints of Young Printmakers)**

Group Show

Ahmet Ajdin, Amer Bakšić,

Adnan Begić, Haris Džerković, Alma Suljević

Sarajevska Zima

Galerija Paleta, 1993 - Unknown

Townhall Strassbourg, Date Unknown

House of World Culture, Date Unknown

World Conference of Human Rights in

Vienna,

Date Unknown

European Cultural Capital 93 Antwerp, Date

Unknown

World Theatre Festival Munich, Date

Unknown

Vicenza, Taormino

Date Unknown

Izložba ULUBiH

Group Show

Adnan Begić, Alma Suljević, and

unknown others

Sarajevska Zima

Galerija Mak / KDM Preporod

1993 – Unknown

Hommage A. Kučukalić

Solo Show

Alma Suljević

Galerija Mak

1993 - Unknown

Soba njenih uspomena

Solo Show

Tošo Mistaševski

Galerija Mak

1993 – Unknown

**Instalacija "UNHCR (Installation
"UNHCR")**

Solo Show

Alma Suljević

Galerija Paleta

1993 – Unknown

Andjeli na zidu

Solo Show

Louis Jammes

Collegium Artisticum / Various locations
throughout the city 1

993 – Unknown

Solo Show

Ana Kovač
Sarajevska Zimza
1992-1993

1994**Sarajevo, Evropska Prijestonica Kulture**

Group Show
Collegium Artisticum
1994

Opkoljeni / Izolovani

Group Show
Jean Christian Bourcart, Josephine Guattari
Obala Art Centar
04.01.1994 – Unknown

Urbicid Mostara

Group Show
Mirsad Baljić, Jakub Hadžić
Galerija Mak
13.01.1994 – Unknown

Preživjeću

Solo Show
Paul Lowe
Obala Art Centar
21.01.1994 – 08.02.1994

**Sarajevo '93 - Grafička Mapa Drvoreza
/ 17 Gravures Pour la Paix : Sarajevo 1993**

Group Show
Izet Alečković, Adnan Begić, Zoran
Bogdanović, Sead Cizmić, Marina Finci, Fedja
Isović, Mirsad Konstantinović, Fikret Libovac,
Esad Muftić, Salim Obralić, Nusret Pašić,
Afan Ramić, Mustafa Skopljak, Dubravko
Terzić, Petar Waldegg, Lejla Zahiragić, Avdo
Žiga
Galerija Mak. 01.1994 - Unknown
Salle des Actes, UNESCO, 1.04.1994-
22.04.1994

**Pozdrav iz Sarajeva / Greetings from
Sarajevo**

Solo Show
TRIO
Collegium Artisticum,
08.02.1994 – Unknown Muzejsko-galerijski
Centar, Zagreb, 13.06.1994
Brno, 16.06.1994-26.06.1994
Gallery Treppenhause, Berlin, 29.06.1994 –
Unknown
Dubrovnik, Date Unknown Edinburgh
Festival,
Date Unknown
Galerija IDCO Ljubljana, 5.09.1995 –
Unknown
And others in Prague, Lyon, Paris, London,
New York, Canada, Manchester, Glasgow

Norveška Priroda - 26 Norveških Grafičara.

Group Show
Collegium Artisticum
12.02.1994 – 28.02.1994

Solo Show

Seid Hasanefendić
Galerija Gabrijel
12.02.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Michel Marcipont
Brussels, 12.1994 – Unknown Greece, Spain,
The Netherlands, France, Dates Unknown
Sarajevo Academy of Fine Arts, 27.03.1995 –
Unknown

**Borci Slikaju / Borci Portretisti, Portrait
painters –Warriors**

Group Show
Alma Suljević, unknown others
Galerija Mak
03.1994 – Unknown

Kipari HKD "Napredak"

Group Show
Galerija Gabrijel
02.04.1994 – Unknown

Muhadžiri u Sloveniji i Italiji

Solo Show
Barjo Perva
Galerija Paleta
07.04.1994 – Unknown

Hommage Mostaru

Group Show
Klub Preporod
08.04.1994 – Unknown

Dvogodišnjica formiranja Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine

Solo Show
Nedžad Ibrišimović
Galerija Paleta
12.04.1994 – Unknown

Otisci Zločina

Solo Show
Ahmed Hamo-Pinjić
Galerija Paleta
22.04.1994 – Unknown

World Press Photo 1994

Group Show
Obala Art Centar
27.04.1994 – Unknown

Tragovi 1984 -1994

Solo Show
Edin Numankadić
Galerija Gabrijel
04.1994 – Unknown

Sarajevo-Life

Group Show
Collegium Artisticum
04.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Ibrahim Ljubović
Galerija Gabrijel
12.05.1994 – Unknown

Group Show of Slovenian Graphics

Cankarjeve Dne
National Gallery of BiH
14.05.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Ivan F. Raić
HKD Napredak
14.05.1994 – 05.06.1994

Slovenska grafična Poslanica

Group Show
National Gallery of BiH
14.05.1994 – Unknown

Posljedice / Aftermath

Solo Show
Sophie Ristelhueber
Obala Art Centar
16.05.1994 – Unknown

Izložba Levhi

Solo Show
Ešref Kovačević
Galerija Paleta
19.05.1994 – 26.05.1994

Jauk Bosne – Art

Solo Show
Maid Hadžiomerađić
Galerija Paleta
28.05.1994 – 04.06.1994

Solo Show

Ibrahim Ljubović
Galerija Gabrijel
05.1994 – Unknown

Back to No Future - War and Fashion

Solo Show
Hannes Schick
National Gallery of BiH
01.06.1994 – Unknown

Art Sacral

Group Show
Ana Kovač, Danko Merin, Samra
Mujezinović, Zrinka Vilić-Melin
Galerija Mak
09.06.1994 – 11.06.1994

Pariz Umjetnika / Le Paris des Artistes Solo Show

Jeanloup Sieff
National Gallery of BiH
15.06.1994 – 21.06.1994

Kaligrafija

Solo Show
Šukrija Gavranović
Galerija Paleta
19.06.1994 – 30.11.1994

In Memoriam

Solo Show
Milomir Kovačević
Collegium Artisticum
24.06.1994 -02.07. 1994

Solo Show

Christian Boltanski
Obala Art Centar,
Academy of Performing Arts
24.06.1994 – 16.07.1994

Iluzija ili Varka Oka / Tromp L'oeil

Solo Show
Mirsad Džombić
Galerija Paleta
27.06.1994 – 06.07.1994

Solo Show

Irfan Hozo
Galerija Gabrijel
06.1994 – Unknown

Žena, prostor, vrijeme

Solo Show
Nadžija Haljevac
Galerija Paleta
06.07.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Nesim Tahirović
Galerija Paleta
08.07.1994 – Unknown

Sarajevski Inžinjeri Života

Group Show
Damir Dado Dragulj,
Enver Dragulj, Dalila Muftić, Janes Tadić, and
unknown others
Collegium Artisticum
09.07.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Ivan F. Raić
UNPROFOR Headquarters
13.07.1994 – Unknown

