

overlapping and amorphous) ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups, the region is notable for the hybrid and disparate ways political and cultural actors—from dictators to democratically elected officials—have attempted to cultivate a collective historical consciousness. Monuments serve as particularly rich examples of the ways politicians, artists, and publics navigate collective values and contest both projected pasts and futures. The transition from late socialism to postsocialism provides diverse examples of how public monuments in countries such as Macedonia, Croatia, and Albania relate to debates on ethnicity, gender, political economy, and class-consciousness in the context of continued redefinitions of Europe's borders and culture as a whole. Furthermore, ongoing attempts to preserve, restore, relocate, or destroy socialist-era monuments offer a rich and complicated body of evidence for the ways that histories are repurposed, especially the histories of the Partisans' transnational antifascist struggle during the Second World War. This dissertation argues that many contemporary artists from Southeastern Europe have focused precisely on the ambiguous and conflicted meanings of socialist monuments, and have avoided treating monuments as monolithic forms associated with official ideological forces, in need of demythologization. Instead, these artists have turned to monuments in order to address the disparate histories of struggle that have given rise to Europe's current sociopolitical situation.

MONUMENTAL ENDEAVORS:
SCULPTING HISTORY IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE, 1960–2016

by

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Introduction: Prolegomena to Any Future Monument

That means that today we cannot write a history of socialism, for instance, because there exists no actual political subject advocating for the idea of emancipation. By this very fact, the politics of socialism are rendered into oblivion. —Branimir Stojanović¹

Ours are, as you suggest, post-monument times.—Zygmunt Bauman²

I. Introduction: The Distributive Monument

Monumental Endeavors critically examines public sculpture and the ways it has developed in the sociopolitical conditions of late socialist and postsocialist Southeastern Europe.³ Specifically, it considers monumental production in this geopolitical region between the 1960s and 1980s, and the artistic practices that constitute responses to socialist monumentality undertaken in the postsocialist period in the republics of the former Yugoslavia and Albania.⁴ This investigation analyzes the ways various communist regimes commemorated the Second World War, the advent of socialism, and earlier struggles that were foundational for both national and ideological identity-formation. It

¹ Nebojša Milikić, Branimir Stojanović, and Milica Tomić, *Politics of Memory* (Belgrade: 2007), p. 2.

² Christina Natalicchio, “Economical Crisis and Postmonuments: An Interview with Zygmunt Bauman,” in *Post-Monument: XIV Biennale Internazionale di Scultura di Carrara*, ed. Fabio Cavallucci (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2010), p. 23.

³ In this dissertation, I use the term ‘Southeastern Europe’ rather than ‘the Balkans,’ a term also frequently used to describe the same geopolitical region. I opt for the name Southeastern Europe for three reasons. First, as Maria Todorova has famously shown, the discourses associated with the name ‘Balkans’ have created an exoticizing paradigm of knowledge that parallels Orientalist discourses. (See Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).) Second, ‘Southeastern Europe’ emphasizes the relationship of the region’s transformation to Europe as a whole, and my larger arguments do in fact relate to the global character of Cold War cultural transformations, as opposed to any purely localized phenomena. (On the relationship of the Balkans and Southeastern Europe in a diachronic framework, see John R. Lampe, *Balkans into Southeastern Europe, 1914–2014: A Century of War and Transition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).) Finally, the discourses on the Balkans as a zone of political violence and disintegration do not reflect the prevailing attitudes towards the region that appertained during much of the socialist period, even if a resurgence of Balkanist discourses did occur with the fall of socialism and the breakup of Yugoslavia.

⁴ The histories of both socialist and postsocialist monumentality have unfolded differently in other nations in Southeastern Europe, such as Bulgaria and Romania. Some of the analyses made here provide the grounds for fruitful comparisons, but for reasons of scope I only occasionally make reference to countries beyond the former Yugoslavia and Albania. I do not wish to iron out the complexity of those other histories by suggesting they can be straightforwardly subsumed under the same analysis.

also analyzes the ways that contemporary artists in these countries have engaged with socialist monuments in order to thematize the mnemonic narratives associated with the period often referred to as ‘actually existing socialism,’⁵ and the ways these artists adapt the ideologies and discourses of socialist monumentality to critique neoliberal conditions in postsocialism.

Southeastern Europe’s modernity has been a particularly conflicted one, both geopolitically and culturally. Home to an overwhelming number of (frequently overlapping and amorphous) ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups, the region is notable for the hybrid and disparate ways political and cultural actors have attempted to cultivate models of collective historical experience. Specific aspects of the region’s past, such the legacies of Ottoman culture and occupation, and the political heritage of the Partisan antifascist resistance, have necessitated complex and contested navigations of shared identity. Monuments and monumentality often played—and continue to play—key roles in the efforts of governments, citizens, and artists to make sense of these histories, and the way they link the region’s nations to Europe and to the world. The transition from late socialism to postsocialism provides diverse examples of how localized monuments shape debates on ethnicity, class-consciousness, and gender in an increasingly globalized political context. In these conditions, the rhetoric of socialist monumentality—and its relationship to socialist-era discourses on historical consciousness—emerges as a viable strategy for recuperating certain modes of engaged political subjectivity.

⁵ On this notion, see Rudolf Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*, trans. David Fernbach (New York: NLB, 1978). The terms ‘real socialism’ and ‘actually existing socialism’ were employed in the late socialist period to denote the concrete political and economic realities in states that referred to themselves as socialist, in order to acknowledge their distinction from more utopian Marxist-Leninist definitions of socialism and communism.

A brief example will make some of these relationships clearer. In 2007, at the Prague Biennale, a group of artists, critics, and psychoanalysts—including Milica Tomić, Branimir Stojanović, and Nebojša Milikić—calling themselves the Monument Group (*Grupa Spomenik*) exhibited what they described as a “distributive monument” [Figure 0.1].⁶ Over the course of four years (from 2002 through 2006), the Monument Group had organized discussions and submitted critiques associated with the Belgrade municipality’s call for proposals for the creation of a monument to the “Fallen Fighters and Victims of the 1990–1999 Wars in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia (including those killed in the 1999 NATO bombing campaign).”⁷ This initial competition was canceled, and a new call for proposals was subsequently issued that removed mention of ‘fallen fighters.’ That competition ultimately (according to its jury) failed to produce a satisfactory proposal, and later—in 2006—a new call was issued for a monument to “the Victims of the Wars and Defenders of the Fatherland from 1990–1999,” to be inaugurated in central Belgrade. This complex and lengthy transformation of the concept for the Belgrade monument became a paradigmatic example of the difficulties of commemorating recent history and conflict in Southeastern Europe. As sociologist Lea David argues, the Belgrade monument affair laid bare the competing ideological and temporal discourses at work in Serbian society in the early 2000s—and particularly the conflict between international expectations about patterns of commemoration, and local, nationalist narratives about who the victims and heroes of the recent past really were.⁸

⁶ See the Monument Group’s description of the work on their website, *Grupa Spomenik/Monument Group*, <https://grupaspomenik.wordpress.com/timeline/> (accessed February 9, 2018).

⁷ Tomić, in Milikić, Stojanović, and Tomić, pp. 5–6.

⁸ Lea David, “Mediating International and Domestic Demands: Mnemonic Battles Surrounding the Monument to the Fallen of the Wars of the 1990s in Belgrade,” *Nationalities Papers* 42:4 (2014): pp. 655–673. The monument was ultimately erected—after a decade of changes to the call for proposals and

The participation of contemporary artists in this debate—for there were several in the Monument Group—indicated the importance of these ideological conflicts not only to local veterans’ organizations and elected officials, but also to narratives being constructed in the international artworld about the status of memory and the mobilization of collective trauma for political purposes.

The Monument Group’s ‘distributive monument’ exhibited in Prague consisted of printed pamphlets drawing from the group’s meetings and discussions related to the Belgrade monument proposal in particular, and on the relationship between the history of socialist Yugoslavia and contemporary memorialization practices more broadly. The pamphlet, entitled *Politics of Memory*, contained the text of a prolonged discussion between Tomić, Stojanović, and Milikić on the question of the “possibility of memory” after the supposed “ends” of both history and ideology in the period of late socialism (the period beginning, Stojanović argues in the text, around the late 1970s).⁹ The proposal ultimately issued by the Belgrade municipality was, according to the discussants, a call for a fundamentally “post-historic[al]” monument. That is, the organizers of the competition sought to project a position “outside of history,” a position from which “knowledge of [history’s] outcome ... is fixed” and from which the victims of historical processes have been clearly identified.¹⁰ Against this ‘post-historical’ paradigm of public commemoration,¹¹ the Monument Group’s stated purpose was to recover a historical

controversies—in March of 2012, near the city’s Central Railway Station. See David, p. 656. See also Lea David, “Mnemonic Battles on the Erection of the Monument to the ‘Fallen of the Wars of the 1990s’: Serbian War Veterans vs. the ‘Monument Group,’” paper presented at the ASN World Convention, Columbia University, April 22–26, 2014.

⁹ Stojanović, in Milikić, Stojanović, and Tomić, p. 2.

¹⁰ Stojanović, in Milikić, Stojanović, and Tomić, p. 9.

¹¹ This paradigm, generally speaking, was one that was established in the wake of the Second World War. The traumas of the 20th century, the Holocaust foremost among them, produced a greater need

understanding that would make possible the remembrance of the events the Belgrade monument sought to commemorate, and the production of this historical understanding could only be produced in the context of a “politics of emancipation,” from a subject-position that would emerge within this politics.¹² Instead of Pierre Nora’s declaration that, in our contemporary context, “[m]emory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition,”¹³ the Monument Group posited that history provided the ground for memory, and specifically that history was most effectively narrated by an ‘emancipated political subject’ that understood the significance of the Yugoslavian National Liberation Struggle and its relationship to socialism.

The *Politics of Memory* pamphlet was presented in the Prague Biennale as what the Monument Group termed a “participatory object”: copies of the pamphlet were printed and displayed in a cluster of cardboard boxes, and visitors could take them and read them later. The project thus presented a particularly nuanced picture of the ontological stages of the monument conceived as a process: the immaterial and ambiguous conceptualization of the monument; the production of politicized subjectivities in the discussions surrounding that ambiguity; the selective re-inscription of those subjectivities as text in the writing of the pamphlet; the reproduction of that material, textual form; and finally the distribution of that form to new subjectivities that—at least potentially—could constitute a new public for the discussions first

to commemorate victims of conflicts rather than the heroes of such struggles. The monument’s role as a focus of shared mourning became even more central to its sociopolitical identity.

¹² Stojanović, in Milikić, Stojanović, and Tomić, pp. 3–4.

¹³ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,” trans. Marc Rousebush, *Representations* 26 (1989): p. 12.

engendered by the proposal for the monument.¹⁴ Due to the very ‘participatory’ character of the display—its interactive quality—the monolithic boxes in which the pamphlets were displayed gradually emptied over the course of the exhibition, slowly dispersing themselves. In this sense, the work resembled other postwar attempts to formally deconstruct the traditional (unified, materially monolithic, quintessentially visible) monument. In particular, as architectural historian Andrew Herscher has commented, the productions of the Monument Group “bear some relationship to the counter-monument¹⁵ as it has emerged in post-Shoah Germany. Yet, while the function of the counter-monument is usually posed as the perpetuation of discussions about remembrance, the object of the Monument Group’s distributive monument” is the recovery of a particular kind of politics.¹⁶ That is, rather than arguing that the traditional monument could not engender an authentic mnemonic experience, and proposing a formal critique thereof, the Monument Group’s installation sought to produce a new kind of monument that would return to a different (though still monumental) model of political and historical understanding than the one prevailing in the present. As the group stated, “We aim to establish and practice different modes of belonging and solidarity other th[a]n ethno-

¹⁴ One could add the continued re-instantiation of this situational relationship through the numerous panel discussions, meetings, and subsequent exhibitions that included the pamphlet, in various cities in Southeastern Europe and beyond, attended by members of the Monument Group. There is, of course, a sense in which this chronology too easily suggests a necessary ontological progression through these different states, a claim that I wish to avoid. I also mean to register the way that the continued re-instantiation of the discussions on politics and memory begin to lose their integrity the more ‘distant’ they become in time for the initial proposal—the enactment of the discussions and the text as a ‘distributive monument’ becomes in danger of losing any engaged political character, and existing purely as a rhetorical form of cultural capital: the insistence that contemporary art *can* effectively speak to current mnemonic demands.

¹⁵ Here Herscher references the notion made famous for English-speaking readers by James E. Young’s article “The Counter-monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today,” *Critical Inquiry* 18:2 (Winter 1992): pp. 267–296. I discuss Young’s notion of the counter-monument below in this introduction, and in greater depth in Chapters 4 and 5.

¹⁶ Andrew Herscher, “Toward a Political Subjectivization of Memory,” *Future Anterior* 8:2 (Winter 2011): p. 58.

cultural, which is the imperative posed by both new ethnic states and the European Union.”¹⁷

The mode of display of *Politics of Memory* itself reflected contemporary art’s increasing interest in the language of the institution, in the simultaneously minimal form and conceptual weight of the document, but its ‘distributive’ character is also of note. Philosopher Peter Osborne has discussed the importance of the notion of “distributive unity” in contemporary art: a ‘distributive unity’ is “a condition of ... commonality of function” in which the included objects or images “share a certain *de*-materialized generality that transcends their technologically particular material forms and acts as a kind of relay between them.”¹⁸ This unity is “imaginary,” Osborne suggests, but nonetheless actualized in social perceptions and relations.¹⁹ In the case of the Monument Group’s distributive monument, this actuality occurs (at least potentially) through the engagement of readers with the text, who will activate the discursive aspect of the monument insofar as they participate in ‘different modes of belonging and solidarity.’ The ‘distributive’ aspect of the work is its existence across time and space not only in a variety of iterative forms (as intersubjective debate; as occasional lectures, conferences, and displays; as texts translated in a variety of languages; and so on). However, these

¹⁷ See the group’s 2009 statement of purpose on their website, <https://grupaspomenik.wordpress.com> (accessed February 9, 2018).

¹⁸ Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art* (New York: Verso, 2013), p. 123.

¹⁹ Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, pp. 123–124. Osborne develops his discussion of distributive unity, a notion he draws from Kant, in the context of a discussion of photography, but I think that the notion is equally applicable to monumentality. This is true in no small part because there is such a strong presumption that there is something as radically distributed as ‘monumentality,’ or ‘the monumental,’ in much the same way that there is presumed to exist something called ‘photography’ and ‘the photographic’ despite the technological distinctiveness and dispersal “spatially and temporally, across a number of discrete sites” (see Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, p. 124). In the case of the monument—and I hope to show that this is true in a particular way of *socialist* monumentality—the distribution of the monumental is dependent on the presumed enduring relationship between the monument itself and the life of the community it is meant to both reflect and project.

discrete iterations are nonetheless identified with the concept of the monument, and suggest an ongoing connection²⁰ between each separate iteration.

In addition to the urgency of the monumental form as such, the Monument Group's project is animated (though not in name) by the urgency of the historical question posed by socialism—or perhaps, by the question of socialist history. This association between the monumental form and the history of socialism in modern Europe is anything but a simple coincidence: the history of socialism and the narratives of socialist history have contributed fundamentally to the centrality of the monument in a history of present global conditions, and contemporary art's relation to these conditions. The monument appears, in works such as the exhibition of *Politics of Memory*, as inextricably bound up with the 'emancipatory' politics of socialism, with the return to the socialist promise to transcend and replace both national and ethnic forms of collectivity.²¹

II. Monumentality between Socialism and Postsocialism in Southeastern Europe

Both the Belgrade municipality and the Monument Group grappled with issues that have become central to the construction of monuments in the latter half of the 20th century, such as how to commemorate both a struggle and its victims, and how to use public commemoration to engender an authentic sense of historical consciousness. What is perhaps most striking is the degree to which the Monument Group's goal in the creation of 'distributive monuments' parallels the rhetoric of socialist monumentality in

²⁰ This is what Osborne terms a 'relay.'