Sezon Pakla

Solo Show
Zoran Filipović
Month of Bosnia & Herzegovina in the Czech
Republic
National Gallery of BiH, 14.07.1994 –
26.07.1994
Mauzolej Terezin, Prague, 10.10.1994 –
15.10.1994

**Elementi za Konstrukciju Pejzaža /
Elements for Constructing a Landscape**

Solo Show
Osmon Arslanagić
Sarajevo
16.07.1994 – Unknown

Survival Art Museum '94

Group Show
Ognjenka Finci, Emir Kusamagić, Annie
Leibovitz, Dragan Rokvić, Milenko Simić,
Enes Sivac, Mustafa Skopljak, TRIO,
Amela Vilic, Amra Zulfikarpašić
Survival Art Museum
19.07.1994 – 25.08.1994

Opening galerija "KO"

Group Show
Mersad Berber, Hasan Efendić, Dževad Hozo,
Ljubo Lah,
Mustafa Skopljak, Safet Zec
Galerija KO
20.07.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Zoran Markičević
Galerija Paleta
27.07.1994 – Unknown

**Četrdeset grafičkih listova: Sarajevo 1992-
1994**

Solo Show
Dževad Hozo
National Gallery of BiH
28.07.1994 – Unknown

Izložba Grafika

Solo Show
Esad Muftić
Galerija Gabrijel
07.1994 – 08.1994

Sarajevsko Naivno Slikarstvo / Sarajevo's Naïve Painting

Ismet Ajanović, Ismet Muftić, Asim Pašović
Beba Univerzum Sarajevo
01.08.1994 – Unknown

Moja Zemlja

Solo Show
Sead Hadžimuhović
Bosnian Cultural Center
02.08.1994 – 10.08.1994

Solo Show

Karl Mijić
Galerija Gabrijel
08.08.1994 – Unknown

Kentauiromahija

Group Show
Marina Finci, Seid Hasanefendić, Dževad Hozo, Ante Jurić,
Fikret Libovac, Mirjana Milidrag, Nusret Pašić, Enes Sivic
Alma Suljević,
Amra Zulfikarpašić, and 30 unknown others.
National Gallery of BiH
13.08.1994 – Unknown

Group Show

Wolfgang Bellwinkel, Peter Maria Schäffer
National Gallery BiH
15.08.1994 – Unknown

Preticanje vjetra / Outrunning the Wind

Solo Show, Happening
Enes Sivic
Beba Univerzum
River Miljacka
23.08.1994

Solo Show

Planinka Mikulić-Cucić
Galerija Gabrijel
23.08.1994 – Unknown

Moć opstanka

Group Show
Matthew Blake, Enis Sefersah
Beba Univerzum
Survival Museum, Svzo's House, The River Miljacka
24.08.1994 – Unknown

Socijalna Tematika u Bosnansko-Hercegovinskom Slikarstvu Izmedju Dva Svjetska Rata

Group Show
Vojo Dimitrijević,
Ismet Mujezinović, Daniel Ozme, Roman Petrović, Rizah Štetić, Todor Švraklić
Galerija Mak
31.08.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Planinka Mikulić- Cucić
Galerija Gabrijel
08.1994 – Unknown

Sarajevski Pucanj

Solo Show
Ante Jurić
Collegium Artisticum
03.09.1994 - Unknown

Solo Show

Karl Mijić
Galerija Gabrijel
13.09.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Braco Dimitrijević
National Gallery of BiH
22.09.1994 – Unknown

Od Sarajeva do Pariza i Nazad

Solo Show
Andreas Pfeiffer
OŠ Skender Kulenović, 16.09.1994 – 17.09.1994
KDM Preporod, 1
7.09.1994 – 24.09.1994

WARum?

Multiethnic Wall Graphites Group Show

Bojan Bahić, Sanda Hnatjuk
X Festival
National Gallery of BiH,
1994 – Unknown
Galerija Mimo, Prague, 03.10.1995 – 1996
Club Otok, Dubrovnik, 1995-1996

Solo Show

Mehmed Zaimović
Galerija Gabrijel
27.10.1994 – Unknown

Boja i Bol

Solo Show
Amir Pleha
Council of Bosnian Muslim Intellectuals
29.10.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Adalbert Ado Opić
Galerija Mak
08.11.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Rikard Larma
Galerija Gabrijel
08.11.1994 – Unknown

Svjedok

Solo Show
Mirsad Džombić
Galerija Paleta
08.11.1994 – Unknown

**MCMXCIV Sarajevo (MCMXCIV
Sarajevo - An Exhibition Presenting the
Fine Arts Academy Students of the
Nineties)**

Group Show
Ahmet Ajdin, Amer Bakšić, Adnan Begić,
Smajil Čar, Suzanne Cerić, Hamdija Dizdar,
Adis Fejzić, Zlatan Filipović, Aleksandar
Gajić, Safet Hadžić, Jasna Hadžimehmedović,
Vanessa Hasanbegović,
Fedja Isović, Enes Krluč, Sanjin Lugić, Fikret
Lukač, Samra Mujezinović,
Jasminko Mulaomerović, Hamdija Pašić,
Anela Šabić, Nebojša Šerić Šoba, Enes Sivic
Amela Subašić, Sanda Sulejić, Amela Tančica,
Branko Vekić, Dejan Vekić, Lejla Zahiragić,
Boro Žuža
Collegium Artisticum
10.11.1994 -20.11.1994
Sweden, Date Unknown

Pejzaži

Solo Show
Tošo Mistaševski
Galerija Mak
22.11.1994 – 01.12.1994

Geometrija vremenena

Solo Show
Mladen Stilinović
Obala Art Centar
25.11.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Fuad Topčagić
Galerija Gabrijel
11.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Zdravko Novak
Dom Armije
11.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Zoran Markičević
Sarajevo
11.1994 – Unknown

Solo Show

Salim Obralić
Sarajevska Zima
National Gallery of BiH
06.12.1994 – Unknown

**Umjetnost za Mir: Slikari Sarajeva
Nadbiskupu Vrhbosanskome**

Group Show
Adalbert Ado Opić, Ahmet Ajdin, Aneta
Benac-Krstić, Miloslav Bilać, Mustafa
Brdarić, Hasan Čakar, Nail Celović, Esad
Česović, Mirsad Džombić, Ivan F. Raić,
Željko Filipović, Stijepo Gavrić, Seid
Hasanefendić, Dževad Hozo, Ante Jurić,
Lidija Karamehmedović, Antonija Konaj,
Mirsad Konstantinović, Ana Kovač, Josip
Kovačević, Nikola Krstić, Ljubo Lah, Mario
Landek, Ibrahim Ljubović, Viktor Majić,
Mirko Marjanović, Savo Marjanović,
Zvonimir Markičević, Anto Martinović,
Planinka Mikulić - Cucić, Esad Muftić,
Jasminko Mulaomerović, Edin Numankadić,
Salim Obralić, Nusret Pašić, Petar Perica
Vidić, Katarina Polić, Afan Ramić, Mustafa
Skopljak, Sanda Smital-Jajčanin, Hasan
Sućeska, Čedo Tepavčević, Mesur Vojić,
Andja Vuković, Petar Waldegg, Mehmed
Zaimović, Avdo Žiga
HKD Napredak
09.12.1994 – 28.12.1994

Solo Show

Nesim Tahirović
Galerija Paleta
08.12.1994 – Unknown

Krik Savjesti

Solo Show
 Emil Grebenar
 Galerija Mak
 12.12.1994 – Unknown

Group Show

Enrico Baj, Herve Di Rosa
 Collegium Artisticum
 21.12.1993 – 21.01.1994

Solo Show

Antonija Konaj
 Galerija Paleta
 22.12.1994 – 05.01.1995
 Sarajevo
 12.1994 - Unknown

1995**Retrospektivna Izložba**

Solo Show
 Mica Todorović
 Galerija Mak
 08.01.1995 – Unknown

**Država Amila - sa Amilom u Svjetliju
Butdućnost**

Solo Show
 Amila Smajlović-Pozder
 Sarajevska Zima
 National Gallery of BiH
 26.01.1995 – Unknown

**100 Dana Opsade. Izložba radova boraca 1.
Korpusa Armije R BiH**

Group Show
 Nedžad Ibrišimović, Muhamed Ćeif, Salem Merdan, Selver Porča, Saša Bugarin, Samir Hamzić, Slaven Panjeta, Nedžad Čmajčanin, Samir Kačunović, Šaban Kovač, Muharem Ajanić, Šaćir Stovrag, Naim Kaljanac
 Galerija Gabrijel
 27.01.1995 – 10.02.1995

I kistom i puškom

Group Show
 Galerija Paleta
 28.01.1995 – Unknown

Sarajevo 1992

Solo Show
 Irfan Hozo

Showcase Exhibition ULUPUBiH

Group Show
 Collegium Artisticum
 1994 – Unknown

Otisci zločina

Solo Show
 Ahmed Pinjić
 Galerija Paleta
 1994 – Unknown

**Umjetnost, otpor i engleski vrt (Europe
Rediscovered II: Art, Resistance and the
English Garden)**

Group Show
 Sanjin Jukić, Milomir Kovačević, Edin Numankadić, others.
 Galerie Nikki Diana Marquardt, 25.11.1995 – 02.12.1995
 Galerija Gabrijel
 09.12.1995 – 01.02.1996

Group Show

Enes Sivac, Nusret Pašić
 Sarajevska Zima
 Collegium Artisticum
 07.02.1995- 25.02.1995

**Iz Umjetničk Zbirke Katoličke Crkve u
Sarajevu**

Group Show
 Galerija Gabrijel
 07.02.1995 – Unknown

Izložba rukopisa Kur'ani-Kerima

Solo Show
 Ešref Kovačević
 Galerija Paleta
 09.05.1995 – 25.05.1995

Solo Show

Amer Bakšić
Sarajevska Zima
Galerija Gabrijel
07.02.1995 – Unknown

War Art

Nedžad Begović
Sarajevska Zima
Galerija Mak
15.02.1995 – Unknown

Solo Show

Marija Mikulić
Sarajevska Zima
National Gallery of BiH
16.02.1995 – Unknown

Život u Nama

Group Show
Viktorija Tomić, Nevenka Bareza, Karolina
Atagić, Emina Beho, Mima Kaurin, Meliha
Aganović
Galerija Paleta
18.02.1995 - Unknown

Maja Banjaluka

Solo Show
Nenad Radanović
Dom Pisaca
20.02.1995 – Unknown

Solo Show

Vinko Jurić
Galerija Gabrijel
21.02.1995 – Unknown

Država Vremena / NSK Država Sarajevo

Solo Show
IRWIN
Sarajevska Zima
Collegium Artisticum
24.02.1995 – Unknown

Joan Miró i Grafičari

Group Show
Federico Amata, Eduardo Arroya, Jorge
Castilla, Eduardo Chilida, Luis Gordil, Josep
Guinovarta, Joana Hernandez, Javier Mariscal,
Jaume Plenso, Alberto Rafolso Casamado,
Antonio Sauro, Antinia Tapiosa, Joan Miró.
Sarajevska Zima
Galerija Mak
27.02.1995 (one night)

Tugovanje

Solo Show
Vinek Jurić Dalma
Galerija Gabrijel
02.1995 – Unknown

Radovi 4 Umjetnika Fotografije iz Graza

Group Show
Max Aufischer, Georg Held, Norbert Nestler,
Friederike J. Nestler-Rebau
Sarajevska Zima
Collegium Artisticum
06.03.1995 – 14.03.1995

**Austrijska Grafika - Osamdesetih i
Devedesetih**

Group Show
Sarajevska Zima
Collegium Artisticum
06.03.1995- 26.09.1995

Open Road Sarajevo

Solo Show
Jan Håfström
Sarajevska Zima
National Gallery of BiH
17.03.1995 – 16.04.1995

Solo Show

Fikret Libovac
Sarajevska Zima
Sarajevo
27.03.1995 – Unknown

Otisci tišine

Group Show
Carol Mann, Andreas Pfeiffer
Sarajevska Zima
National Gallery of BiH
31.03.1995 – 15.04.1995

Praha Sarajevu

Group Show
Galerija Gabrijel
01.03.1995 – Unknown

**Miroslav Bilać - Slike. Četrdeset godina
umjetničkog djelovanja Kamernog Teatra
'55**

Solo Show
Miroslav Bilać
Sarajevska Zima
Galerija Gabrijel
17.03.1995 – Unknown

Solo Show

Djoko Mazalić
Galerija Gabrijel
21.03.1995 – Unknown

35 Crteža i Grafika - Internacionalne**Zbirke Galerije Portreta Tuzla**

Group Show
Sarajevska Zima
Collegium Artisticum
03.1995 – Unknown

Sarajevo Juče Danas i Sutra

Solo Show
Sead Mustafić
Galerija Paleta
04.04.1995-14.04.1995

Udruženje Likovnih Umjetnika Sarajeva - o Podu Dana Armije Republike Bosne i Hercegovine

Group Show
Fehim Fede Avdić, Bojan Bahić, Amer Bakšić, Marina Finci, Seid Hasanefendić, Sanda Hnatjuk, Dževad Hozo, Irfan Hozo, Nedžad Ibršimović, Mirsad Konstantinović, Fikret Libovac, Esad Muftić, Edin Numankadić, Salim Obralić, Nusret Pašić, Afan Ramić, Mirsad Šehić, Enes Sivac, Mustafa Skopljak, Amila Smajlović-Pozder, Fuad Topčagić, Mehmed Zaimović, Avdo Žiga.
National Gallery of BiH
15.04.1995 – Unknown

Oči Istine

Solo Show
Ivica Propadalo
French Cultural Center, Sarajevo
17.04.1995 – Unknown

Bridge: Exhibition Houston - Sarajevo – Houston

Group Show
Dan Allison, Tanja and Stjepan Roš, Ismet Arnautalić, Bojan Bahić, Amer Bakšić, Adnan Begić, Nedžad Begović, Damir Dado Dragulj, Edin Numankadić, Esad Muftić, Zlatan Filipović, Marina Finci, Aleksandar Gajić, Kemal Hadžić, Sanda Hnatjuk, Dževad Hozo, Benito Huerta, Mirza Idrizović, Ademir Kenović, Sharon Kopriva, Zlatko Lavanić,