²¹ This promise, of course, was neither universal nor successful: ironically, in many cases, it was precisely Cold War-era socialist policies and ideologies that managed to reify national consciousness in ways previously unheard of in certain regions, Southeastern Europe among them. However, I believe it is impossible to understand the level of influence that the idea of socialism as an alternative (to nationalism and ethnocentrism, as well as to imperialism and capitalism) exercised and continues to exercise in almost all spheres of cultural production. Thus, the fact that socialist monuments promoted nationalism should not prevent us from considering what else they promoted, and how those alternative aims appear as available to artists working after socialism.

Yugoslavia. The Monument Group’s strategies and claims—both artistic and ideological—are central to the questions that this dissertation aims to both raise and address. What kinds of relationships were constructed between the form of the monument²² and socialist political discourses during the Cold War? What roles did the construction of monuments play in socialist Eastern Europe, and how did these roles exceed the traditional interpretation of socialist monuments as totalitarian propaganda? Why and how do contemporary artists in postsocialist nations engage with socialist-era monuments and monumentality in order to understand their recent past and present conditions? What new forms of community arise from postsocialist engagements with monumental heritage, and how are these forms of community related to the ones created during the socialist years?

This dissertation proposes to answer these questions by considering the shifting paradigms of monumentality that have characterized the production of public commemorative sculpture in Southeastern Europe, and the ways that artists working after socialism’s end have engaged with monumentality. Some authors have suggested that the socialist era was characterized by an “eclipse of historical sensibility,” and that contemporary artists who incorporate the socialist past into their works are striving against this lack.²³ I argue, rather, that socialist monuments present an important resource for contemporary artists: they provide not only historical reference points for socialism’s

²² As is perhaps already clear, in this dissertation I generally use the term ‘monument’ in a narrow sense corresponding to what Aloïs Riegl referred to as “intentional” monuments—that is, monuments created with an explicitly commemorative or celebratory purpose. I rarely use the term with the broader meaning that Riegl analyzed: the object that has become a monument simply by virtue of its integration into a new systems of values, such as the system that cherishes the ‘age value’ of remnants of the past. See Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin,” trans. Kurt W. Forster and Diane Ghirardo, *Oppositions* 25 (Fall 1982): pp. 21–51.

²³ This is how Mark Godfrey characterizes the work of Albanian contemporary artist Anri Sala, in Godfrey’s seminal article “The Artist as Historian,” *October* 120 (Spring 2007): p. 144.

self-understanding, but they also present models that offer complex historical sensibility—in particular ways—to artists working now.

In recent decades, and often in response to the afterlives of socialist culture, the monument has been a frequent topic of investigation in group exhibitions and research projects that include or focus on contemporary artists. Consider an array of different recent exhibitions and transnational curatorial projects, spanning the continent:

Monument to Transformation,²⁴ initiated by Zbyněk Baladrán and Vít Havránek, 2006–2009; *Low-Budget Monuments*,²⁵ curated by Mihnea Mircan, 2007; *Since We Last Spoke About Monuments*,²⁶ curated by Mihnea Mircan, 2008; *Post-Monument*,²⁷ curated by Fabio Cavallucci, 2010; *Invisible Monuments*,²⁸ curated by Costanza Paissan, 2012; *Open Monument*,²⁹ curated by Marta Jecu, 2013; *The Empty Pedestal*,³⁰ curated by Marco Scotini, 2014; *Face to Face with the Monument*,³¹ organized by Chto Delat, 2014; *Monuments Should Not Be Trusted*,³² curated by Lina Džuverović, 2016; and *Heroes We Love*, organized by various scholars, curators and artists from across Southeastern Europe, 2015–2017.³³ The list is by no means exhaustive—it could include many more

²⁴ This project took place at various sites and art spaces across Europe, from the Czech Republic to Armenia.

²⁵ The Romanian Pavilion the 52nd Venice Biennale.

²⁶ The exhibition was held at Stroom den Haag in The Hague, Netherlands.

²⁷ The 14th International Sculpture Biennale of Carrara, Italy.

²⁸ The exhibition was held at La Galerie Contemporary Art Centre in Noisy-le-Sec, France.

²⁹ At Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, in Berlin, Germany.

³⁰ At the Museo Civico Archeologico in Bologna, Italy.

³¹ This installation and publication project was realized in Vienna at Schwarzenberg Platz.

³² At Nottingham Contemporary, England.

³³ From one of the conferences that took place in association with the *Heroes We Love* project, the journal *Studia ethnologica Croatica* published a special issue (volume 29, 2017, edited by Tihana Pupovac and Nevena Škrbić Alempijević) with a series of articles focused on monumentality and (post)socialism in various Southeastern European countries. In subsequent chapters I address some of the theoretical and practical issues raised by these articles. The publication serves as an important step in a careful consideration of public monuments during and after socialism. In most cases, however, the analyses do not address the role of contemporary art in shaping the perception of socialist cultural heritage. The present dissertation attempts to introduce this aspect more explicitly into the current scholarly discourse.

national pavilions at various biennales, as well as numerous other projects and art exhibitions. They evidence not only a pervasive interest in the monument, but also the ongoing exploration the mutability of ‘monument’ as a concept: frugality, reminiscence, invisibility, suspicion, and adoration are among the diverse ideas and affects associated with monuments in the titles of these exhibitions.

While many of these exhibitions focused on artists born or operative in countries of the former socialist bloc, the appearance of the monument in contemporary art is a phenomenon that belongs not only to former Eastern Europe, but to the entire globe. The urgency of engaging with monumentality as an artistic form derives in no small part from the legacy of fascist monumentality—especially in postwar Germany³⁴—and from the necessity to remember and mourn the tragic losses of the Second World War.³⁵ The commemoration of the heroes and victims of the Second World War was—and remains—not only a matter of individual or collective memory, but also a matter of *history* and historical consciousness. As such, it was a crucial aspect of socialist culture. In the postsocialist period, these socialist-era projects of historical construction and memorialization have become controversial because of their association with official socialist culture, and thus with processes of totalitarian domination. As anthropologist Kristen Ghodsee points out, ongoing political efforts to equate fascism with communism—as comparable historical traumas—have the effect of “t[ying] all leftist

³⁴ The literature on this topic is vast, but an effective overview of the role of monuments in German life after the Second World War is given in the latter chapters of Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870–1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 143–301.

³⁵ See James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

political ideals to the horrors of Stalinism.”³⁶ This in turn results in the interpretation of nearly all public monuments of the socialist era as no more than oppressive propaganda, and any trace of their revolutionary political content or aesthetic openness is violently obscured.

III. Affinities and Terminologies

Monumental Endeavors critically situates itself primarily in relation to three fields of academic investigation. The first is that focused on understanding the art of Central and Eastern Europe in relation to wider narratives of European modern and global contemporary art. This body of literature aims at constructing what art historian Piotr Piotrowski refers to as a “horizontal history”³⁷ of modern art, both in the region and beyond: a history that dispenses with the centerpieces of “hierarchical,” Western-centric art history—namely, questions of canon and of stylistic movements.³⁸ The horizontal model of art history pays closer attention to geography, and does not consider the paradoxical or specific qualities of ‘localized’ artistic phenomena to be any barrier to their consideration as serious topics for art historical research. Furthermore, it does not consider the potential ‘belatedness’ of certain stylistic phenomena to relegate them to a secondary status in a global history of art.³⁹ Works such as Steven Mansbach’s *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: From the Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1890–1939* (1999),⁴⁰ Piotr Piotrowski’s *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and the Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe*

³⁶ Kristen Ghodsee, “A Tale of ‘Two Totalitarianisms’: The Crisis of Capitalism and the Historical Memory of Communism,” *History of the Present: A Journal of Critical History* 4:2 (Fall 2014): p. 117.

³⁷ Piotr Piotrowski, “Towards a Horizontal History of the European Avant-Garde,” in *Europa! Europa? The Avant-Garde, Modernism, and the Fate of a Continent*, ed. Sascha Bru, et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), pp. 49–58.

³⁸ Piotrowski, “Towards a Horizontal History,” pp. 54–55.

³⁹ On the topic of belatedness in art from ‘peripheral’ areas, see Fonteini Vlachou, “Why Spatial? Time and the Periphery,” *Visual Resources* (2016): pp. 1–17.

⁴⁰ Steven A. Mansbach, *Modern Art in Eastern Europe: From the Baltic to the Balkans, ca. 1890–1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

(2009),⁴¹ and Amy Bryzgel's *Performance Art in Eastern Europe since 1960* (2017),⁴² as well as projects like IRWIN's *East Art Map* (2006),⁴³ help construct a fuller picture of developments in Eastern European art in order to expand our understanding of both Western and non-Western art in conditions of global modernity. Although geographically narrow in scope, my study shares with these previous endeavors a conviction that we cannot truly understand European—much less global—art histories without a robust picture of how art has functioned in geographies that have traditionally been considered as 'peripheral' in relation to Europe.

The second body of literature with which I engage is that focused on chronicling the history of public sculpture in postwar Europe, and on understanding the changing roles that monuments have played in both capitalist and socialist contexts. Some of the earliest and most important approaches to this subject matter focused on memorials to victims of the Second World War, and of the Holocaust in particular. James E. Young's study *The Texture of Memory* (1993)⁴⁴ was among the first to recover not only the important role of war memorials in a history of postwar art, but also the essential complexity of the monument as a contemporary form. Reuben Fowkes' dissertation *Monumental Sculpture in Post-war Eastern Europe, 1945–1960* (2002) and his subsequent publications on Eastern European monumentality⁴⁵ are key to my

⁴¹ Piotr Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and the Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe*, trans. by Anna Brzyski (London: Reaktion, 2009).

⁴² Amy Bryzgel, *Performance Art in Eastern Europe since 1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

⁴³ IRWIN, eds., *East Art Map: Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe* (London: Afterall, 2006).

⁴⁴ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory*.

⁴⁵ See Reuben Fowkes, *Monumental Sculpture in Post-war Eastern Europe, 1945–1960* (PhD Diss., Essex University, 2002); Reuben Fowkes, "Croatia/Hungary: Socialist Realist Art Criticism at the Crossroads of the 1950s," *Third Text* 20:2 (March, 2006): pp. 201–210; Reuben Fowkes, "Soviet War Memorials in Eastern Europe, 1945–74," in *Figuration/Abstraction: Strategies for Public Sculpture in Europe 1945–1968*, ed. Charlotte Benton (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 11–32; and Reuben Fowkes,

investigations, since they provide a groundwork for understanding monumentality as a diverse political and stylistic phenomenon across the region. Fowkes' investigations examine the period immediately prior to the years upon which I focus, and the issues he considers are different, in important ways. The immediate postwar period—in much of the socialist bloc—saw a proliferation of sculptures solidifying ties to the Stalinist Soviet Union, as well as statues of leaders and allegorical figures. In the late socialist period, however, patterns of commemoration began to change, at least in Southeastern Europe, as the possible visions of local and global socialism changed. Other authors have examined public sculpture in this period from the angle of a stylistic history. For example, Vladimir Kulić, Maroje Mrduljaš, and Wolfgang Thaler's *Modernism In-Between* (2010)⁴⁶ looks at the modernist architecture and monuments of Yugoslavia, raising important questions about the role of styles such as Brutalism and Surrealism in geopolitical contexts beyond Western Europe. While my own investigation is not an attempt to sketch out a stylistic history, such projects inform my approach to narrating the art historical context of both Yugoslavia and Albania.

Finally, my dissertation responds to and builds upon the recent development—especially in the field of literary studies—of what is known as “weak theory” or “affect theory.” I discuss this theoretical framework at greater length below, in Section V of this introduction, but I do want to briefly sketch the broader scholarly context that informs my incorporation of weak theory into the art history of the former Eastern Europe. Weak

“You Only Live Twice: The Strange Afterlife of Socialist Sculpture,” in *Bucharest: Matter & History: The Public Monument and Its Discontents*, ed. Anca Benera (Bucharest: 2010), pp. 213–233.

⁴⁶ Vladimir Kulić, Maroje Mrduljaš, and Wolfgang Thaler, *Modernism In-Between: The Mediatorial Architectures of Socialist Yugoslavia* (Berlin: Jovis, 2012). See also Vladimir Kulić, “Building the Socialist Balkans: Architecture in the Global Networks of the Cold War,” *Southeastern Europe* 41 (2017): pp. 95–111.

theory is concerned primarily with providing alternatives to ‘strong’ critical theories that seek to discover the machinations of ideology behind or beneath social and artistic processes. These ‘strong’ theories are in many ways similar to Cold War rhetorics that sought to deconstruct the illusions of socialist progress and lay bare the ‘reality’ of life in socialist countries. To raise the question of socialist monumentality, and its heritage or continuity in the present is to challenge these narratives, to search for a more complex view of what socialism was and how it operated.⁴⁷ As anthropologist Alaina Lemon writes, recent work in the humanities and social sciences has “question[ed] dominant accounts of the recent, late socialist past and the ways the past moves in the present...”⁴⁸ Lemon argues, “We have more latitude now to study how, during socialist times, people related to socialist states and their institutions in ways that cannot be explained by a binary of ‘blind subjugation’ versus ‘dissidence’ (mediated by ‘indifference’), but also through minute forms of investment and engagement.”⁴⁹ My own dissertation aims to join these lines of inquiry, reevaluating not only our understanding of the complexity of socialist monumental art, but also the ways that certain postsocialist artworks are inextricable from this complex history.

There are several key terms and concepts that I employ repeatedly in the analyses that follow; to help clarify to readers my understanding and use of these terms, I offer a series of working definitions.

⁴⁷ To gauge the continued bias against artwork produced under socialism or totalitarianism—especially ‘official’ art commissioned by governments, that often does not fit into the dominant narrative of either increasingly abstract or increasingly self-critical artistic practice—scholars have often looked to survey publications and their treatment of socialist art. For example, Mikke Bolt Rasmussen and Jacob Wamberg, in their introduction to *Totalitarian Art and Modernity* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2011), note the relative lack of discussion of either socialist or Nazi art in the recent surveys of modern art history.

⁴⁸ Alaina Lemon, “Writing Against the New ‘Cold War,’” *Anthropology News* (November, 2008): p. 11.

⁴⁹ Lemon, “Writing Against the New ‘Cold War,’” p. 12.

Socialist Monumentality. The origins of socialist monumentality are often located in Lenin's Plan for Monumental Propaganda, announced in April of 1918. Whether Lenin's Plan is considered as a logical continuation of earlier traditions of monumental construction (such as the statues of Paris)⁵⁰ or treated as a fundamentally open-ended and experimental project that cannot be so easily causally linked to preceding and succeeding practices,⁵¹ it must be acknowledged that the issue of socialist monumentality was from its inception a highly complex one. I do not follow a strict delineation between the general concept of monumentality and specific objects, but I do seek to frame monumentality as a phenomenon that exceeds the formal characteristics of any particular monument.⁵² In socialist culture, monumentality also functioned in discursive and affective ways that sometimes operated independently of monuments themselves. Although I do not presume to offer a universal definition of socialist monumentality, it is helpful to place certain conceptual parameters on the term. Art historian Suzana Milevska writes that "[t]o build a monument is by definition to attempt to represent the sublime — that which is incomprehensible, bigger than any of us."⁵³ The mimetic paradox of monumentality is its attempt to both project and commemorate the sublime, and socialist monumentality is that form of representation whose sublime object is collective participation in the building of socialism. This object is global, since it presumes no

⁵⁰ Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage, 1870–1997* (London: Reaktion, 1998), p. 107.

⁵¹ Christina Lodder, "Lenin's Plan for Monumental Propaganda," in *Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture in a One-Party State, 1917–1992*, ed. Matthew Cullerne Bown and Brandon Taylor (New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 16–18.