Fikret Libovac, Jim Martina, Salim Obralić, Nusret Pašić, Afan Ramić, Enes Sivac, Mustafa Skopljak, Amila Smajlović-Pozder, Alma Suljević, TRIO, Srdjan Vuletić, Mehmed Zaimović, Pjer Žalica,
Sarajevska Zima
Davis/McClain Gallery, Houston and Collegium Artisticum
18.04.1995 – Unknown

Solo Show

Emir Skender
Galerija Mak
29.04.1995 – Unknown

Group Show

Amila Smajlović-Pozder, Marian Wenzel
National Gallery of BiH
04.1995 – 20.04.1995

Radova Učenika Škole Primjejene**Umjetnosti – Sarajevo**

Group Show
National Gallery of BiH
01.05.1995 – 05.05.1995

Solo Show

Afan Ramić
Collegium Artisticum
09.05.1995 – Unknown

Group Show

Fuad Arifhadžić, Bojan Bahić, Miroslav Bilać, Samir Biščević, Mustafa Brdarić, Fehim Fede Avdić, Seid Hasanefendić, Sanda Hnatjuk, Dževad Hozo, Ljubo Lah, Fikret Libovac, Ibrahim Ljubović, Planinka Mikulić - Cucić, Esad Muftić, Ismar Mujezinović, Edin Numankadić, Salim Obralić, Nusret Pašić, Ferid Precić, Afan Ramić, Ismet Rizvić, M. Sefić, Mustafa Skopljak, Hasan Sućeska, Mehmed Zaimović, Safet Zec
Klub Preporod
10.05.1995 – 23.05.1995

Solo Show

Dimitrije Popović
Galerija Gabrijel
10.05.1995 – Unknown

Umjetnička Galerija. 1 Izložba

Group Show

Muzej Mimara, Zagreb, 06.1995 – Unknown

Umjetnička Galerija Dubrovnik, 08.1995 – Unknown

Dom Stjepana Kosača, Mostar, 09.1995 – Unknown

National Gallery of BiH, 10.1995 – Unknown

Dvorana Samostara Sestara Milusrdnica sv. Vinka Paulskog

Solo Show

Daniel Butala

Shelled Church of Saint. Vincent 07.07.1995 – Unknown

Grafički Listovi

Solo Show

Branko Popovac

Ljeto u Kamernom '95

Galerija Gabrijel

16.08.1995 – Unknown

Iz ciklusa "Konji"

Solo Show

Miroslav Bilać

Ljeto u Kamernom '95

Galerija Gabrijel

08.1995 – Unknown

Plakati, Design

Solo Show

Amra Zulfikarpašić

Ljeto u Kamernom '95

Galerija Gabrijel

02.09.1995 – Unknown

Solo Show

Petar Perica Vidić

National Gallery of BiH

14.09.1995 – 26.09.1995

Prague – Sarajevo

Group Show

Days of BiH Culture in the Czech Republic

Mauzolei Terezin, Prague, 10.09.1995 -

14.09.1995

National Gallery of BiH, 15.12.1995-

Unknown

Solo Show

Amila Arslanagić

Ljeto u Kamernom '95

Galerija Gabrijel

16.09.1995 – Unknown

World Press Photo 1995

Group Show

Obala Art Centar, ALU

16.09.1995 – Unknown

Mape grafika '92, '93, '94 (Promotivna izložba originalnih grafičkih listova. Mape Sarajevo. Devedesetdruge, Devedesettreće, Devedesetčetrvte.)

Group Show

Josip Alebić, Zoran Bogdanović, Sead Čizmić, Seid Hasanefendić, Dževad Hozo, Radmila

Jovandić, Mladen Kolobarić,

Mirsad Konstantinović,

Esad Muftić, Aida Mušanović, Salim Obralić,

Nusret Pašić, Mihajlo Prica, Mustafa Skopljak,

Radoslav Tadić, Petar Waldegg, Mehmed

Zaimović, Avdo Žiga

Sarajevska Zima

National Gallery of BiH, 26.01.1995 –

Unknown Galerija Portreta Tuzla 03.1995 –

Unknown Former Czech Town Hall

18.09.1995 – 14.10.1995

Solo Show

Andraž Šalamun

Basement of printing press of the University of Sarajevo

19.09.1995 – 23.09.1995

Ratni Put 115. bbr

Solo Show

Alija Akšamija

Barracks of the Green Berets

09.11.1995 – Unknown

Solo Show

Selver Porča

Press-Center Dobrinja

10.1995 – Unknown

Tjelesno - Ono što Me Gleda / Corporeal - What Looks at Me

Solo Show

Miriam Cahn

Obala Art Centar, Akademija Likovnih

Umjetnosti

14.11.1995 – 03.12.1995

Solo Show

Lukša Peko

Galerija Gabrijel

20.11.1995 – Unknown

Solo Show

Casimir Ferrer

National Gallery of BiH

24.11.1995 – 10.12.1995

Plakati – Levhe

Group Show

Galerija Gabrijel

27.11.1995 – Unknown

Group Show

Suzanne Cerić, Fedja Isović

Tamna strana Diznilenda

Collegium Artisticum

11.1995 – Unknown

150 Metara Kvadratnih za Slobodu

Solo Show

Dominik Kole

National Gallery of BiH

23.12.1995 – Unknown

Friendships is the Gold Wire

Solo Show

Amra Zulfikarpašić

Galerija Gabrijel

1995

Mostar, Razrušeni Grad

Group Show

Sarajevska Zima

Sarajevo

1995

Likovni Anale '95

Group Show

HKD Napredak

27.12.1995 – 15.01.1996

1996**Pošta 92-96**

Group Show

Fikret Libovac, Enes Sivac, Alma Suljević,

Amra Zulfikarpašić

Sarajevska Zima

Former Post Office Building

07.02.1996 - Unknown

Bosna i Hercegovina 1886-1907

Solo Show

Raimund von Stillfried

Sarajevska Zima

Bosanski Kulturni Centar 09.02.1996 –

Unknown

Group Show

Luc Deleu, Peter Downsbrough, Bernd

Lohaus, Philippe van Snick, Marthe Wéry

Sarajevska Zima

National Gallery of BiH 10.02.1996 –

Unknown

Jacques Prevert i Slikari

Group Show

Georges Braque, Alexander Calder, Max

Ernst, Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró

Sarajevska Zima

Collegium Artisticum

16.02.1996 – Unknown

Praznik u Jersalemu

Solo Show

Janos Kobanyaija

Sarajevska Zima

Galerija Mak

16.02.1996 – Unknown

Solo Show

Salek Šarić

Sarajevska Zima

Akademija Likovnih Umjetnosti

19.02.1996 – Unknown

Vidijvo-Nevidijivo

Solo Show

Samra Mujezinović

Sarajevska Zima

Galerija Mak

21.02.1996 – Unknown

Izložba Studenata SLADE

Group Show

Sarajevska Zima

Akademija Likovnih Umjetnosti

24.02.1996 – Unknown

Pismo

Solo Show

Nusret Pašić

Obala Art Centar, Akademija Likovnih

Umjetnosti

02.1996 – Unknown

Murali Waltera Kershaw / Commissioned**Murals of Foreign Artists**

Gillian Halliwell, Walter Kershaw, Jack

Lewis, Andrea Tierney

Sarajevska Zima Sarajevo

1996 – Unknown

ANNEX II

Selected Actor Biographies

The following annex contains a selection of biographies of the actors who appear in this text. While they do not include all of the artists and those that worked with them that were active in Sarajevo between 1992 and 1996, this annex is intended to offer a cursory and informal overview of the broad biographies of some of the persons whose viewpoints were presented in this text.

The majority of biographies have been written based on the website of the Agiart gallery: <http://agiart.tripod.com/index.htm>. Some have been supplemented with additional online sources, including Wikipedia articles, press articles and the artist websites. It was not possible to reconstruct the biography of all artists mentioned in this text. Not all artists mentioned in this text have a biography easily available. For those of whom a digital footprint can be found, albeit only uncertain websites such as social media or unaccredited websites, the term “official biography unavailable” will be used. For those artists who have no digital trace at the moment will be marked as “biography unavailable”.

Alija Akšamija: Born in Rogatica, 1919, Akšamija is primarily remembered for documenting post-war Yugoslavia through the lens of his camera. He passed away in 2016. (<https://www.jergovic.com/ajfelov-most/alija-aksamija/>)

Mehmed Akšamija: Son of Alija Akšamija, he was born in Višegrad in 1954. A photographer and art theorist, he is currently a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, where he lives and works.

Izet Alečković: Born 1944 in Sarajevo. An expressionist painter, Alečković is a member of ULUBiH and former teacher at the Sarajevo High School of Applied Arts. He lives and works in Sarajevo.

Dan Allison: Allison was born in 1953 in Houston, Texas, where he continues to live. Specializing in print-making, he has received recognition particularly in the Yugoslav sphere. (<https://davidbarnettgallery.com/artist/dan-mitchell-allison>)

Zdenka Badovinac: Curator and writer, she is currently the director of the Museum of

Contemporary Art Zagreb after fulfilling the same role at the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana between 1993-2021.

Bojan Bahić: Graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, Bahić is a digital artist, painter and designer. He lives and works in Southern California.

Amer Bakšić: Born in 1966 in Sarajevo, graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo in 1991. Beginning teaching in 1997, Bakšić is a senior assistant professor at the ALU. Working with diverse mediums, his work often explores black and white shapes through a variety of supports. He lives and works in Sarajevo.

Mirsada Baljić: Born in Čapljina, where she studied painting before coming to Sarajevo. She has been part of at least 50 individual exhibitions and over a hundred group shows, and prefers working with colorful aquarelles

paints. She is a member of the ULUBiH and is currently is the director of the gallery Preporod. She lives and works in Sarajevo. (<https://faktor.ba/vijest/u-prestiznoj-palaci-sponza-u-dubrovniku-mirsada-baljic-slavi-veliki-jubilej-249117>)

Smail Bato Bostandžić: Born in 1965 in Čapljina, Bostandžić works primarily as a painter, graphic designer and ceramic artist. He graduated from graphic design and ceramic school in California, where he lives and works together with Sarajevo.

Adnan Begić: Biography unavailable.

Azra Begić: One of the most influential art historian, critic and curator in the Bosnian and Sarajevo artistic scene. Born in 1931 and deceased in 2017, she was particularly impactful for the development of the National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Nedžad Begović: Born 1958 in Bijeljina, Begović is a film director and scenographer, associated with the SAGA production company.

Zoran Bogdanović: Bogdanović was born in 1957 in Kozluk. He graduated from the Sarajevo High School of Applied Arts in 1977 and the Academy of Fine Arts in 1981. He was also a professor at the High School of Applied Arts in Sarajevo.

Christian Boltanski: Boltanski remains one of the most influential actors in French conceptual art. Born in 1944, the sculptor, photographer, painter and filmmaker is most known for his photographic installations. (<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/christian-boltanski-2305>)

Aleksandar 'Saša' Bukvić: Painter, sculptor and visual artists, Bukvić was born in 1949 in Šapc. A graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, Bukvić is a founding member of the *Zvono* collective and initiator of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*. He lives and works in Sarajevo.

Miriam Cahn: Born in 1949 in Basel, Switzerland. Having studied at the department of graphics of the Gewerbeschule Basel, her work centers around primitive and reflective portraits of mysterious figures, mostly through

paint or drawing. Cahn lives and works in Basel and Bergell, Switzerland. (http://www.galeriewolff.com/medias/pdfs/mc_biography_2017_0.pdf)

Muhamed Ćeif: A graduate of the High School of Applied Arts in Sarajevo under Nusret Pašić, Ćeif was a classical painter based in Sarajevo. Born in 1960, Ćeif passed away in 2019.

Sead Cizmić: He was born in Nevesinje in 1958. Cizmić studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, from which he received a M.A degree specializing in painting in 1986. He lives and works in San Diego.

Ješa Denegri: Influential art historian and critic. Denegri was born in 1936 in Split, and has acted both as curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade (1965-1991) and professor at the Belgrade Faculty of Philosophy from 1991 to 2007. He lives and works in Belgrade.

Izet Džirlo: Gallerist and cultural worker, Džirlo is primarily remembered for his work as director of the Cultural Center Trasa in Sarajevo, and for his leadership of the Galerija Paleta, for which he was responsible since 1992. He passed away in 2021.

Ešraf ef Kovačević: Born in 1924 in the village of Kovačevci, he was an orientalist and calligrapher specializing in Islamic art. (<https://stav.ba/vijest/esref-ef-kovacevic-kovac-pisane-rijeci/1352>)

Casimir Ferrer: Born in 1946 in Trébas, France. A former professional firefighter, he has been exhibiting his oil paintings in group shows since 1970, gaining a place for himself in the global scene since the 1980s. Ferrer lives and works in Albi, France. (<http://www.bleu-reglisse.com/ferrer.html>)

Željko Filipović: Born in 1948 in Banja Luka. He graduated from the Sarajevo High School of Applied Arts in 1968, specializing in graphics and graphic design. He studied both at the Pedagogic Academy of Sarajevo at the department of Fine Art (1973) and the Academy of Fine Arts in the department of painting in 1985. He received his post-graduate degree in graphics from the latter in 2006, having studied under Dževad Hozo. Filipović is currently a professor at the Pedagogical Academy in

Sarajevo. He lives and works in Sarajevo. (<http://zlatanfilipovic.com/zfilipovic.com/zeljko/biogr.html>)

Zlatan Filipović: Born in 1973, Zlatan Filipović graduated from the Sarajevo's Academy of Fine Arts in 1999, and continued his studies with a M.A. degree from Alfred University in the state of New York, which he obtained in 2001. He went on to teach multimedia arts and design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo and is currently a professor at the American University of Sharjah (UAE). His work is heavily based on new media forms and the exploration of technology through film installations, photography and focusing entirely on the digital medium. Filipović lives and works in UAE. (<https://www.aus.edu/faculty/zlatan-filipovi%C4%87> and artist website).