⁵² As James F. Osborne suggests, there are merits to separating the notion of monumentality from monuments themselves. See Osborne, "Monuments and Monumentality," in *Approaching Monumentality in Archaeology*, ed. James F. Osborne (New York: State University of New York Press, 2014), p. 3.

⁵³ Suzana Milevska, "Ágalma: The 'Objet Petit a,' Alexander the Great, and Other Excesses of Skopje 2014," *e-flux journal* 57 (September, 2014), <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/agalma-the-objet-petit-a-alexander-the-great-and-other-excesses-of-skopje-2014/> (accessed March 12, 2018).

matter the precise character of the localized actuality of socialism, socialist subjects are always already engaged in a struggle that includes fellow citizens throughout the world. This object is also futural because it is speculative: universalized communist society has not been achieved, and in some philosophical models (such as Maoism), it can never be fully achieved because class struggle persists. Thus, I define socialist monumentality not in terms of a particular aesthetic, nor in terms of a particular political origin (as do explanations that treat monumentality as ‘official art’), but rather in terms of its *imaginary*.

History. Throughout this dissertation, I refer frequently to the notion of “history,” and less often to the notion of “memory.” I do, in part, subscribe to the widespread view that opposes “history’s officialism” to memory’s ability to “recall hidden pasts, the lived and the local, the ordinary and the everyday.”⁵⁴ However, I primarily continue to speak of history, rather than memory, even when I turn to a discussion of contemporary artists working in postsocialism. Thus, this dissertation differs from many analyses of monuments and contemporary art alike that purport to expand our understanding of mnemonic processes.⁵⁵ I follow philosopher Peter Osborne in privileging the lens of history because socialist culture—including socialist monuments—importantly relates to

⁵⁴ Daniel Abramson, “Make History Not Memory,” *Harvard Design Magazine* 9 (Fall 1999), <http://www.harvarddesignmagazine.org/issues/9/make-history-not-memory> (accessed June 10, 2016). I expand on the relationship between history and memory in Chapter 4.

⁵⁵ Thus, while my study is informed by the substantial—and still growing—literature on issues of cultural memory and collective memory, it does not intend to intervene into the definitions of these different concepts, and instead focuses on returning to the notion of history as an important element of current discourses on culture. While the literature on memory, collectivity, and culture is vast, for an overview, see Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980); Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History,” pp. 7–24; Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and Jan Assman, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” trans. John Czaplicka, *New German Critique* 65 (Spring–Summer 1995): pp. 125–133. On the relevance of history as a model, over memory, for a hermeneutics of contemporary art, see Peter Osborne, “The Truth Will Be Known When the Last Witness is Dead: History Not Memory,” in *After the Event: New Perspectives on Art History*, ed. Charles Merewether and John Potts (New York: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 202–217.

the *future*, and the discourse of history best captures this futural aspect. As Osborne writes, the object of history is the speculative “transgenerational unity of the human”; history is “collectivity projected ... beyond all actually existing social subjects.”⁵⁶ This is, in a sense, to restate the conceptual framework put forward by the Monument Group: a ‘politics of memory’ (and with it, memory *tout court*) is impossible without a historical understanding grounded in projected future possibilities, and this futural projection is impossible without an emancipated, class-conscious subject. Monuments are forms of representation that are mediated not only by the artists that create them, but also by the governing bodies that commission them, the communities that sustain them, and so on. As such, although they are clearly related to embodied practices of memory, they also constitute a construct “severed from the subjectivity of individual subjects.”⁵⁷

The Cold War. I often describe the scope of my enquiry, at least that part dealing with socialism, in relation to the Cold War, or as occurring in the Cold War era. There have been numerous attempts to define the Cold War and its social conditions, and this dissertation does not primarily intend to offer a definition of a monumental aesthetic or ideology that is unique to the Cold War years (1945 till 1991). Rather, I adopt Odd Arne Westad’s basic definition of the Cold War as the “period in which the global conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union dominated international affairs.”⁵⁸ What Westad’s pathbreaking analysis emphasizes is precisely the *global* character of this conflict, and I have used the language of the Cold War to draw attention to this broader context. Although, as I have noted, I draw inspiration from art historical projects that

⁵⁶ Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, pp. 193–194.

⁵⁷ Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, p. 193.

⁵⁸ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 3.

focus on Central and Eastern Europe as a specific region, I do attempt to explain the phenomena that I examine here solely with reference to national or regional developments. Although the local meanings of monuments remain indispensable, socialist monumentality developed in the postwar period in the context of a global ideological imaginary that was premised first upon the opposition between the United States and the Soviet Union and eventually, for both hard-line Stalinist nations like Albania and members of the Non-Aligned Movement like Yugoslavia, upon other shifting global geopolitical divisions.

Late Socialism. The term “late socialism” generally describes the period from the 1960s⁵⁹ to the 1980s in the countries of the Eastern Bloc, a period during which many of the nations constituting this geopolitical sphere (including Albania) broke away from the Soviet Union and began establishing new socioeconomic and political alliances (sometimes socialist in nature, sometimes capitalist). Certain authors, such as aesthetician Aleš Erjavec, equate late socialism with postsocialism, describing the decline of socialism’s credibility as “the proclamation of the end of socialism from within socialism itself.” Erjavec sees the breaks between various nations and the USSR—and these nations’ subsequent turn to the idea of “‘socialism as world progress,’ ... a late and more benign variant of ‘world revolution’”⁶⁰—as evidence that socialism had already waned to

⁵⁹ In some cases, the period might include the 1950s as well. This is especially true in the case of Yugoslavia, which broke with Stalin’s USSR in 1948. Tito later reconciled with Khrushchev’s Soviet Union, but Yugoslavia still remained outside the main Soviet sphere of influence.

⁶⁰ Aleš Erjavec, “Introduction,” in *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition: Politicized Art Under Late Socialism*, ed. Aleš Erjavec (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 3. As anthropologist Alexei Yurchak notes, the period of late socialism is referred to in the former Soviet Union as “the period of stagnation.” (See Yurchak, “The Cynical Reason of Late Socialism: Pretense, Power, and the *Anekdot*,” *Public Culture* 9 (1997): p. 161). However, I believe it is important not to simply accept and reinscribe this version of history, especially in the field of art history, since it leads too easily to dismissals of any art associated with ‘official’ spheres as enervated. Yurchak’s own work shows the ways in which the model of ‘stagnation’ is insufficient to describe Soviet culture during the 1960s to 1980s.

the point of abandoning its initial ideals and goals. The pessimism of this view, I believe, derives from the fact that it still privileges the Soviet Union as the exemplar of socialist culture. My purpose in this dissertation is precisely to provide counterexamples to this pessimistic assessment by broadening the geographical scope of what we might consider the exemplars of socialist culture to be. I propose to see the late socialist period as one that—while it did present significant challenges to the viability of previous utopian models of communist revolution—was characterized by complex cultural responses to shifting national and international conditions. Official culture under late socialism was not as enervated as some narratives would have us believe, and monumental construction in these years provides one way of understanding the period’s vitality.

Postsocialism. I follow art historian Anthony Gardner in using the term “postsocialism” rather than “postcommunism” to describe the period beginning during the 1980s in Europe, and specifically in nations of the former Eastern Europe.⁶¹ As Gardner points out, the term “communist” was used to describe the political parties in power in these nations, while “socialism” was the social and philosophical system that these parties claimed to advance in practice.⁶² Furthermore, Gardner notes, the use of the

Yurchak also correlates late socialism with a shift “from a ‘semantic’ to a ‘pragmatic’ model of ideological discourse.” In other words, there was an increased emphasis on mimicking *forms* of official ideology rather than their literal (semantic) meanings. This, again, ultimately frames the late socialist period as one in which socialist ideologies tended towards empty forms that could be successfully parroted and parodied by various elements of Soviet society. (See Yurchak, “Soviet Hegemony of Form: Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45:3 (July 2003): pp. 480–510.) However, I believe that Yurchak’s analysis—which he acknowledges aims to describe the Soviet case in particular—cannot be easily generalized to all of Southeastern Europe, much less to all of the socialist world, as authors like Erjavec seem to believe it can. In fact, the dissolution of Soviet authority in the region gave rise to new possibilities for substantive ideological meanings, as well as for new forms thereof to arise.

⁶¹ See Anthony Gardner, *Politically Unbecoming: Postsocialist Art Against Democracy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015), pp. 8–9.

⁶² My consistent use of the terms ‘socialism’ and ‘postsocialism’ (and their corollary adjectival forms) in this dissertation demands some explanation. Some historians, such as Andrew Roberts, have argued that the term ‘socialism’ should not be used to describe the regimes of postwar Eastern and Central

term ‘postsocialism’ emphasizes a pan-European perspective—specifically, the effects of socialism beyond those countries that identified as ‘socialist’—rather than a framework confined to a particular part of Europe.⁶³ Some authors, such as Aleš Erjavec, have equated postsocialism with the postmodern condition, coincident with the emergence of an “age of empty signifiers” characterized by the sudden vacuity the chief ideological precepts of the previous political system.⁶⁴ However, I prefer to use the term to describe a

Europe. Roberts suggests that this practice “stretch[es] the term] too thin and [uses it] to cover too great a diversity of systems,” creating confusion with welfare states and democratic socialist political parties. (See Roberts, “The State of Socialism: A Note on Terminology,” *Slavic Review* 63:2 (Summer 2004), p. 350.) Given that the states of the Eastern Bloc were governed by communist parties, Roberts advocates the use of the term ‘communist’ to describe these states, despite the problems this entails (pp. 363–364). However, Roberts’ argument is based on a mode of analysis that deals with (and thus needs labels for) entire nation-states defined by their socioeconomic systems. This mode is less well-equipped for describing the complex individual cases of the Eastern Bloc. (For example, it would be quite problematic to refer to Yugoslavia as communist, and the literature on postwar Yugoslavia tends to use the term ‘socialist.’) Roberts’ approach also lacks the ability to deal with the shared ideologies driving international cultural production in the Eastern Bloc and beyond in these years. Discourses of the time spoke of ‘the building of socialism,’ ‘cultural exchange between socialist nations,’ and ‘the socialist world.’ While the term ‘communism’ may accurately describe the character of one-party states led by communist parties, it fails to accurately describe the breadth of phenomena—artistic, architectural, commemorative, infrastructural—that were part of the ‘building of socialism,’ and recent anthropological and historical literature on the region has often opted for the use of the term ‘socialist’ except when speaking specifically of communist parties and their policies or goals.

In the field of art history, authors such as Piotr Piotrowski and Boris Groys have used the terminology of post/communism to describe postwar developments in Eastern European art. (See, for example, Piotr Piotrowski, *Art and Democracy in Post-Communist Europe*, trans. Anna Brzyski (London: Reaktion, 2012) and Boris Groys, *Art Power* (Cambridge, MIT Press, 2008).) However, I consider Anthony Gardner’s critique of their usage to be compelling. Furthermore, there is no real confusion created by using the term ‘socialist’ in the context of art from the Eastern Bloc, since the qualifier is not widely used to describe art and culture originating in welfare states, or in countries controlled by democratic socialist parties. Thus, throughout this dissertation, I use the term ‘socialist’ when broadly describing the postwar era (up through around 1989) in the former Eastern Europe, and when describing art produced in countries ruled by communist parties. I use the term ‘communist’ only when specifically referring to communist parties or regimes controlled by them. Likewise, I use the term ‘postsocialist’ to describe cultural production in the region and beyond after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

On the problem of referring to the postwar years in Albania in particular as “communism,” see Romeo Kodra, “Albanian Lapidar Survey: Lehtësia e papërballueshme e përdorimit të konceptit ‘komunist,’” *AKS Revista*, June 11, 2014, <https://aksrevista.wordpress.com/2014/06/11/albanian-lapidar-survey-lehtësia-e-papërballueshme-e-përdorimit-të-konceptit-komunist/> (accessed June 15, 2016). My thinking on this topic is indebted to exchanges with Kodra.

⁶³ Gardner, *Politically Unbecoming*, pp. 8–9.

⁶⁴ Erjavec, “Introduction,” pp. 26–29.

period in which, in both the former West and the former East, the ideals of socialism remain available in myriad though often divergent ways.⁶⁵

IV. Structure

This dissertation is comprised of the present introduction, five chapters, and a short conclusion. Chapter 1 provides a historical and theoretical outline for the context of socialist-era monumentality in Southeastern Europe, while each of Chapters 2 through 5 deals with one or more case studies. Two of these latter chapters focus on the socialist period, and two chapters investigate the years after 1989.

Chapter 1, “‘The Monumentality of Our Socialist Life’: The Partisan Resistance, Revolutionary Temporality, and the Geopolitics of Late Socialism in Southeastern Europe,” provides a historical background for understanding the significance of the two political units upon which my study focuses: (the nations emergent out of the former) Yugoslavia, and Albania. Yugoslavia and Albania present a compelling pair of case studies precisely because their sociopolitical forms of socialism were so distinct. Albania was characterized by the attempt to produce and sustain a firmly centralized Stalinist political and cultural system—although this project was counteracted by the country’s continually shifting international alliances and the effects of these changing orientations on both political structures and everyday life. While Albania’s reputation as the most isolationist nation in Eastern Europe is perhaps accurately reflected by the final decade of

⁶⁵ This is one reason why I feel the term ‘postsocialist’ continues to apply to art produced in the countries of the former socialist bloc. Although, as authors such as Caroline Humphrey suggest, the term ‘postsocialism’ derives primarily from academic discourses—rather than from a stable description of a geopolitical condition—there are still good reasons for using it to describe a particular ideological set of possibilities and attitudes that are reflected in the art I examine here. See Caroline Humphrey, “Does the Category ‘Postsocialist’ Still Make Any Sense?”, in *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies, and Practices in Eurasia*, ed. C.M. Hann (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 12.

the Cold War, it maintained important international connections through the late 1960s,⁶⁶ and its artistic phenomena cannot be fully understood without considering the *global* character of its geopolitical existence in this period. Yugoslavia pursued a similarly global political path in the same years: the country's formative role in the Non-Aligned Movement at once distanced it from the most powerful participants in the Cold War antagonism and established its political relationship with nations in Africa and Southeast Asia. At the same time, Yugoslavia's project to establish a de-centralized, self-management socialism and its openness to cultural influences from Western Europe and America made it politically and culturally distinct from Albania in profound ways, despite the fact that their geographic proximity meant that—in some aspects—their paths to modernity were similar up through the early 20th century.

Despite their differing political structures, Yugoslavia and Albania shared an important narrative regarding the genesis of socialism in their respective nations: the narrative of self-liberation⁶⁷ from fascist forces during the Second World War through the struggle of the Partisan resistance. The commemoration of this struggle was the impetus for the construction of an overwhelming number of the monuments erected in Albania and Yugoslavia during the period of late socialism, and this chapter argues that the revolutionary legacy of the Partisan narrative importantly affected the development of socialist monumentality in Southeastern Europe. Further, I suggest that the antifascist ideology of so many socialist memorial projects is part of why they retain such appeal for

⁶⁶ See Elidor Mëhilli, *From Stalin to Mao: Albania and the Socialist World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017).

⁶⁷ Note that I use the term 'narrative': I do not aim to enter into debates on the historical veracity of the claims to self-liberation in the antifascist struggle, which are occasionally dubious at best. However inaccurate these claims might have been on the part of the communist parties that emerged out of Partisan military structures, the fact remains that this narrative importantly differentiated Yugoslavia and Albania from many other states in the socialist bloc, where the Red Army was framed as a 'liberating' force, and monuments to the sacrifices of Soviet soldiers proliferated.

artists in the postsocialist era: it is what prevents artists from dismissing these monuments as what Andrew Herscher calls ‘counter-heritage,’⁶⁸ undesirable heritage that is deemed unworthy of engagement or preservation, and instead causes artists to seek to add to and recover the legacies of these memorials. This chapter argues that these postsocialist interactions with socialist monumental works constitute a different aesthetic and temporal relationship than that typically established between the historical avant-gardes and the various critical neo- and post-avant-gardes of Eastern Europe, and thus offer an alternative narrative for understanding broader art historical trends in the region.