Ognjenjka Finci: Finci was born in 1949 in Sarajevo, and works primarily as an architect and designer. Currently Finci lives and works in Sarajevo, where she is a lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Sarajevo and Academy of Fine Arts, Sarajevo. She is a member of ASAS and ULUPUBiH. (<https://www.sveske.ba/en/autori/o/ognjenka-finci>)

Marina Finci: Born in 1960 in Sarajevo, Finci graduated from the department of graphics of Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo in 1984. She pursued her post-graduate degree at the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade, which she finished in 1988. She began working as an assistant professor of graphics at the Sarajevo Academy in 1993, where she continues to teach today. She works mainly with a primitive abstract style of graphic prints.

Alma Gavrić: Born in 1960 in Stoc, Gavrić graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo in 1984. Gavrić is a painter and lives and works in Sarajevo, where she teaches at the High School of Applied Arts. (<http://www.kns.ba/index.php/sekcije/likovna/340-likovni-profil-alma-gavric>)

Stijepo Gavrić: Born in 1958 in Tuzla. Gavrić graduated from the Sarajevo High School of Applied Arts and from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, department of sculpture. He currently teaches at the High School of Applied

Arts. A classical artist, Gavrić sculpts his works in marble. (<http://www.stijepogavric.ba/about.html>)

Kemal Hadžić: Photographer. He became a member of ULUPUBiH in 1979, and is a member of the art collective *Zvono*. Between 1992-1996, Hadžić worked as a military photographer for the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina. He lives and works in the USA.

Jusuf Hadžifejzović: Born in 1956 in Prijepolje, Hadžifejzović is a conceptual and performance artist and painter. After studying at the Belgrade Academy of Fine Arts, he received his postgraduate degree from the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. He is the founder of the Charlama Gallery in Sarajevo and one of the initiators of the *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*. Hadžifejzović lives and works in Sarajevo and Antwerp. (<https://csu.si/en/resident/jusuf-hadzifejzovic/>)

Fuad Hadžihalilović: Having taught at the Sarajevo High School for Applied Arts after receiving his degree in printmaking from the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade, Hadžihalilović was amongst BiH's most influential educators and curators. He was the first director of the Collegium Artisticum gallery, a function he fulfilled from 1975 until 2005. He passed away in 2021.

Seid Hasanefendić: Born in Brčko in 1935. Hasanefendić graduated from the Sarajevo High School of Applied Arts in 1958, and from the Academy of Fine Arts of Zagreb in 1965. Painting mostly blue-toned geometric landscapes, he became a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, of which he was the dean between 1985 and 1989. He was the director of the National Gallery of BiH between 1994 and 2000. He lives and works in Sarajevo.

Sanda Hnatjuk: Biography unavailable.

Dževad Hozo: Born in Užice in 1938, Hozo graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in

Ljubljana in 1963, specializing in graphics. Since 1979, he has been teaching at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, and has been a member of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1981. He is most known for his recurrent graphic series involving declinations of the traditional Bosnian tombstone, the nišan. Hozo lives and works in Sarajevo. (http://old.kons.gov.ba/main.php?id_struct=6&lang=1&action=view&id=3276)

Irfan Hozo: Son of Dževad Hozo, Irfan was born in Sarajevo in 1957. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, where he also received his postgraduate diploma in 2006. Hozo has been elected two times to chair the Organization of Artists in Bosnia and Herzegovina (ULUBiH). His preferred style is centered on traditional oil still lifes. Hozo lives and works as an independent artist in Sarajevo.

Nedžad Ibrišimović: Born in Sarajevo in 1940. A prominent writer and sculptor, he graduated from the Sarajevo High School of Applied Arts and the Philosophical Faculty of Sarajevo. He wrote for the newspapers *Naši Dani* and *Oslobodjenje*, and was the editor of the literary magazine *Život* between 1995 and 1998. Ibrišimović passed away in Sarajevo in 2011. (<https://www.mojalektira.com/biografija/nedzad-ibrisimovic/>)

Louis Jammes: Born in 1958 in Carcassonne. During the 1980's, his photographic work centered around portraits of prominent cultural actors such as Lou Reed or Andy Warhol. Over time, his work evolved out of the studio and into street photography. During his stay in Sarajevo, Jammes printed collages of the city's children, giving them wings and placing them in the ruins of the city. He lives and works in Paris. (<https://www.rabouanmoussion.com/louis-jammes-expo-fr/>)

Sanjin Jukić: Participant of the exhibition *Witnesses of Existence*. Official biography unavailable.

Ante Jurić: Born in 1954 in the village Vinjani, near Posušje. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, where he also received his post-graduate degree. Member of the exhibition *Witnesses of Existence*.

Suada Kapić: Born in 1952 in Sarajevo. Kapić completed her first BA at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Sarajevo, after which she studied theater and film directing at the Belgrade Academy of Performing Arts. In 1990, she founded the independent multi-media organization FAMA, which she runs until today.

Muhamed Karamehmedović: Born in 1924 in Trebinje, Karamehmedović was one of Bosnia's most prominent art historians. Having graduated with a degree in art history in Belgrade in 1956, he received his doctorate from the university in Ljubljana in 1965. He has been a professor at the architectural faculty and the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, as well as lecturing at the philosophical faculty and the Academy of Performing Arts. During the war, he wrote extensively for *Oslobodjenje* on various subjects regarding art and culture. He passed away in 2008. (<http://antologija.blogger.ba/arhiva/2008/06/06/1594848>)

Mirsad Konstantinović: Born in 1957 in Sarajevo. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo in 1995, where he became an associate professor at the department of graphics in 1996. Konstantinović mainly produced somberly toned graphic prints. He passed away in 2008. (<http://depo.ba/clanak/8450/promocija-kataloga-opusa-mirsada-konstantinovica>)

Ana Kovač: Kovač was born in 1943 in Sarajevo. She received her undergraduate degree in sculpture from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb in 1968, and received her postgraduate degree from the same university. She was a member of the Association of Fine Artists of HKD Napredak. Kovač passed away in 2022.

Milomir 'Strašni' Kovačević: Born in 1961 in Cajnic began his photographic career at the age of 17 at the University Club of Photography of Sarajevo. Kovačević is a member of the Association of Professional Journalists since 1986 and a member of ULUBiH since 1989. Having worked as a photojournalist for a number of local papers, Milomir Kovačević focuses his photographic lens on the documentation of everyday life of Sarajevo, which he continues until his arrival in France in

1995. He continues to exhibit internationally to this day. Kovačević lives and works in Paris. (<http://www.milomirkovacevic.com/auteur.html>)

Alija Kučukalić: One of BiH's most recognizable sculptors, Kučukalić was born in 1937 in Sarajevo. After studying sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana, he returned to Sarajevo where he became a lecturer at the newly opened Academy of Fine Arts. A tenured professor and head of department of sculpture, he also acted as the director of the collegium for postgraduate study and was acting vice-dean of the Academy. He was killed by a mortar strike in Sarajevo in 1992. (<https://www.alu.unsa.ba/content/alija-kucukalic>)

Nermina Kurspahić: Born in 1956 in Sarajevo, Kurspahić graduated from the philosophical faculty in Sarajevo specializing in comparative literature and theatre studies. During the siege, she wrote on art events for *Oslobodjenje*. (<http://penbih.ba/clanovi/nermina-kurspahic/>)

Razija Lagumdžija: Born in 1925 in Trebinje. Part of the first generation to study at the Philosophical Faculty in Sarajevo, she studied linguistics and Yugoslav literature before receiving her doctoral degree from the University of Belgrade in 1976. During the siege of Sarajevo, her son Zlatko Lagumdžija was acting Prime Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina, an experience that she discusses repeatedly in her contemporaneous writings. (<https://www.asu.unsa.ba/index.php/ba/asu/razija-lagumdija>)

Ljubo Lah: Born in 1930 in Sarajevo, Lah graduated from the local High School of Applied Arts and later studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade under Djordje Andrejević-Kun. Lah passed away in 2010 in Sarajevo. (<http://srbinovski-art.com/autor.php?id=12>)

Annie Leibovitz: Leibovitz (1949) is a portrait photographer, best known for her intimate celebrity photographs, such as one of John Lennon and Yoko Ono taken hours before Lennon's murder.

Fikret Libovac: Libovac was born in 1957, in Prijedor. Having graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, he pursued a post-graduate degree at the same institution. He is a member of ULUBiH. Libovac's work is characterized for example by small melancholy metal sculptures of birds and some larger installations. He lives and works in Sarajevo. (<http://www.remek-djela.com/aktivnosti/fikret-libovac/fikret-libovac.html>)

Ibrahim Ljubović: Born in Sarajevo in 1938, Ljubović graduated from the Sarajevo High School of Applied Arts in 1960. As one of the most prominent artists from his generation, his work was heavily symbolic and dabbling in the surreal, using a heavily contrasting palette. He passed away in Sarajevo in 1995.

IRWIN: IRWIN is a Ljubljana-based artist collective most notable for its transgressive use of imagery, transcendence of multiple genres and political commentary. Established in 1984 as part of the "Neue Slovenische Kunst" movement, it is made up of Dušan Mandić, Miran Mohar, Andrej Savski, Roman Uranjek and Borut Vogelni. (<https://irwin-nsk.org/about/>)

Maria Lluïsa Borràs i González: Born in 1932 in Barcelona, Maria Luisa Borràs was a prominent Catalan art critic and expert on the art of Francis Picabia. During the siege of Sarajevo, she helped facilitate a number of group exhibitions to travel in and out of the city. She passed away in 2010. (https://elpais.com/diario/2010/01/26/necrologicas/1264460402_850215.html)

Paul Lowe: Born in 1936 in the UK, Lowe is an award-winning photographer who has worked with *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Life*, *The Sunday Times Magazine*, and others. He is currently the Course Director of the Masters programme in Photojournalism and Documentary Photography at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. Lowe lives and works in Sarajevo. (<https://www.panos.co.uk/photographer/paul-low/>)

Carol Mann: Beginning her career as an art historian, Mann has been working for nearly twenty years on questions relating to gender and modern warfare. Having spent significant time in various conflict zones, including Bosnia and Afghanistan, she combines her practical experiences with a theoretical approach and is the director of the humanitarian agency FemAid, based in Paris. She has taught at multiple institutions, including Kabul University, University of Kisangani and various universities in Paris and London. (<http://www.sciencespo.fr/psia/users/carolmann>)

Predrag Matvejević: Matvejević, (1932 in Mostar – 2017 in Zagreb) is amongst the most influential Yugoslav and Croat writers and cultural theorists of the 20th Century. He has taught in universities in Zagreb, Paris and Rome, and is a member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences of BiH since 2002. His book *“Mediterranean: A Cultural Landscape”* has been translated into over 20 languages.

Esad Muftić: Born in 1944 in Gradac, Muftić attended the Sarajevo High School of Applied Arts. He continued his graduate and post-graduate studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade. Returning to Sarajevo, he began working at ALU as an assistant professor in the subject of graphics, which he continued to teach as a professor until 1995. Muftić was also the vice-dean of the Academy of Fine Arts. He lives and works in Sarajevo.

Hamzaliya Muhić: Born in 1970 in Sarajevo. Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, and now teaches at the “OŠ Pofalići” school. His work is somber, using simple compositions in dark tones to convey conflicting emotions.

Saida Mujazenović: Born in Sarajevo in 1954, graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo in 1978.

Sadudin Musabegović: Born in 1939 in Prijepolje, he is considered to be one of the most prominent art theoreticians in Bosnia and an influential thinker. Musabegović graduated from the faculties of philology and philosophy in Belgrade, from where he received his post-graduate degree in 1965. He received his doctorate from the philosophical faculty in

Sarajevo, after which he began teaching as a professor of aesthetics at the University of Sarajevo. He was the dean of the Academy of Fine Arts during the siege of Sarajevo. Musabegović passed away in 2014. (<https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/u-sarajevu-preminuo-profesor-sadudin-musabegovic/140412025>)

Edin Numankadić: Born in 1948 in Sarajevo. Numankadić studied at the Pedagogical Academy of Sarajevo (department of visual education) and later studied Yugoslav literature at the Philosophical Faculty in Belgrade. A member of the exhibition group of *Witnesses of Existence*, his work has evolved towards darker tones incorporating various scripts. Lives and works in Sarajevo.

Salim Obralić: Born in Maglaj in 1945, he studied at the Sarajevo High School for Applied Arts and later the Sarajevo Academy of Fine Arts, which he graduated in 1971. In 1974, Obralić received his post-graduate diploma from the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade, and began his teaching drawing/graphics at his former faculty in Sarajevo. He is now a professor at the ALU and the head of the graphics department. Obralić lives and works in Sarajevo.

Achille Bonito Oliva: Born in 1939 in Caggiano, Italy, Bonito Oliva was an Italian art critic and historian of contemporary art. He has been teaching art history at La Sapienza in Rome since 1968. Director of the 45th Venice Biennale, he was also the pioneer in the use of the term of trans-avant-garde art for the emerging Italian movement. (<https://www.revolvy.com/main/index.php?s=Achille+Bonito+Oliva>)

Nermina Omerbegović: Born in Sarajevo in 1964, Omerbegović is a journalist and singer. She is a journalist for Oslobođenje, and has

published poetry and literary criticism texts in several Bosnian publications. She is author of two books of poetry: "Odrastanja" (Društvo Pisaca, 1996) and "Prizivanje dodira" Synopsis, 2006).

Haris Pašović: Born in 1961 in Sarajevo. He studied directing at the Academy of Performing Arts in Novi Sad, and has received a number of prestigious scholarships, including the Fulbright scholarship. Pašović is best known for his productions of Wedekind's "Spring Awakening" and is the artistic director of the Sarajevo East West Theatre Company. During the period of the siege, he managed the MES International Theatre Festival and organized the first Sarajevo Film Festival with the Obala Art Centar. He is a tenured professor of Directing at the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo.

Nusret Pašić: Pašić was born in Sarajevo in 1951. He began his studies at the Sarajevo Academy of Fine Arts, followed by a post-graduate program at the Faculty of Fine Arts, which he graduated from in 1983. Beginning his career at the Academy as an assistant in the department of drawing/painting he is now the head of the departments of Painting and Teaching, as well as the president of the Academy Council. During the siege, he took part in the exhibition *Witnesses of Existence*.