The second chapter of the dissertation—“The Dictator Visits the Studio: Monumental Industry and Forms of Collective Experience in Communist Albania”—focuses on the involvement of the socialist dictator Enver Hoxha in the creation of the Vlora *Independence Monument*, located in southern Albania. On July 13, 1969, a letter from Hoxha was published on the first page of the weekly Albanian cultural periodical *Drita*. The letter was addressed to Kristaq Rama, Shaban Hadëri, and Muntas Dhrami—the three most prominent sculptors in socialist Albania—and it contained a series of conceptual and aesthetic considerations bearing upon the creation of the massive *Independence Monument* currently being realized by the sculptors, to be placed in the port city of Vlora. The dictator had recently visited the sculptors in their studio, and the letter summarized the dictator’s impressions from this visit, as well as clarifying suggestions he had made to the artists in person. A letter of response from the three

⁶⁸ Andrew Herscher, “Counter-Heritage and Violence,” *Future Anterior* 3:2 (Winter 2006): pp. 25–26. I return to a discussion of Herscher’s concept of counter-heritage in Chapter 4.

sculptors was also printed.⁶⁹ This exchange of letters was subsequently to serve as one of the key points in socialist Albanian cultural history—it represented the first time that Hoxha’s aesthetic commentary and intervention in the creative process were made public, and in the ensuing years it was held up as an example of the dictator’s concern with art’s importance and his beneficent role as cultural critic. Hoxha’s letter also established the importance of monumental industry as a *collective* and collaborative process that modeled the vision of collective history that socialist Albania was seeking to establish in these same years; in the year 1970, art critic Kujtim Buza would survey the plethora of public art projects (chiefly sculptural and architectural) underway at the time, and write “nearly all of our sculptors, no matter their age, have joined together to form collectives.”⁷⁰

This chapter examines two monuments—the above-mentioned Vlora *Independence Monument* and the *Four Heroines of Mirdita* monument—inaugurated in the early 1970s (1972 and 1971 respectively) in socialist Albania. The latter monument, created by sculptors Andrea Mano, Fuat Dushku, Dhimo Gogollari, and Perikli Çuli, was also one of the first to be cast in bronze by the new organization founded to reproduce works of sculpture in the People’s Socialist Republic of Albania.⁷¹ The *Four Heroines* monument commemorated the deaths of four young women,⁷² several involved in antifascist activities, from the northern regions of Albania at the hands of conservatives who resisted the emancipation of women under socialism. The monument was discussed

⁶⁹ Enver Hoxha, “Në Gurrën e Pashtershme e Jetëdhënëse të Krijimtarisë së Popullit, Do të Gjejmë atë Frymëzim të Madh për të Realizuar Vepra të Bukura e Madhështore për Popullin Tonë,” and Kristaq Rama, Muntas Dhrami, and Shaban Hadëri, “I Dashur Shoku Enver,” both in *Drita*, July 13, 1969.

⁷⁰ Kujtim Buza, “Puna Krijuese Kolektive,” *Drita*, September 27, 1970.

⁷¹ Correspondent for *Drita*, “Atje ku Riprodhohen Veprat e Artit,” *Drita*, May 16, 1971.

⁷² Marta Tarazhi, Prenda Tarazhi, Shkurte Cara, and Mrike Lokja.

in the press of the time as not only a materialization of the heroines of socialism, but also of the collective labor of the four sculptors and the workers at the center where sculptures were cast and reproduced. These layers of collective labor and reproduction (the reproduction of history and the (re)production of monumental sculptures) modeled a complex present in which various degrees of agency were both concentrated and dispersed across several actors (the Albanian socialist state, monumental sculptors, craftspeople who cast the sculptures, and the figures of history represented in the sculptures). The chapter asserts the crucial relationship between socialist monumentality and the *present*: socialist monuments were often not simply reflections of their own time's relationship to the past, but monumentalizations of the present. This aspect of socialist monumentality introduced a unique constellation of temporal and conceptual paradigms that postsocialist artists have subsequently taken up in disparate ways.

Chapter 3, "The Vault of Time and the Sun: Revolutionary Temporality and the Ilinden Memorial Complex," focuses on the Ilinden Memorial in Kruševo, in present-day Macedonia. Inaugurated in 1974, the memorial complex represents one of the most intricate attempts to narrate both resistance to the Ottoman Empire and the transnational Yugoslav Partisan struggle against fascist occupiers. The town of Kruševo was the site of the historic Ilinden Uprising against Ottoman forces in 1903, and from this uprising a short-lived, ten-day republic emerged that was subsequently harshly crushed. The political legacy of this republic—and the constitution it drafted—has become an important piece of Macedonian nationalist history, one of the links that establishes Macedonia's role in broader regional struggles against Ottoman forces on behalf of 'Europe.' Kruševo's importance in relation to Southeastern European history more

broadly and to Macedonian nationalism in particular made its status as a site of memory in Yugoslavia particularly contentious.⁷³ The narratives constructed around Ilinden and Kruševo reveal both the possibilities and the limitations of linking earlier conflicts to the antifascist resistance and the development of socialist society in Yugoslavia.

I consider the Ilinden Memorial—designed by the husband-and-wife team of Jordan and Iskra Grabul, with stained-glass windows by painter Borko Lazeski and an amphitheater designed by painter Petar Mazev—as a unique navigation of nationalist and transnationalist ideologies, accomplished through the intertwining of abstract and figurative visual modes. The chapter places the memorial complex in the broader context of monumental production in Yugoslavia between the 1960s and the 80s, considering its formal and conceptual relationship to other public monuments by artists such as Bogdan Bogdanović and Vojin Bakić. Monuments in socialist Yugoslavia are noteworthy for the variety of modernist modes of representation that they manifested, ranging from Surrealism to Cubism to Socialist Realism. While Yugoslav public art in present-day Croatia and Serbia has received a growing amount of attention, the Macedonian case remains relatively unexamined. I use the relative marginalization of Macedonia within Yugoslavia to consider some of the tensions inherent in the attempt to materialize Yugoslavian socialist history as a universal phenomenon. The Ilinden memorial complex evidences the use of a visual rhetoric of organic abstraction, suggesting the body's heightened affective connection to the course of socialist history, in an attempt to overcome differences in ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identity that challenged both Josip Broz Tito's and Edvard Kardelj's versions of Yugoslav social unity. At a broader level,

⁷³ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 22–50.

the monument also evidences the attempt to frame socialist history as a reconciliation of divergent temporalities, under the auspices of the present as the privileged time of socialist becoming; thus the discussion in this chapter reinforces the assertions made in the previous chapter about the contemporaneity of socialist culture.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation, “Adding Eternity to Forever: Towards an Aporetic of Monumental Heritage in the Work of Armando Lulaj and David Maljković,” begins to consider the ways that socialist monumentality finds itself reflected and transformed in contemporary art, examining the works of two artists from Southeastern Europe whose practice frequently incorporates the traces and remains of socialist commemorative art. Armando Lulaj and David Maljković have both carried out sustained engagements with the socialist past in Albania and Croatia, respectively, but in quite different ways. What unites the works that constitute the core of this chapter— Lulaj’s *NEVER* (2012), and Maljković’s *Scenes for a New Heritage* (2004–2006)⁷⁴—is the expansion of time surrounding the socialist monument itself, the prolongation of monumentality through both new forms (the revision of signs) and the return to old forms (the recapitulation of abstract modernist aesthetics). Armando Lulaj’s *NEVER* project consists of an intervention in the Albanian landscape and an accompanying 22-minute video that intersperses documentation of the intervention with socialist-era footage. In 1968, on the slopes of Mt. Shpirag in Berat, Albania, a division of the People’s Army of Albania painted the Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha’s name—ENVER—on stones set into the mountainside, in letters 100 meters in height. During the socialist era, periodic repainting kept the geoglyph legible, but after the 1991, it gradually disappeared from

⁷⁴ It is interesting to note that this work lent its name to the re-installation of the Museum of Modern Art’s contemporary galleries in 2015.

view, covered over by brush and shifting stone. As part of the creation of his film, Lulaj carried out extensive research on the ENVER geoglyph, tracking down one of the soldiers who had originally helped create the work, and working with him and a group of locals to locate the letters and transform the name ENVER into its semiotically saturated anagram NEVER.

While Lulaj's *NEVER* carries out a transformation (or perhaps simply a transposition) of socialist culture that engages with vernacular modes of monumental construction and preservation, David Maljković's encounter with the socialist past is often staged through engagement with a specific artist. Many of Maljković's works focused on socialist-era Yugoslav monumentality treat those created by Croatian sculptor Vojin Bakić. The *Scenes for a New Heritage* video trilogy (set in and after the year 2045) explore Bakić's 1981 monument at Petrova Gora serves as a mysterious site of pilgrimage to which various strange visitors make their way. The futuristic aspect of Maljković's films and collages (developed both out of the otherworldliness of Bakić's monument and the strange, often indecipherable actions of the protagonists in the videos) is accompanied by the insinuation of "collective amnesia," as Maljković describes it.⁷⁵ That is, rather than saving the monument from oblivion, they frame the monument itself as a site for the generation of that oblivion. Both Lulaj's and Maljković's projects are linked to the idea of such monuments as 'heritage,' as something that must be preserved, but their realizations are coupled with a necessarily partial negation of the monument— with Maljković this occurs through the production of amnesia, with Lulaj through linguistic negation. This negation recovers socialist monumentality as a speculative

⁷⁵ Qtd. in Christina Macel and Joanna Mytkowska, *Promises of the Past: A Discontinuous History of Art in Former Eastern Europe* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2010), p. 119.

category of experience, from which one may propose new narrative parameters and affective possibilities.⁷⁶

The fifth and final chapter of the dissertation, “Weak Monumentality, Counter-Monumentality, and Postsocialist Art,” is concerned with developing the previous chapter’s discussion of the ways that contemporary art is inflected by its encounter with or use of socialist monumentality. However, this chapter is different in both its focus and its character: it deals primarily with works of performance, and it aims to construct a broader theoretical framework with which to understand postsocialist art that addresses the monumental. I term the theoretical viewpoint that I develop here ‘weak monumentality.’ One of the key questions this chapter seeks to answer is that of how to read artworks that clearly relate to the monumentality of the socialist past, but do *not* primarily function as deconstructive critiques of that past. The heart of this chapter develops around an examination of a performance by the Albanian artist Elisa Cenaliaj, entitled *Welcome, Dear Workers* (2005). Cenaliaj treats the monument not so much as a center from which power structures emanate, but as a background against which power structures—be they historical patterns, embodied practices, or emotional appeals—become apparent. It is this aspect of contemporary monumental engagements that I dub ‘weak monumentality,’ and Cenaliaj’s work functions as the opening onto a theoretical elaboration of weak monumentality in the works of several artists practicing in Southeastern Europe during the postsocialist period.

⁷⁶ These works also enact a complicated relationship to ‘contemporaneity,’ since they depend in part upon a) the perceived temporal distance between the actual present and the supposedly eternal present anticipated by socialist monumentality, and b) the perceived temporal distance of the projected future moment that is produced by the artistic expansion of the monument’s existence. In this sense, however, they recover one of the greatest promises of socialist monumentality, that which aimed at the broadest possible historical reach across which the monument could ‘bring together’ divergent times and experiences of time.

In addition to Cenaliaj's *Welcome, Dear Workers*, this chapter investigates Adela Jušić's *Unknown Partisan Woman* (2016), Dalibor Martinis' *JBT 27.12.2004* (2005), Milica Tomić's *Remembering* (2000–2001), and Nada Prlja's *Humanistic Communism* (2016), examining the ways that these artworks use monumentality—in its narrative, affective, and structural aspects—as a means to represent the historical multiplicity of experience, the existence of alternative futures and pasts, and the importance of collective experience as a horizon for understanding the present. Monumentality in these artworks is something at once ineffable and inescapable: ineffable because the concrete material remnants of socialist monumentality are fading, or else becoming 'heritage' that calls for preservation; inescapable because the cultural and artistic heritage of the socialist period locates monumentality not in centralized forms but rather in distributed and dispersed modes of historical understanding. This is both the strength and the 'weakness' of monumentality as it is reflected in contemporary artistic practices, and in order to more precisely describe the artistic strategies examined in this chapter, I turn to the paradigm of 'weak theory.'

V. Weakness and Monuments

Weak theory owes its development to theorists in a range of disciplines, including psychologist Sylvan Tomkins, critical theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Marxist philosopher Gianni Vattimo. Weak theory is associated with the affective turn in literature and culture studies, but I use the framework in this dissertation in a number of distinct ways. Given the relative foreignness of the framework of weak theory in art history, it is perhaps necessary to state that the qualification 'weak' is not meant in a pejorative sense—quite the opposite. The association of weakness with monumentality is

used to signal a productive ontological weakness, one that contrasts with the ideological dominance typically attributed to monuments.

First and foremost, my incorporation of weak theory into the understanding of socialist and postsocialist art is related to the emerging mode of understanding that sees postsocialist art's relation to prior art in terms of relative strength. In an essay in the catalog for the project and exhibition series *Heroes We Love*, curator Maja Ćirić asks, “[I]s post-Yugoslav art and curating *weakened* or *empowered* by ... entanglement with and in the socialist past?”⁷⁷ Ćirić does not directly answer this question, but she does go further in thematizing the relationship of contemporary art to its socialist (monumental) past as one that hinges on a dichotomy of fragility and strength. She continues: “a rhetorical question arises here: are the curators and artists ‘still in love with the socialist heroes’ because these heroes sustain some illusion of non-fragility?”⁷⁸ Ćirić’s way of posing this question is insightful—it lays bare a dominant but less-often thematized mode of understanding contemporary art’s relation to its historical past(s). This understanding sees the past (most frequently the socialist or the totalitarian fascist past, but at times also the modernist past) as projecting strength and power. Juxtaposed to this past, the present is understood either as something fragile in need of the strength of the past, or as a critical corrective that exposes the weakness of the past. In this dualism of strength and weakness, fragility and resiliency, monuments are sometimes called upon to exemplify the heroic power of the past. At other times they embody the past’s enervation: “Monuments are nowadays [...] contingent, frail and perishable,” according to Zygmunt

⁷⁷ Maja Ćirić, “Not Getting Closure: Curating and Leaning Backwards in the Post-Yugoslav Context,” in *Heroes We Love: Ideology, Identity, and Socialist Art in the New Europe*, ed. Simona Widmar (Maribor: UGM Maribor Art Gallery, 2017), p. 81. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁸ Ćirić, p. 84.

Bauman.⁷⁹ Framing these processes in relation to weak theory allows these artistic navigations to become more explicit.

Another important role that I call upon weak theory to play in my analysis is that of dissolving strong art historical canons that police the boundaries of genres and establish hierarchies based upon the purity of style.⁸⁰ Literary historian Wai Chee Dimock has argued for a comparable use of weak theory in dissolving a strict hierarchy or taxonomy of (literary) genres,⁸¹ and another literary historian, Paul Saint-Amour, has adopted the framework in order to more accurately characterize the current dissolution of ‘modernism’ as a prescriptive, logically coherent category in favor of definitions that are more vague and sometimes so descriptive as to be nearly tautological.⁸² I would posit that—in large part—the field of art history of the former Eastern Europe (like many other attempts to expand art history’s purview) is fundamentally a ‘weak’ enterprise precisely insofar as it seeks both to shake off a defunct canon of modernism and to practice a close description of artistic meanings that acknowledges their localized multiplicity. This is not to suggest that these localized meanings never play a role globally: in many cases, they do, but this role is rarely helpfully reduced to a description of influence on the

⁷⁹ Qtd. in Natalicchio, “Economic Crisis and Postmonuments,” p. 23. James E. Young likewise asserts the “essential fragility” of the monument; see Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 14.

⁸⁰ As Steven Mansbach notes, the history of modern art in Eastern Europe has often suffered from approaches that are structured by a “teleology of style” that aimed to construct a “coherent narrative” that could in turn be reified by museum collection and exhibition patterns. See Mansbach, “Methodology and Meaning in the Modern Art of Eastern Europe,” in *Central European Avant-Gardes: Exchange and Transformation, 1910–1930*, ed. Timothy Benson (Cambridge: MIT Press and LACMA, 2002), p. 295.

⁸¹ Wai Chee Dimock, “Weak Theory: Henry James, Colm Tóibín, W.B. Yeats,” *Critical Inquiry* 39:4 (Summer 2013): pp. 732–753.

⁸² Paul Saint-Amour, *Tense Future: Modernity, Total War, Encyclopedic Form* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 37–43. I thank Christina Walter for bringing my attention to Saint-Amour’s use of weak theory.

For an application of Eve Sedgwick’s theories—and particularly of her notion of “paranoid” versus “reparative” readings—in an art historical context, see Adair Rounthwaite, “Sanja Iveković, Marina Abramović and the Global Politics of Authentic Experience,” *Third Text* 28:6 (2014): pp. 457–474.

development of stylistic canons.⁸³ The notion of artistic ‘weakness’ in relation to monumentality also seeks to re-evaluate what artist Johanna Drucker calls the “oppositional models that are the legacy of the avant-garde,” and to replace them with greater focus on the complicity of contemporary art with various institutional and political structures.⁸⁴

Finally, the exploration of ontological ‘weakness’ in the context of monuments relates to a characterization that was made of Cold War-era socialist states, that they were ‘weak’ states.⁸⁵ This descriptor was meant to counter the implications of discourses of totalitarianism that suggested that socialist states were functionally radically centralized and controlled every aspect of life within their borders. Scholars offered alternate models that emphasized the dispersal of power in socialist production, and the continual re-negotiation of these power relations at various levels of the socialist bureaucracy. These re-negotiations allowed for ‘forms of investment and engagement’ (to return to the argument of Alaina Lemon, cited above) that were neither wholly capitulatory nor wholly oppositional.

⁸³ Here again, I follow authors such as Mansbach and Piotrowski, who suggest the crucial importance of noting how artists and artworks served as *mediations* between local and transnational networks, discourses, and aesthetic models. In the case of socialist monuments, this mediation also occurs through the production of a transnational socialist imaginary that was nonetheless tied explicitly to the formation of national consciousness. This is a version of the famous debate over the realization of cultural production that was “national in form, socialist in content,” although I do not think it overly productive to try to construct a stable narrative of what elements of monumentality were national as opposed to socialist, and whether those aspects were formal or related to content. I *do* think it helpful to pay close attention to the kinds of explicit mnemonic referents—that is, content—are referenced by socialist monuments, and in the case of Southeastern Europe, those referents are often related to the Partisan antifascist liberation struggle.

⁸⁴ Johanna Drucker, *Sweet Dreams: Contemporary Art and Complicity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. xiv–xvi.

⁸⁵ Katherine Verdery, “Theorizing Socialism: A Prologue to the Transition,” *American Ethnologist* 18:3 (1991): p. 426.

VI. A Brief Note on Ideology and Methodology

A study that examines the state-sponsored creation of monumental sculpture in the socialist period must confront particular realities about the conditions of artistic creation in states such as Albania and the former Yugoslavia. One of the convictions that underlies the argument of this dissertation regards the fundamental mutability of monuments' meanings over time; however, that mutability cannot prevent us from acknowledging that monuments created in postwar socialist states were often produced in accordance with strict ideological criteria, by artists who were—generally speaking—prepared by their training to create works in accordance with these criteria.⁸⁶ These artists were members of the Communist Parties that controlled the political landscape of their respective nations, they were well paid for the realization of state commissions, they were able to travel much more freely than common citizens, and they had access to resources (both construction materials and textual information) that were not widely available to the

⁸⁶ There is nothing in this definition alone that necessarily separates the state artists of postwar socialist countries from—for example—the court artists of earlier periods, or for that matter from many contemporary artists working in the artworld today. However, what differentiates the conditions of official socialist art production was the constant implicit (and occasionally explicit) threat of imprisonment and in some cases execution for departing from the state's ideological or stylistic criteria for artistic expression. This threat was far more ubiquitous in Stalinist states such as Albania than it was in the more decentralized context of Yugoslavia (especially after Tito's break with the Soviet Union in 1948).

However, even in Albania, the exercise of state power was not necessarily felt as a constant threat of censorship and punishment, or even as a constant demand for particular kinds of artistic content. Nicholas Tochka, in his study of musical composers working for the state in socialist Albania, cites a fascinating exchange between two former official composers, on the topic of state 'repression.' In the exchange, which took place in 2010 on television, one composer asserts "I find this [censorship] difficult to talk about. No one ever told me, 'take away that and put in this.'" The other replies, "Songs for the Party?... [T]hese were direct orders." The first responds, "Nobody ever ordered me to make a song for the Party. Those songs were usually composed by those who desired to gain something." See Tochka, *Audible States: Socialist Politics and Popular Music in Albania* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 126. This exchange captures the paradox of repression in socialist states: for artists and others who sought to advance in society and secure economic and political stability, the production of works that corresponded with Party ideology was a logical economic decision, and in some cases they might never have felt limitations on their artistic freedom. At the same time, however, these artists belonged to an elite that had been educated to understand the social conditions of their own artistic production, and they were thus prepared to navigate the ideological situation in which they worked. This option was not available to everyone, and some artists suffered for their failure to fit into this system sufficiently.

public in socialist society. That is, the artists who realized the monumental projects discussed in the sections of this dissertation focused on the socialist era belonged to an elite class, and the artistic freedoms they enjoyed were not generally available to other, ‘unofficial’ artists or to ordinary citizens.⁸⁷

In communist Albania, as Chapter 2 of the dissertation makes clear, monumental commissions were carried out by a relatively limited circle of artists, often working with younger assistants as well as collaboratively with each other. Sculptors in postwar Albania were often educated—at least through the early 1970s—at art academies in other socialist nations. Kristaq Rama, Muntas Dhrami, and Shaban Hadëri, the trio of sculptors discussed in Chapter 2, attended the Jordan Misja artistic lyceum in Tirana and subsequently completed their higher education Ilya Repin Institute in Leningrad, but other Albanian sculptors of the period also studied in Prague and Bucharest.⁸⁸ There was also a generation of sculptors working in socialist Albania who were slightly older, and who had received their training in Rome;⁸⁹ Odhise Paskali, the first modern Albanian sculptor, was among these artists, and his influence on younger Albanian sculptors (and prominent political position) indicates that socialist-trained sculptors were not the only ones who enjoyed privileged positions in postwar Albanian society. After the country’s break with the Soviet Union and subsequently with China, Albanian artists were educated within Albania, but few of these artists had time to rise to prominence as monumental

⁸⁷ Although socialist states often encouraged the production of art by workers, as well as the creation of ‘folk’ arts by socialist citizens living in rural areas, there remains a great deal of work to be done considering the relationships between the kinds of artistic agency available to state artists and those available to common citizens.

⁸⁸ Short biographies of many of the major Albanian sculptors of the socialist period can be found in Ylli Drishti, Suzana Varvarica Kuka, and Rudina Memaga, *Monografi: me Artistë Shqiptarë të Shekullit XX* (Tirana: Galeria Kombëtare e Arteve, 1999).

⁸⁹ For an overview of modern Albanian artists trained in Italy, see Ylli Drishti and Leon Çika, *Artistë Shqiptarë në Akademitë Italiane/ Artisti Albanesi nelle Accademie Italiane* (Tirana: Galeria Kombëtare e Arteve, 2005).

sculptors before the end of socialism. Although Albanian sculptors did not always have direct discussions with Party officials during the realization of their projects, it is certainly the case that these artists' ongoing economic stability depended on continuing to create works that reinforced official ideological agendas.

In socialist Yugoslavia, state control of artistic production—especially monumental sculpture and architecture—functioned differently, although the artists discussed in this dissertation did still belong to a privileged class of cultural producers. The capitals of the constituent socialist republics of Yugoslavia possessed their own rich artistic legacies, including academies of architecture and fine arts where the country's most prominent monument-builders were educated. Artists such as Bogdan Bogdanović, Jordan Grabul, and Vojin Bakić, discussed in Chapter 3, completed their studies in Belgrade and Zagreb, rather than abroad. Although early in the postwar period Tito recommended that architects in particular visit the Soviet Union to acquaint themselves with Soviet models of construction, this practice ended after the 1948 break with the USSR, and Yugoslav monumental sculptors and architects were able to work free from the constraints of a single official style.⁹⁰ Furthermore, the committees deciding competitions in socialist Yugoslavia were populated by as many architects and artists as Party officials, and local representatives of municipalities where the monuments were to be realized were at least as important as national-level representatives.⁹¹ In Yugoslavia, artists were in fact given great leeway to create the new stylistic paradigms that would

⁹⁰ On the constraints and freedoms operative on Yugoslav architects during socialism (including Bogdan Bogdanović, discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation), see Vladana Putnik, "From Socialist Realism to Socialist Aestheticism: Three Contrasting Examples of State Architects in Yugoslavia," in *The State Artist in Romania and Eastern Europe: The Role of the Creative Unions*, ed. Caterina Preda (Bucharest: Editura Universității din București, 2017), pp. 347–373.

⁹¹ This was the case, for example, with the committee for the Ilinden Memorial in Kruševo, discussed in Chapter 3.

visually distinguish the country's socialist identity from that of both the Soviet Union⁹² and the capitalist West, and while the central state government certainly exercised control, it was by no means as directly involved as it was in Stalinist Albania. It was often enough for artists to continue to declare their ideological allegiance to socialist and communist ideals in order for significant stylistic experimentation to be not only tolerated but in fact promoted.⁹³

Perhaps what is most important to understand is that there was no single experience associated with the status of being an official artist, especially across such differing cases as Yugoslavia and Albania, and even within the borders of these nations. Even more importantly, the monuments created by artists working for and with the state have not been received solely as aesthetically or ideologically closed objects, reflecting nothing but a propagandistic system. The genesis of this dissertation is as much anthropological as art historical: it grew out of two years spent living and working in Albania between 2009 and 2011, during which time I became interested in the way socialist monuments were understood by both citizens and artists living today. It is my conviction that understanding monuments fully demands some degree of ethnographic familiarity with the way that they are experienced by the communities in which they are located. In my time in Albania (and my subsequent months spent conducting research in former Yugoslavia), I was struck by the degree to which ordinary citizens and artists

⁹² Bogdan Bogdanović explains Tito's attitude towards the architect's peculiar modernist style in an interview: "Tito, in all truth, did not have much artistic discernment. But he understood that my monuments were not Russian monuments ... When he saw me, a bizarre man with a surrealist biography, ready to build him constructions which weren't Russian, he said, '*Let him.*'" See Bogdan Bogdanović and Alexandre Mirlesse, "Interview with Bogdan Bogdanović," *Rencontre européenne* 7 (February, 2008), p. 6.

⁹³ This was the case with Bogdanović. See Vladana Putnik, "From Socialist Realism to Socialist Aestheticism," p. 357.

alike frequently felt significant attachments to socialist monuments, often despite being both cognizant and critical of the system and conditions that produced them.

My own study of monuments in the region unfolded *not* primarily as an attempt to uncover the machinations of power and ideology behind these sculptures, but to understand how they were able to endure as something more than mere propaganda. Of course, Yugoslavia and Albania are by no means the only former socialist nations where official socialist-era monuments continue to serve as sources of historical understanding for artists and everyday citizens alike. However, the significant stylistic contrast between the monuments produced in the two countries makes a comparison between them particularly fruitful. The first case studies that I examine in this dissertation—the Vlorë *Independence Monument* and the *Four Heroines of Mirdita*—are decidedly stylistically conservative: they conform quite strictly to Socialist Realism’s figurative paradigm, and their compositional arrangements belong to the hierarchical repertoire of traditional monumental sculpture. In contrast, the dissertation’s second case study—the Ilinden Memorial in Kruševo—is stylistically experimental, merging various strains of aesthetic modernism in a complex series of sculptural and architectural spaces that eschew a simple historical narrative. Understanding how more ‘traditional’ forms of monumentality and more radically modernist ones alike could both express the ideological and historical paradigms endemic to the ‘building of socialism’ in Southeastern Europe is important because it moves beyond the straightforward separation of Socialist Realism and aesthetic modernism to instead consider the shared political and historical goals underpinning their uses in socialist Eastern Europe.

In the case of this study, it is inevitable that my reading of the Albanian case benefits from my substantial time spent living there, while my understanding of the (former) Yugoslavian cases lacks the same degree of anthropological familiarity with the present context. The comparison of the Yugoslav and Albanian cases, however, has an additional methodological valence: it seeks to avoid the tendency to deal with Yugoslavia and Albania as having experienced totally different histories simply because of their different forms of socialism and because of the perception of Albania's mono-ethnic cultural stability. Prevailing accounts of Albanian socialism tend to homogenize the country, thus underplaying the degree to which Enver Hoxha's communist regime sought to unify a quite linguistically and culturally divided citizenry.⁹⁴ Once the illusion of Albania as a socialist state unified around a clear version of ethnic identity falls away, the comparisons to Yugoslavia—a country that similarly struggled to create a version of ethnic identity that could transcend specific cultural and linguistic differences—appear much more productive from a historical point of view.⁹⁵ In fact, a closer examination of the way both socialist monuments and postsocialist artistic responses to monuments have developed sheds light on shared aspects of the postwar histories of these two countries. By deepening this line of investigation, this dissertation will escape the nationalist narratives that are often reinforced by insisting on dealing with Albania (as a non-Slavic Southeastern European nation with its own significant internal cultural and linguistic

⁹⁴ This view—which treats the notion of Albanian national identity as already relatively stable under socialism—is true even of recent astute histories of Albanian socialism, such as Elidor Mëhilli's excellent *From Stalin to Mao*.

⁹⁵ The comparison of Yugoslavia and Albania has appeared, to many scholars I have met that work on the region, as anathema. However, their protest against the comparison has almost invariably relied on arguments for either Yugoslav or Albanian exceptionalism, arguments that I find unconvincing primarily because they reinforce a nationalist historical perspective. Of course the perspective that lumps together Albania and Yugoslavia as twin 'totalitarian' socialist nations is unhelpful, but that approach is far from the character of the present endeavor.

differences) completely separately from debates raised about arts, culture, and politics in the context of late socialist and postsocialist Yugoslavia. By focusing on the connections between the development of socialist monumentality and the commemoration of the Partisan antifascist movement, this dissertation argues that while other cultural conditions might have differed between the Albanian and Yugoslav contexts, the kinds of historical consciousness that they sought to produce was in many ways similar.

My focus on the commemoration of antifascist movements in Southeastern Europe, and on the recovery of class-conscious socialist ideals in the postwar period, has its own ideological impetus. This dissertation was written in a global context that has seen the resurgence of explicitly fascist ideals amongst right-wing populist political parties across Europe and America. There is a particular urgency, in this historical moment, to initiating the recovery of antifascist ideas in art of all kinds, including in socialist monuments. At the same time, there is an urgency to understanding how artists after socialism have used the socialist past to provide aesthetic and conceptual alternatives to the rhetorics of neoliberalism in the former East and beyond. This dissertation participates in both of these projects, in the hope that art historical scholarship can contribute to a more robust radical cultural politics the present.