Fra. Petar Perica Vidić: Painter and priest of the Franciscan order, born 1938 in Sarajevo. Vidić began studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna in 1966, and has taught visual arts and art history at the Franciscan classical gymnasium in Visoko.

Andreas Pfeiffer: Austrian painter born in 1954 in Graz. Lives and works in Malakoff, France.
(<https://www.centrepompidou.fr/cpv/resource/ce4kXo/rbadMn>)

Ivica Propadalo: Born in 1950 in Livno, Propadalo is a painter, scenographer and designer. He lives and works in Zagreb since 1977.

Mirsad Purivatra: Director of the Sarajevo Film Festival and Obala Art Centar since the 1980's. He has received numerous prizes for his work in expanding the SFF, including the prestigious French Knight of the Order of Arts

and Humanities (*Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres*) award.
(<http://www.robertboschacademy.de/content/language2/html/53471.asp>)

Affan Ramić: Affan Ramić, born in 1932 in Derventa, was one of the Bosnia's well-known classical painters. Ramić studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade under Mark Čelebonović, and continued studying painting in Paris and Prague. He exhibited often during the siege, and was most known for the use of toned colors and depictions of the Bosnian countryside. Ramić passed away in 2015.

Sophie Ristelhueber: Born in Paris, Ristelhueber is an acclaimed photographer whose work focuses on the documentation of human landscapes touched by disaster, both man-made and natural. Ristelhueber lives and works in Paris.

Nada Salom: Art historian and critic for *Oslobodjenje* during the siege of Sarajevo. Biography unavailable.

Nebojša Šerić Šoba: Born in Sarajevo in 1968 Šoba attended the Sarajevo High School for Applied Arts before beginning his studies at the Sarajevo Academy of Fine Arts in 1989. In 1999, he attended the Rijksakademie, a two-year residency program in Amsterdam. Working between installations, sculptures and paintings, Šoba shifts between mediums with ease and precision. Šoba lives and works in New York City.

Borivoje Simić: Journalist for *Oslobodjenje* during the siege of Sarajevo. Biography unavailable.

Enes Sivac: Born in 1966 in Sarajevo, he graduated from the Sarajevo High School of Applied Arts in 1985, after which he enrolled himself in the Academy of Fine Arts. Finishing his studies in 1991 in the department of sculpture, Sivac continued to create large metal sculptures depicting figures, often suspended in the air, and was for a short time a lecturer at the ALU. <https://sarajevo.co.ba/autor-cuvenog-bicikliste-na-zici-izlaze-u-zvonu/>

Mustafa Skopljak: Skopljak was born in Kotor Voroš in 1947, after which he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts of Sarajevo, finishing his

post-graduate degree in 1988. That same year, he began working there as an assistant and later as a professor. He was part of the *Witnesses of Existence* exhibition, and is currently head of the department of sculpture at the Academy. Skopljak works and lives in Sarajevo.

Amila Smajović: Amila Smajović is a visual artist and graphic designer based in Sarajevo. She graduated from the High School of Applied Arts in Sarajevo in 1983, after which she studied graphics at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo. She received her M.A. from the same institution in 2001, for which she presented her project “The State of Amila and a world of symbols.” Smajović defended her doctorate at the Faculty of Political Science in Sarajevo in 2018, and is currently the director of ULUPUBiH. (<https://www.sarajevo.ba/bs/article/11262/izlozba-amile-smajlovic-u-galeriji-ulupubih-od-9-do-16-decembra>)

Andraž Šalamun: Born in 1947 in Ljubljana. Šalamun received a degree in comparative literature from the University of Ljubljana in 1975, Painter and philosopher, he was most notably a member of the art group OHO from 1966 to 1971. He lives and works in Koper.

Ibrahim Spahić: Organizer of the Sarajevo Winter Festival, Ibrahim Spahić is the director of the International Peace Center and involved in many cultural productions in the city. (<https://sarajevo.travel/en/text/ibrahim-spahic/400>)

Alma Suljević: Born in Kankanj in 1963. Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts of Sarajevo in 1991, specializing in sculpture. In 1997, she was elected as an assistant professor at the academy, where she is now a professor. Her current work is largely made up of site-specific installations dealing with the local socio-political landscape. Lives and works in Sarajevo.

Radoslav Tadić: Born in 1946 in Sarajevo. Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo in 1976 and received a post-graduate degree from the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana in 1978. Tadić was a member of ULUBiH and one of the organizers of the Yugoslav Documenta (1984-1989) and participated in the *Witnesses of Existence* exhibition. He was active as an assistant

professor at the ALU in Sarajevo, where he taught painting until 1993. Tadić passed away in 2013.

TRIO: An artist collective made up of Bojan Hadzihalilović, Dalida Hadzihalilović and Lela Mulabegović Hatt. Founded in 1985, the group was made up of young graduates of the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo and formed one of Yugoslavia's first productive design studios. They continue to produce a variety of modern and pop-arty designs for a variety of clients. (<https://www.nlb.si/design-exhibition-of-trio-sarajevo>)

Srdjan Vuletić: Born in 1971, Vuletić graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo in 1995. Filmmaker and director, he has produced a number of award winning documentaries and films, and was highly active during the period of the siege. (<https://iffr.com/en/persons/srdjan-vuletic>)

Petar Waldegg: Born in 1950 in Travnik. Waldegg graduated from the Sarajevo High School of Applied Arts in 1972, after which he went on to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo. Finishing his degree in 1976, he continued his post-graduate education studying graphics in Ljubljana. He became an assistant professor at the ALU in 1980, where he continued to teach graphics until 1993. He participated in the *Witnesses of Existence* exhibition in 1994. Lives and works in Klagenfurt, Austria. (<https://www.events.at/e/petar-waldegg-fern>)

Karim Zaimović: Bosnian writer, journalist and publicist, most known for his short story collection *The Secret of Raspberry Jam* and his extensive expertise on comicbooks. Zaimović was killed in 1995, as a result of complications to a mortar injury.

Mehmed Zaimović: Born in Tuzla in 1938, Zaimović was one of the more influential Bosnian artists of his generations. Having graduated from the Sarajevo High School for Applied Arts in 1960, he participated in over five hundred group exhibitions and sixty solo shows, including representing Yugoslav art abroad with his colorful compositions. Zaimović passed away in 2011 in Sarajevo.

(<http://stav.ba/na-danasnji-dan-prije-pet-godina-napustio-nas-je-veliki-mehmed-zaimovic/>)

Avdo Žiga: Born in 1953 in Sarajevo. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo in 1978 and continued his postgraduate studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade, which he finished in 1983. He has been teaching classes in graphics at the ALU Sarajevo since 1991. His work is highly centered around black-and-white graphic prints depicting shifting human forms. Žiga lives and works in Sarajevo.

Nermina Zildžo: Zildžo is an art historian and critic, and member of AICA. She has worked as curator for the National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina and is currently a lecturer at the International University of Sarajevo.

Amra Zulfikarpašić: Designer, artist, Born in 1946 in Sarajevo. She studied design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, from which she graduated in 1978, and from where she received her postgraduate degree in 2001. She is a professor for graphic design at the same institution, and is a member of ULUPUBiH.