Chapter 1:

“The Monumentality of Our Socialist Life”: The Partisan Resistance, Revolutionary Temporality, and Socialist Geopolitics in Southeastern Europe

It was incorrect for you to separate the Partisan struggle from the people’s uprising.—Josip Broz Tito (to Milovan Djilas)¹

After 1945, all of us faced the very important task of recreating the abundance of themes and subjects from our recent history of the National Liberation [Struggle] and also from contemporary life. In doing so, we were supposed to avoid all formalistic playing around with the matter, and even all imitation of previous forms and models: we were to invent a new form, a higher and better form that would be adequate for our new man and the time in which we lived.—Vojin Bakić²

I. Introduction: Socialist Monumentality Between Past and Present

In March of 1977, the Albanian sculptor Shaban Hadëri addressed the plenary gathering of the Albanian Union of Writers and Artists, the central state-controlled organization of cultural producers in socialist Albania.³ Hadëri’s speech at the plenum addressed a question that had long been of crucial importance to socialist art in general, and to Socialist Realism in particular: how could art most accurately reflect the dynamism of socialist life, the transformations brought about by socialist modernizing projects? Hadëri’s discussion focused on monumental sculpture, a key element of the transformation of urban and rural spaces that took place in many socialist nations across Eastern Europe in the postwar period. He explained the relatively nascent character of Albania’s monumental tradition, which he asserted emerged primarily in the years following the country’s liberation from fascist forces in 1944.⁴ This sculptural tradition

¹ Qtd. in Milovan Djilas, *Wartime*, trans. Michael B. Petrovich (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), p. 79.

² Qtd. in WHW (What, How, and for Whom), *Vojin Bakić* (Zagreb: WHW, 2008), p. 45.

³ Shaban Hadëri, “Monumentaliteti i Jetës Sonë dhe Pasqyrimi i Tij në Skulpturë,” *Nëntori* 5 (May, 1977): pp. 246–248.

⁴ The best general account of Albanian occupation during the Second World War and the actions of the People’s Liberation Army of Albania is given by Bernd J. Fischer, *Albania at War, 1939–1945*

had developed through commemoration of the heroes and sacrifices of the Second World War, and Hadëri saw it epitomized in the numerous busts dedicated to war heroes, as well as in the ensembles created as the centerpieces for ‘martyrs’ cemeteries’⁵—cemeteries dedicated to those fallen in the National Liberation struggle—throughout the Albanian territory. While the theme of the National Liberation War had—according to Hadëri—given socialist Albania important and inspirational works of public art, the growth of socialist society provided new challenges to monumental representation. He explained,

Despite all the successes that our sculptural work has achieved, there still remains a great deal of work to be done, especially to reflect the monumentality of our socialist life. Our country’s victories in all fields of endeavor, during the era of the [Communist] Party, are magnificent: the giant factories of electricity and steel being constructed in Fierza, Elbasan, and Ballsh; railways and power lines; the birth of new cities and the fundamental socialist transformation of the villages; and finally the greatest achievement of our time, the New Man. This miraculous reality has inspired and will continue to inspire all of our creators, including our sculptors, to create monumental works—because [our socialist] life itself is a monumental work.⁶

Hadëri was by no means the first, even in the Albanian context, to identify the tension—perhaps even the real conflict—between the representation of ‘building socialism’ in the present and the traditional monumental imperative to commemorate the past. Seven years earlier, artist and critic Kujtim Buza and historian Kleanth Dedi raised similar concerns over the proliferation of sculptures featuring figures of Partisans in Albanian martyrs’ cemeteries as a barrier to the true expression of the revolutionary

(West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1999). As Fischer notes, the communist Partisan forces in Albania “contributed significantly to their own victory” over the Italian and subsequently German fascist militaries, even if the narratives that were subsequently circulated during socialism exaggerated the autonomy of the Albanian Partisans in liberating the country (p. 265).

⁵ I discuss the construction of these cemeteries at greater length in Raino Isto, “Dynamisms of Time and Space: The Synthesis of Architecture and Monumental Sculpture in Socialist Albania’s Martyrs’ Cemeteries,” *Eesti Kunstiuuseumi Toimetised* 11 (2016): pp. 42–67, and consider the unique relationship to sacrifice established by their space in Chapter 2 below.

⁶ Hadëri, “Monumentaliteti i Jetës Sonë,” pp. 246–247. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from English to Albanian are by the author.

present of the country. Buza and Dedi wrote in an official report on commemorative sculpture, “Thus it seems as if only the [figure of the] partisan can honor all the fallen partisans and martyrs. This truncates the historical period of [...] pledging oaths in the name of new victories, as if this time belonged only to the partisans in the years of the war, and not to all of the people today, in their battles to construct socialist society.”⁷

That is, Buza and Dedi identified an important ideological anxiety endemic to the socialist construction of time in the postwar period: how to establish the indispensability of recent history for the present, while still partitioning that history as past and asserting the primacy of the present?⁸

Shaban Hadëri himself had been part of this history in two ways. He was one of a trio of sculptors who repeatedly received commissions from the Albanian socialist government, and who created many of the most prominent monuments in Albania

⁷ Kujtim Buza and Kleanth Dedi, “Disa Probleme dhe Masa për të Ngritur me Kritere më të Drejta Monumentet, Përmendoret, Bustet, Lapidarët dhe Pllakat Përkujtimore,” Arkivi Qendror Shtetëror (hereafter AQSh) F. 511, V. 1970, D. 86, fl. 20.

⁸ It should be noted that in the early 1970s, the debate over monumentality in socialist Albania was also closely connected to questions about the ways that the country framed itself against other ‘revisionist’ socialist nations, such as the Soviet Union. In 1971, Albanian art critic Andon Kuqali examined what he characterized as the weaknesses of Soviet art at the time, including monumental sculpture. Kuqali wrote, “The Soviet press declares to the four directions that the Soviet Union is realizing Lenin’s idea of monumental propaganda, and it connects this idea with the monuments that have been put up throughout various cities, and with the frescoes, mosaics, stained glass windows, and other forms of monumental decorative images that have been created. This is how it looks on the outside. Lenin, in his plan for monumental propaganda, spoke of even the most modest works of art—busts, simple commemorative plaques, which immortalize the great events and figures of the revolution, or other noted historical figures that have contributed significantly to humanity’s advance and thus serve to propagandize progressive and revolutionary ideas. It seems that monuments and the monumental decorative art of the Soviets is not actually fulfilling this purpose. Kuqali went on to criticize the focus on victimization in monuments such as the one at Salspils (in Latvia, inaugurated in 1967), as well as the obsession with ‘epic’ themes in monumental depictions of cosmonauts. Although Kuqali’s text did not provide corollary positive examples from the Albanian (or other ‘non-revisionist’) contexts, the implication was that socialist Albania’s monumentality was a truer continuation of Lenin’s ideas than the Soviet Union after Stalin’s death provided. See Kuqali, “Art dhe Revizionistë,” *Nëndori* 5 (May, 1971): pp. 96–97.

[Figures 1.1–1.3].⁹ Later, after the death of Albania’s socialist dictator Enver Hoxha, he designed the massive bronze monument to Hoxha that was installed in the central plaza of Tirana [Figure 1.4].¹⁰ Before he became one of the country’s most successful sculptors, however, Hadëri, born in a village near the southern Albanian town of Delvina, had served together with his father as a Partisan in the Albanian National Liberation Army.¹¹ Thus, when Hadëri reflected on the commemoration of the Partisan struggle a little over three decades after its end, in 1977, he was considering how monumental sculpture could do justice to the new forms, speeds, and urban configurations of society without forgetting a past that many—including he himself—had lived and still vividly remembered. He was considering how the past could be kept open as a source of present possibilities.

This dilemma has persisted even after the historical end of socialism in Eastern Europe: we might already recognize it as one of the fundamental dilemmas raised by the example of the Belgrade Monument Group, which I discussed in the Introduction. There too, one of the key issues was to hold open the past to avoid a sense of determined resolution, and thus to affirm the complexity of historical and political experience. Nor is this navigation of the connectedness of the past and present as represented in monuments unique to the case of socialist monumentality: similar debates can be found, for example, in issues arising over the commemoration of the slave past in the United States of

⁹ The other two members of the trio were Kristaq Rama and Muntas Dhrami; I discuss their work at length in Chapter 2.

¹⁰ During the design of the work, Hadëri suffered a debilitating paralysis and the monument itself was completed by painter and sculptor Sali Shijaku. Conversation between the author and Orges Shijaku (son of Sali Shijaku), June 2014.

¹¹ Ylli Drishti, Suzana Varvarica Kuka, and Rudina Memaga, *Monografi*, p. 106.

America,¹² though there the debates arise for different reasons. It is important to distinguish this phenomenon, however, from debates about the accurate commemoration of the past (although in many cases the two coincide): it is one thing to contest the accuracy of the monumental mimesis of past events; it is another thing to assert that monuments are also bound to ‘monumentalize’ their present in a particular way, in order to do justice to the past’s formative effect on the present.¹³ This latter issue is one of both style¹⁴ and subject matter, and it touches upon not only the past’s relation to the present,¹⁵ but also their corollary relationship to the future. The relationship of the past and the present is always, to a certain degree, determined in relation to the future, but in the case of socialist monumentality in particular, the ontological status of the future and its potential temporal proximity were issues of particular importance.¹⁶

In order to understand Hadëri’s paradoxical assertion that socialist commemorative sculpture should expand its efforts to monumentalize the socialist

¹² See, for example, Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), and Renee Ater, *Contemporary Monuments to the Slave Past: Race, Memorialization, Public Space, and Civic Engagement* (forthcoming).

¹³ In other words, the philosophical grounding for this debate on the correct monumental suturing of past and present is a version of what Hans-Georg Gadamer calls “effective history”: the role that history itself plays in the development of historical understanding. (For an overview of this topic, see Hans-Helmuth Gander, “Between Strangeness and Familiarity: Towards Gadamer’s Conception of Effective History,” trans. Ryan Drake, *Research in Phenomenology* 34 (2004): pp. 121–136.)

¹⁴ As James E. Young notes, monuments always ultimately reflect certain aesthetic preferences of their own time. While they may be more ‘traditional’ than other forms of artistic representation, they cannot be said to be artistically retrograde, since they represent the past according to the mimetic modes of a particular present. See Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 13.

¹⁵ Historian Françoise Choay notes that, traditionally, the “purpose of the monument is to bring to life a past engulfed by time” (see Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, trans. Lauren M. O’Connell (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 13). In this case, however, the past is quite proximal, and its vitality in fact appears to compete with the present—the quandary that confronted monumental sculptors like Hadëri was how to balance these competing vitalities, to express the continued life of the past in a way that nonetheless acknowledged its transformation over time.

¹⁶ I return to this notion below, but here I want to briefly summarize: the importance of the future in socialist culture was established by the question of whether or not it had arrived, and whether it would ever arrive. This uncertainty has been compounded by the rhetoric of the postsocialist “transition” itself, wherein the projected future (total integration into the global neoliberal democratic system of markets) seems never to arrive even as its effects become all the more apparent in local settings.

present, we must understand a bit more about the history of modern Southeastern Europe leading up to postwar conditions and political relationships. This chapter outlines that history, focusing in particular on the unique role played by the Partisan resistance in establishing the political and historical discourses of postwar regimes in Yugoslavia and Albania, respectively. The events of the Second World War, and the actions of the Partisans, were crucial to the narratives about socialist modernity established in the postwar period, including the ethno-national and transnational valences of those narratives.¹⁷ This chapter aims to outline some of the narrative challenges presented by the complex historical temporality of the war (referred to in both Yugoslavia and Albania as a ‘National Liberation Struggle’), and the ways that this period was framed historically in relation to earlier historical periods. The chapter also chronicles some of the key historical issues raised by the legacy of leftist militant action in the region, in order to suggest the ways that late socialist ideals and practices of commemoration helped set the stage for political and artistic conditions in the postsocialist period. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to give a full description of the ends of socialism and the first decades of neoliberalism in Southeastern Europe. Nonetheless, I aim to provide a framework for understanding how political and artistic developments in the postsocialist period exist

¹⁷ Some have given a rather grim assessment of the success of narratives of antifascist resistance in establishing any common ground for identity in the region, whether transnationally socialist or locally multiethnic. For example, Andrew B. Wachtel, in his important analysis of the cultural development of the Yugoslav ideal, argues that—after the Second World War—“[o]nce themes of the partisan war had played themselves out, supranational Yugoslav culture was unable to renew itself...” (See Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation: Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 9.) My interest here is twofold. First of all, I still believe it is interesting to consider continued attempts to produce broader (Yugoslav or international) ideals during late socialism, even if they ultimately failed as grounds, for instance, for preventing the eventual break-up of and violence in Yugoslavia. Second, I believe that as more time is passing between both the end of the Second World War and the end of the violence that coincided with the end of socialism, we may see the commemoration of Partisan struggles—and the attempts to posit something *beyond* these struggles—re-emerging as a subject of artistic interest.

within a historical horizon that stands in (often antagonistic) relation to the commemoration of wartime leftist resistance movements that were framed as the origins of the postwar regimes in Yugoslavia and Albania alike.¹⁸

II. The Partisan Resistance in Yugoslavia and Albania: History and Forgetting

The Partisan struggle played a fundamental role in establishing the historical conditions for the rise to power of communist regimes in both Albania and Yugoslavia.¹⁹ As military historian Bernd Fischer notes, “Albania’s wartime experience, although lasting only about five years, became the focal point for Albanian existence”²⁰ in the postwar years, through textbooks, films, literature, painting, and—most importantly for the present study—monuments. Historian Tony Judt notes the importance of Partisan movements in establishing the leftist legitimacy of postwar governments.²¹ What was the Partisan resistance? Who were the Partisans? Broadly, the Partisan resistance is the name given to an incredibly diverse range of military resistance movements across Europe that fought against various fascist occupying forces,²² and were explicitly communist in their

¹⁸ As might be gleaned from this description, this chapter is more historical than art historical: it is primarily concerned with elaborating a political and social context for monumental production and discourses of monumentality in the region. While a more traditionally art historical analysis might draw this context from artworks, I think it important to understand contexts and occurrences that shaped the production of monuments but were nonetheless distinct from stylistic discussions and are incompletely grasped by formal analysis. These contexts and occurrences were not ‘external’ to the artworks I later discuss—far from it. However, their interaction can be summarily traced more effectively with a broader historical lens.

¹⁹ Historian Tony Judt points out that Albania and Yugoslavia were the two places in the socialist bloc where communism came to power “through the heroic efforts of the local resistance” instead of the through the efforts of the Soviet Red Army. See Judt, “The Past is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Post-war Europe,” in *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe*, ed. Jan-Werner Müller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 164

²⁰ Fischer, *Albania at War*, p. 256.

²¹ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), p. 41.

²² A concise overview of Partisan military efforts in the greater context of European resistance against fascism is given in Jørgen Hæstrup, *European Resistance Movements, 1939–1945: A Complete History* (Westport: Meckler, 1981), pp. 460–493. For a summary of the Yugoslav Partisans in particular, see Sabrina P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918–2005* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006), pp. 113–162.

ideology.²³ However, the very broadness of this definition conceals the heterogeneous character of the movements, and this diversity is important precisely because it made the resistance so challenging for regime leaders and artists alike to narrate as a coherent legacy.

While the Partisan struggle spanned Europe, its localized manifestations in Southeastern Europe were in certain ways exemplary, and political forces across Europe and Asia had significant investments in the outcomes of the resistance there. By the 20th century, Southeastern Europe was already associated, in a number of ways, with Europe's imaginary construction of itself, its others, and its borders.²⁴ The very geographic 'between-ness' of the region (first between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe,²⁵ and later between the socialist East and the capitalist West) meant that the Great Powers had a vested interest in antifascist movements there.²⁶ For the Soviets especially, the Partisan antifascist movement represented at once a viable example of social revolution brought about by localized leftist forces and a dangerously nationalist challenge to Stalin's broader imperialist goals. The intensity of antifascist fighting in Southeastern

²³ This qualification is already problematic, since the 'communist' character of resistance movements (and these movements were sometimes as localized as particular villages, otherwise fairly isolated from broader military movements) was almost immediately exaggerated by socialist regimes, and this came to be true especially in the case of commemoration, as I discuss below. Thus, I do not claim that everyone who meaningfully participated in what could be called the Partisan resistance did so because they ascribed to leftist philosophies. However, it is certainly true that this is how the history of the period was subsequently written, and this general view is only gradually being deconstructed by closer studies of the resistance.

²⁴ For an overview of these discourses and imaginaries, see K. E. Fleming, "Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography," *The American Historical Review* 105:4 (October, 2000): pp. 1218–1233.

²⁵ The importance of former struggles against the Ottoman Empire for framing ideologically leftist resistance during the Second World War will be explored below, in Chapter 2 and especially in Chapter 3.

²⁶ Tony Judt, "Introduction," in *Resistance and Revolution in Mediterranean Europe*, ed. Tony Judt (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 12–13.

Europe also set it apart from other areas, and contributed to the widespread association of the Partisans with Yugoslavia in particular.²⁷

The Partisan struggle was also framed as a particular *kind* of warfare—namely, a guerilla struggle that took place across mountainous and remote areas of the continent. A citation from Josip Broz Tito’s 1941 letter to Partisan commander Milovan Djilas regarding Djilas’ handling of the military situation in Montenegro is indicative of the kind of struggle that Tito intended the Partisans to be conducting:

It was not incorrect to start an uprising, but it was incorrect to start that uprising without political operations from below. It was incorrect for you to separate the Partisan struggle from the people’s uprising. It was incorrect that right from the start you created armies and fronts, instead of adopting the Partisan method of warfare. . . . [I]t was incorrect for you to dismiss the armed masses instead of breaking up large units into smaller Partisan detachments and carrying on a continuous Partisan war.²⁸

Much of the literature and visual representation of the antifascist struggle reinforced this image of popular and frequently decentralized guerilla struggle.²⁹ Novels and films about the topic inevitably “focus[ed] on a small, isolated band of Partisans fighting against great odds,” winning out or else heroically sacrificing themselves against German, Italian, or sometimes Bulgarian forces, or sometimes against domestic fascist sympathizers.³⁰ The geographic distribution of the struggle—ranging across mountains and centered in particular villages³¹— contributed to patterns of memorialization after the

²⁷ Hæstrup, *European Resistance*, p. 466–467.

²⁸ Qtd. in Milovan Djilas, *Wartime*, p. 79.

²⁹ The literature on Partisan representation (and on art produced by Partisans) has recently begun to grow. For an overview of such representations in several media, see Miranda Jakiša and Nikica Gilić, eds., *Partisans in Yugoslavia: Literature, Film, and Visual Culture* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015).

³⁰ Wachtel, *Making a Nation*, p. 152.

³¹ Milovan Djilas gave a description of the harsh reality of this kind of warfare: “For hours, both armies clambered up rocky ravines to escape annihilation or to destroy a little group of their countrymen, often neighbors, on some jutting peak six thousand feet high, in a starving, bleeding, captive land.” Qtd. in Judt, *Postwar*, p. 35.

war that extended the network of socialist (pre-)history across both urban and rural areas in Yugoslavia and Albania alike, a point to which I will return in subsequent chapters.

The Partisans were multinational, but—especially in Southeastern Europe—the localized military efforts often framed themselves (as noted above) as ‘national’ liberation struggles.³² There were numerous participants in the Partisan movement who belonged to minority ethnic or linguistic groups, and whose contributions were therefore difficult to narrate in ‘national’ terms. In a multiethnic and multinational state like Yugoslavia, the presence of fascist nationalist movements (the Croatian Ustaša, for example) and movements that sometimes collaborated with and sometimes resisted the occupiers (the Serbian Četniks) made it difficult to claim that any nation had resisted (or capitulated) in a unified way.³³ This in turn presented important challenges to memorializing those lost in the war. As historian Heike Karge argues, the commemoration of the victims of fascism in Yugoslavia followed, generally speaking, similar patterns to the rest of Europe in the postwar period: these patterns first and foremost emphasized the heroes of the resistance to fascism, and it was usually later that memorials were constructed to the victims. (This was also the case in Albania.) These memorials to victims often relegated their loss to a secondary status, foregrounding the Partisans, or else victims were “retroactively reinterpreted as politically active victims

³² See Judt, “Introduction,” pp. 5–8.

³³ Indeed, in some cases, the unity of the resistance movements was established precisely by fascist forces, as when the Ustaša labeled the Četniks and Partisans alike as a single “‘Serb-Communist’ rebellion.” On this point, and the broader difficulty of determining who precisely the Partisans were, see Marko Attila Hoare, “Whose Is the Partisan Movement? Serbs, Croats, and the Legacy of a Shared Resistance,” *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 15:4 (2002): pp. 24–41.

There is also the issue—too complex to address here—of divisions across Yugoslavia that stemmed from competing military participation in the First World War, divisions that endured through the interwar period and affected the possibilities for unity during the Second World War. On this topic, see John Paul Newman, *Yugoslavia in the Shadow of War: Veterans and the Limits of State Building, 1903–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

who were resisting the enemy, men and women who had sacrificed themselves ‘for the cause.’”³⁴ The relative temporal proximity of the war resulted in a marked avoidance of certain traumas, especially those deaths (such as the massive loss of life in internment camps) that appeared ‘meaningless,’ and a corollary focus on ‘meaningful’ sacrifices that could be tied to the socialist present. (This generally meant those who could be framed as the military heroes of the struggle.) This situation also produced a generalization of certain forms of memorialization in which a few monuments came to stand for victims throughout the territory of Yugoslavia. This was the case, for example, with the memorial complex at Jasenovac, which—as Karge compellingly shows—was ultimately framed as commemorating not only losses in that camp, but also those in all other internment camps in the country.³⁵

Even for the ‘heroes’ of the war—those Partisans who did survive—the trauma of the war sometimes had significant effects on their subsequent integration into society. For example, medical historian Ana Antić describes the rise of a phenomenon called “partisan hysteria” in Yugoslavia in the postwar period; the term was used by psychiatrists to describe a form of war neurosis in which former soldiers of the People’s Army of Yugoslavia would act out violent scenarios, apparently recapitulating their participation in wartime battles. Antić attributes the widespread diagnosis of this condition to concern—on the part of upper-middle-class medical professionals—about the upward mobility that characterized Yugoslav society after the socialist revolution

³⁴ Heike Karge, “Sajmište, Jasenovac, and the Social Frames of Remembering and Forgetting,” *Filozofija i Društvo* 23:4 (2012): p. 108.

³⁵ Karge, “Sajmište, Jasenovac,” pp. 111, 115–116. As Karge notes, there was a financial aspect to the representative role played by Jasenovac: the memorial complex’s scale and elaborate character created shortages that probably contributed significantly to the lack of other internment camp memorials constructed.

precipitated by the Partisan struggle to liberate the country. The soldiers diagnosed were generally from lower classes, and their neurosis was attributed to an inability to handle the (social as well as military) authority they had been granted in the war.³⁶ In other words (at least as some Yugoslav physicians believed), the war was traumatic not only because of violence witnessed in battle but also because it produced new structures of social authority that were disruptive to established hierarchies of class.

The case of ‘partisan hysteria’ is indicative of what might be justifiably called the ‘revolutionary’ character of the Partisan struggle in relation to society in Southeastern Europe. Tony Judt asserts that the “implicitly revolutionary character of the [P]artisan resistance movement was quite unambiguous.”³⁷ The radical transformation of life that took place during the war upended previous elites, reconfigured property ownership, and in the process pitted many common citizens against each other in new ways; the postwar state of affairs almost could not help but represent a ‘revolutionary’ change in society. At the same time, the condition of states like Yugoslavia became an imaginary blueprint of such revolutionary transformation in the wake of German occupation for other countries as well: the Partisans appeared to represent a real example of a bottom-up social force taking power against rightist forces.³⁸ I do not mean to romanticize the emergence of socialist states in Yugoslavia and Albania; there was tremendous, real violence involved in the creation of one-party states in the immediate wake of the war and after, and the origin narratives constructed by communist parties rarely do justice to the complexity of

³⁶ Ana Antić, “Heroes and Hysterics: ‘Partisan Hysteria’ and Communist State-building in Yugoslavia after 1945,” *Social History of Medicine* 27:2 (2014): pp. 349–371.

³⁷ Judt, “Introduction,” p. 6.

³⁸ Judt, “Introduction,” pp. 6–7.

the Partisan resistance or the diversity of its participants.³⁹ However, analyses of the emergence of communist regimes in the region should not be reduced to a critical attack on burgeoning totalitarianisms, since this obscures the ongoing political and ideological conflicts that prevailed even in supposedly ‘totalitarian’ conditions.

It is undeniable that one reason the Partisan resistance served as such a central aspect of postwar socialist narratives was that the leaders of both Yugoslavia and Albania—Josip Broz Tito and Enver Hoxha—were also leaders in their respective National Liberation Armies. It was under Tito that the Communist Party of Yugoslavia helped the Albanian resistance forces to establish both the Albanian Communist Party and their National Liberation Army, which Hoxha led.⁴⁰ However, this should not prevent us from noting the ways that the Partisan resistance gave rise to social forms and—more importantly for this particular analysis—representational and commemorative forms that exceeded leadership cults. It is problematic, as Owen Hatherley has shown, to attribute the production of monuments in the postwar years directly to centralized power structures and socialist dictators.⁴¹ The realities of memorial commission were often far more

³⁹ As Gorana Ognjenović and Jasna Jovelić write, in Yugoslavia the violence that took place in the struggles between the Partisans and the Četniks—and later to purge those identified as Četniks—was “unprecedented in Europe” in terms of its “intensity ... and the number [of] victims.” See “Introduction,” in Ognjenović and Jovelić, eds., *Revolutionary Totalitarianism, Pragmatic Socialism, Transition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). On the Albanian case, and Enver Hoxha’s use of violence to maintain power, see Isa Blumi, “The Politics of Culture and Power: The Roots of Hoxha’s Postwar State,” *East European Quarterly* 31:3 (September, 1997): pp. 379–398.

⁴⁰ On the similarities and differences between Tito and Hoxha, see Stanislav Sretenovic and Artan Puto, “Leader Cults in the Western Balkans (1945–90): Josip Broz Tito and Enver Hoxha,” in *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc*, ed. Balázs Apor, et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 208–223. I discuss the narration of Hoxha’s role in the National Liberation War in Albania below in greater detail in Chapters 2 and 4. See also Fischer, *Albania at War*, pp. 123–124. For a lengthier discussion of the period of political relations between Yugoslavia and Albania, see Elidor Mëhilli, *From Stalin to Mao*, pp. 38–53.

⁴¹ Owen Hatherley, “Concrete Clickbait: Next Time You Share a Spomenik Photo, Think About What It Means,” *Calvert Journal*, November 29, 2016, <https://www.calvertjournal.com/articles/show/7269/spomenik-yugoslav-monument-owen-hatherley> (accessed April 7, 2018). See also Gal Kirn, *Partizanski prelomi in protislovja tržnega socializma v Jugoslaviji* (Ljubljana: Sophia, 2016).

complex, because many of the monuments produced after the war could not be subsumed under a simple overarching narrative about the Partisans and their unified victory over fascism. Rather, such monuments often focused on localized rebellions, sometimes linking those local uprisings to previous uprisings against other forces.⁴² Thus, the relationship of the Partisan resistance narrative to the subsequent leadership of communist parties in Southeastern Europe should not detract from the broader revolutionary potential of the struggle.⁴³ This was true in Yugoslavia because of the radical shift from the monarchic pre-war structure of the state, and the Partisan struggle became one of the most salient aspects of postwar Yugoslav identity.⁴⁴ A similar case could be made for Albania, which was ruled by a king (Ahmet Zogu) in the interwar period,⁴⁵ and which subsequently underwent significant political and social restructuring after the war.

The representation of the Partisan struggle and antifascism more broadly functioned as a key moment of ‘revolutionary time.’⁴⁶ The revolutionary character of this struggle, however, entered into a constant dialectical tension with the process of

⁴² This latter is the case with the Ilinden Memorial at Kruševo, discussed in Chapter 3, which sought to bridge the conceptual and temporal gap between resistance to the Ottomans in 1903 and the “second Ilinden,” under Partisan leadership in 1944. On the rhetoric of the ‘second Ilinden,’ see Ramet, *Three Yugoslavias*, pp. 154–155.

⁴³ On some of the ways that different publics were able to change the interpretation of the Second World War through their engagement with monumental sites and official memory discourses, see Heike Karge, “Stony Memory—Petrified Memory? World War II Memory and Monuments in Yugoslavia,” paper delivered at the seminar *Art for Collective Use: Monument, Performance, Ritual, Body*, University of Ljubljana, November 2015, <https://vimeo.com/150611821> (accessed May 6, 2018).

⁴⁴ See Maruša Pušnik, “Media Memorial Discourses and Memory Struggles in Slovenia: Transforming Memories of the Second World War and Yugoslavia,” *Memory Studies* (August, 2017): p. 3.

⁴⁵ On King Zog, see Bernd J. Fischer, “King Zog, Albania’s Interwar Dictator,” in *Balkan Strongmen: Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of Southeast Europe*, ed. Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst & Company, 2007), pp. 19–49.

⁴⁶ On this phenomenon in the Yugoslav context in particular, see Gal Kirn, “Anti-fascist Memorial Sites: Pure Art or the Mythologization of Socialist Yugoslavia?” in *Art Always Has Its Consequences*, ed. Dóra Hegyi, Zsuzsa László, Emese Süvecz, et al. (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011), pp. 124–125. As will become clearer in the final chapters of this dissertation, the antifascist struggle (and socialist monumentality’s engagement with it) also emerges as a key moment in neo- and post-avant-garde attempts to envision a meaningful contemporary global history.

commemoration itself, which sought to make the events of the war—and its extended effective-historical horizon—concrete and legible. Thus monuments became sites where the tension of historical irruption⁴⁷ vied with the assertion of continuity and the notion that time had achieved—in ‘actually existing socialism’—a kind of historical culmination.⁴⁸ One way to describe this relationship would be to say that socialist monuments created an uneasy “place where the co-temporality of historical and revolutionary time [was] restored”; this is to use the language that theorist John Roberts uses to describe the avant-garde as an artistic-temporal phenomenon.⁴⁹ The perceived stability of even the most aesthetically avant-garde monument, however, already resists the possibility of a complete ideological disruption of history. In other words, precisely insofar as they reified a narrative of socialist progress, monuments under socialism could rarely ‘interrupt’ everyday experience in a radical way. This was sometimes due to the placement of these monuments, which were often created on or near the sites of particular

⁴⁷ Literary theorist Darko Suvin argues that these monuments’ revolutionary character was sometimes comparable to the kind of critical utopian tendency of science fiction (a field of study that Suvin’s writings helped establish in the United States, after leaving Yugoslavia). The abstract modernist tendencies of monumental sculptors like Vojin Bakić (whom I shall discuss in subsequent chapters) was linked, according to Suvin, to envisioning the kinds of alternate possibilities that the antifascist struggle opened up for Yugoslavia (and this openness was in turn what later caused many of them to be destroyed when nationalism arose in the breakup of Yugoslavia). See Boris Buden and Darko Suvin, “Only Intelligent Planning Can Save Us,” *e-flux Journal* 86 (November, 2017), <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/86/160962/only-intelligent-planning-can-save-us/> (accessed May 2, 2018).

⁴⁸ This is related both to the phenomenon described by Vladimir Paperny in his influential analysis of Stalinism in Paperny, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin: Culture Two*, trans. John Hill and Roann Barris (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 18. As Paperny writes, “The present turned out not to be the first moment in history, but rather the last.”

⁴⁹ John Roberts, *Revolutionary Time and the Avant-Garde* (New York: Verso, 2015), p. 49. The notion of avant-garde or revolutionary temporality also allows us to consider these peripheral or minor cultural scenes in terms of both their spatial *and* temporal diversity. As Fonteini Vlachou argues, the peripheral is as much a temporal category as a spatial one, and as such, there is a particular absurdity to ignoring developments in ‘minor’ cultures simply because they are—for example—‘behind’ the canonical history of the avant-garde (which still essentially privileges Western European and American histories, though this paradigm has been undergoing a gradual but significant shift for decades now). See Vlachou, “Why Spatial?”, pp. 1–17.

military actions, and thus in relatively remote places (often in dialogue with the wildness of the surrounding landscape).

Even in urban areas, however, the perceived role of monuments was not to actively disrupt; as one of socialist Albania's best-known sculptors, Muntas Dhrami, wrote in 1976, when we encounter monumental works, "we pause to think, we swear oaths, we pass by, we stop to rest."⁵⁰ That is, socialist monuments served as the background for actions both profound (oathtaking) and commonplace (pausing to rest). They took on an enframing role that permitted a range of reactions from attentiveness to relative inattention, rather than a dominant, centralized role in shaping experience.⁵¹ At other times, however, monuments were called upon to play a much more active role: this occurred during inauguration ceremonies and on annual days of celebration devoted to the events and people commemorated by such works. In such instances, public monuments were invested with a more direct educatory role: they were intended to

⁵⁰ Muntas Dhrami, "Vendosja në Hapësirë dhe Përmasat Kanë Shumë Rëndësi," *Nëntori* 4 (April, 1976): p. 23.

⁵¹ Tomislav Oroz and Nevena Škrbić Alempijević, in their discussion of Antun Augustinčić's Monument to the Peasants' Rebellion in Gornja Stubica (Croatia), characterize roughly these same two roles as the dichotomy between the object as a monument and the object as a "backdrop" or "stage." Their distinction is astute, but I believe the language they use ("*spomenički objekt*" versus "*sceni prilagođenoj raznorodnim izvedbama*," a monumental object versus a stage adapted for various kinds of performances—see pp. 133–134) obscures the fact that both of these uses were compatible and extant in the conceptualization of socialist monuments. See Oroz and Alempijević, "Dva Lica Spomenika: Politike i Prakse Korištenja *Spomenika Seljačkoj Buni i Matiji Gupcu* u Gornjoj Stubici," *Studia ethnologica Croatica* 27 (2015): pp. 131–156. Oroz and Alempijević also establish this dichotomy with examples from the socialist and postsocialist period, respectively, although they do not imply that *only* after the end of socialism have monuments become backdrops for stage-like performances.

One important question raised by Oroz and Alempijević's analysis is that of the enlivening of monuments through individual or collective interactions. In some cases, monuments seem to have been 'vivified' in particular ways (the Monument to the Peasants' Rebellion in Gornja Stubica, for example, has a sound system and staging room installed when it was created, precisely to facilitate its use as a theatrical space). The monument's role as an object that enlivens its surroundings and an object that awaits vivification should not be considered as incompatible opposites, but rather as alternative and intertwined forms of the monument's existence.

perform not only the work of memory, but also the work of interpreting the characteristics of socialist progress.⁵²

III. Late Socialist Geopolitics in Southeastern Europe, Monumental Scale, and Collective Identities

Monumental sculptures provide unique opportunities to investigate the interactions of spatial and temporal factors in cultural representation: while the traditional monument is spatially rooted in a particular place, and maintains a relatively stable (or at least only gradually changing) relationship with its surroundings, it is also almost by definition displaced in time, since it refers to persons or events that belong to the past. There is an additional spatial category—distinct from emplacement—that is crucial to the meaning of most monuments, and that is scale. The scale of monuments is significant apart from their sheer size,⁵³ since it raises the question of translating experiences, memories, and histories *across* different scales—both spatial and temporal. As art historian Joan Kee writes, it is necessary “to think of scale beyond what certain sizes might mean, and instead more in terms of how the juxtaposition of differently sized objects might be experienced.”⁵⁴ Thus, monuments never function solely in terms of a hierarchy of size (and the expression of power via the construction of colossal edifices and figures), but always also through processes of metonymic and mereological transition from the local to the national and global scales, and back.

⁵² Muntas Dhrami, “Artet Figurative në Edukimin Ideoestetik të Masave,” *Shkenca dhe Jeta* 6 (1975): pp. 48–50.

⁵³ This is not to suggest that sheer size plays no significant role in the meaning of monuments. As Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby, points out, the 20th century was one defined in large degree by the construction of edifices and monuments massive in size, building off of the technological developments of the 19th century. See Grigsby, *Colossal: Engineering the Suez Canal, Statue of Liberty, Eiffel Tower, and Panama Canal* (New York: Periscope, 2012), p. 170.

⁵⁴ Joan Kee, “What Scale Affords Us: Sizing the World Up Through Scale,” *ARTMargins* 3:4 (2014): p. 4.

The ‘global turn’ in modern and contemporary art has drawn increased attention to the question of scale, particularly as certain types of borders (such as national ones) become permeable to the point of their disappearance, for at least some subjects.⁵⁵ However, this permeability of borders, and the relation of scale to an understanding of the increasing effect that the global context has upon localized politics, was also an important component of the culture of socialist countries, which sought to construct new networks and to restructure (or at least re-frame) existing global political hierarchies. Yugoslavia and Albania were no different from other socialist countries during the Cold War in this regard, and in fact they are both somewhat uniquely exemplary, although for different reasons.⁵⁶ The period upon which the first chapters of this dissertation focus, the 1960s and 70s, saw new geopolitical configurations arise that had profound implications for Southeastern Europe, and at the same time Yugoslavia and Albania both played interesting roles within these reconfigurations.⁵⁷ While I do not mean to suggest that there are deterministic linkages between the state of international affairs and the production of specific monuments in the countries under discussion, I also do not believe it is coincidental that these nations saw such a surge in monumental production precisely during the years in which new identities and ideologies of nationalism and transnationalism were being worked out within the socialist bloc. The 1960s and 70s were decades in which forms of belonging came into question for citizens of Southeastern Europe in new ways, as they did for the entire world, and some of those

⁵⁵ Kee, “What Scale Affords Us,” p. 3.

⁵⁶ As Tony Judt explains, the two countries represented the exemplars of two different political responses to the conditions of post-Stalinism: the politically decentralized model of Tito’s Yugoslavia and the “national Stalinism” of Albania (a model also followed by Romania). See Judt, *Postwar*, pp. 429–430.

⁵⁷ I describe some of the specificities of these roles—or at least the significance of the ideological alignments taken by Albanian and Yugoslavia—below in Chapters 2 and 3 in greater detail. Here, however, I wish to suggest the significance of the scope of global political orientations taking form within the region at this time.

ways of belonging have also shaped the politics of belonging (to Europe in particular) after the end of socialism.

Socialist Yugoslavia was internally defined, especially in the 1970s, by a divide between two different versions of national and administrative unity. One of these was the model of “brotherhood and unity”⁵⁸ advanced early in the development of the postwar Yugoslav socialist state, of which Tito was a proponent. This notion of Yugoslavia framed the nation first and foremost as the nation of “South Slavs”—Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, and other groups such as Macedonians and Muslim Slavs (Bosnians) that could be included under this ethnically and culturally specific umbrella. The second model was that advanced by Edvard Kardelj, one of the ideologues of Yugoslav workers’ self-management, and of non-alignment⁵⁹ as well. Kardelj was one of the chief authors of the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution, which—after a constitutional debate that had carried on since 1967—decentralized political decision-making in Yugoslavia, giving more power to the constituent republics.⁶⁰ Kardelj’s model was more overtly ‘ideological’: it held that “the essence of today’s Yugoslavism can only be the socialist interest and socialist consciousness.”⁶¹ For Kardelj, the principle holding Yugoslavia together was the

⁵⁸ As Sabrina P. Ramet notes, there were essentially three pillars to socialist Yugoslavia: the notion of South Slav ‘brotherhood and unity,’ the imperative towards self-management, and the international principle of non-alignment. See Ramet, *Three Yugoslavias*, p. 185.

⁵⁹ The Non-Aligned Movement was founded in 1961 in Belgrade, and Tito’s role in establishing the movement helped maintain his relevance as a political actor on the international scale. The movement aimed to establish international political connections that avoided the Cold War division of the world into blocs, and it allied Yugoslavia with nations in both Africa (such as Egypt and Ghana) and Southeast Asia (India, Indonesia). While the movement seemed to emerge explicitly in response to Cold War geopolitics, ideologues of the movement like Kardelj argued that the roots of the organization were found in the Second World War, and specifically in the anti-imperialist character of antifascist mobilizations by many ‘Third World’ countries during the war. See Kardelj, *The Historical Roots of Non-Alignment* (New York: University Press of America, 1985), pp. 53–57.

⁶⁰ On these two models of ‘Yugoslavia,’ see Dejan Jović, “Yugoslavism and Yugoslav Communism: From Tito to Kardelj,” in *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea 1918–1992*, ed. Dejan Djokić (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), pp. 157–181.

⁶¹ Edvard Kardelj, qtd. in Jović, “Yugoslavism and Yugoslav Communism,” p. 157.

commitment to socialist ideals, and this vision of the country promoted what was termed the “withering away of the state” that was meant to occur in the context of workers’ self-management.⁶² Although this latter model eventually proved unsustainable, it was the one that guided much of Yugoslav policy until the 1980s, when aggressive nationalisms began to dominate in the absence of a strongly institutionalized unity.⁶³

This model of socialist consciousness, which called for a weakening of centralization, was meant to ensure that the character of postwar Yugoslavian society really was ‘revolutionary,’ that it was different from the various prior and contemporaneous alternative forms of centralized nationhood. There was significant debate in Yugoslavia about the kind of art that was meant to reflect this form of socialist society, and the solutions that were settled upon differed from most other socialist nations, including neighboring Albania. Already in the 1950s, Yugoslav cultural theorists and producers had weighed the dueling appeals of the European avant-garde traditions, which had played a significant role in earlier Yugoslav art, and Socialist Realism,⁶⁴ which supposedly most directly represented the realities of socialist life. Some, such as the author and cultural critic Miroslav Krleža, suggested that neither of these alternatives could live up to task of adequately representing socialist society in Yugoslavia, since both developed in quite different historical conditions than those of Southeastern Europe’s revolutionary antifascist struggle. Krleža, in 1952, wrote that “[i]f we develop a socialist

⁶² Jović, “Yugoslavism and Yugoslav Communism,” p. 159.

⁶³ Historian Dejan Jović argues that it was Kardelj’s model—which insisted on “the weakness of the state”—that eventually caused nationalisms to rise up again, since there seemed to be no way to achieve a stronger state in Yugoslavia *except* through nationalist claims. See Jović, “Yugoslavism and Yugoslav Communism,” p. 180

⁶⁴ Another alternative, at least in Croatia, was the naïve or folk art style of Krsto Hegedušić and the Hlebinska School. On this topic, and on the debates surrounding Socialist Realism in Croatia in general, see Reuben Fowkes, “Croatia/Hungary: Socialist Realist Art Criticism at the Crossroads in the 1950s,” *Third Text* 20:2 (2006): pp. 201–210.

cultural environment that is conscious of its rich past and cultural mission in contemporary European space and time, our art will inevitably appear.”⁶⁵ That is, Krleža held that given faithful attention to the construction of a true socialist society that understood both its past and its role in relation to other modern nations, a new and different kind of art would emerge.

In Yugoslavia, there were precedents for attempts at monumentalizing the particular multiethnic (and, as Andrew B. Wachtel terms it, “supranational”⁶⁶) culture supposedly shared by the country’s constituent republics. The works of sculptor Ivan Meštrović provided a foundation of representing for depicting Yugoslav identity in the context of monumental sculpture and architecture, for example. Works such as Meštrović’s *Tomb of the Unknown Yugoslav Soldier*, commissioned in 1934 by King Alexander I for a hilltop near Belgrade⁶⁷ [Figure 1.5], and the *Vidovdan Temple* design and associated sculptures, conceived between 1906 and 1913 [Figure 1.6] and exhibited in 1910 in the Vienna Secession exhibition building,⁶⁸ both of which combined figuration influenced by the style of Rodin⁶⁹ with architectural contexts reminiscent of classical and Egyptian structures. Meštrović’s works were importantly synonymous with

⁶⁵ Qtd. in Bojana Videkanić, “Yugoslav Postwar Art and Socialist Realism: An Uncomfortable Relationship,” *ARTMargins* 5:2 (2016): p. 20. See also Bojana Videkanić, *Non-Aligned Modernism: Yugoslavian Art and Culture from 1945–1990* (PhD Diss., York University, 2013). As Videkanić notes, the political position of Yugoslavia in the Non-Aligned Movement, and between the two blocs, was reflected in the paradoxical “mixture of aesthetic utopianism and aesthetic and political pragmatism” (p. iii) that characterized the country’s artistic production in the postwar years.

⁶⁶ Wachtel, *Making a Nation*, p. 128.

⁶⁷ On this monument, see Aleksander Ignjatović, “From Constructed Memory to Imagined National Tradition: The Tomb of the Unknown Yugoslav Soldier (1934–1938),” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 88:4 (October 2010), pp. 624–651. See also Wachtel, pp. 108–113.

⁶⁸ On the *Vidovdan Temple* project, see Aleksander Ignjatović, “Images of the Nation Foreseen: Ivan Meštrović’s Vidovdan Temple and Primordial Yugoslavism,” *Slavic Review* 73:4 (Winter 2014): pp. 828–858.

⁶⁹ For the connections between Rodin and Meštrović, see Barbara Vujanović, “Auguste Rodin and Ivan Meštrović—French Connections in Croatian Sculpture,” *Sculpture Journal* 25:2 (2016): pp. 203–216.

monumentality for the Yugoslav cultural tradition,⁷⁰ and their style can be seen reflected in certain figurative monuments in Yugoslavia produced during the socialist period. (For example, one of the best-known sculptors of socialist Yugoslavia, Antun Augustinčić [see **Figures 1.7–1.9**], studied with Meštrović, and it is easy to see some of Meštrović’s influence in his work.⁷¹) But ultimately Meštrović’s version of Yugoslav identity proved insufficient to the task of representing the new vision of Yugoslav culture that socialism sought to promote. This is perhaps because, as Aleksander Ignjatović has argued, Meštrović’s works promoted a “primordial” vision of Yugoslav identity, rather than a “synthetic” one.⁷² Ignjatović argues that works like the Vidovdan Temple—focused on the events and heroes of the Battle of Kosovo of 1389, the key tragic event in Serbia’s narration of its struggle against the Ottoman Empire—were part of Meštrović’s attempt to reflect a deep, underlying Yugoslav identity that was characterized by a “pre-schismatic historical unity.”⁷³ It is perhaps precisely because of this ‘primordialist’ conception (so closely linked to the ‘brotherhood and unity’ element of postwar Yugoslav national rhetoric) that a new kind of monumental sculpture needed to emerge: the kind of collective identity-construction that took place in the wake of the Partisan resistance and the Second World War was one closely linked to assemblage and inclusive synthesis. It

⁷⁰ For discussions of the monumentality of Meštrović’s works, and their relation to architecture, see Gavin Stamp and Roger Bowdler, “Ivan Meštrović and Architecture,” *Sculpture Journal* 25:2 (2016): pp. 235–238, and Barbara Vujanović, “Derivacija klasičnih modela u modernoj umjetnosti: primjeri monumentalizma u spomeničkoj plastici Ivana Meštrovića,” *ADRIAS* 21 (2015): pp. 153–170.

⁷¹ Augustinčić was the author of the Monument to the Battle of Batina, in Batina, Croatia (1947); the famous sculpture of Josip Broz Tito in Tito’s birthplace of Kumrovec, Croatia (1948); and the Monument to the Peasants’ Rebellion in Gornja Stubica, Croatia (1973). He was also a founding member of the leftist art group *Grupa Zemlja* (Earth Group), which also included Krsto Hegedušić.

⁷² Another reason was the works’ linkage to an imaginary that was *imperial* in character, as Elizabeth Clegg suggests. Meštrović’s position in Vienna, and the period in which his work was produced, tied his sculpture to the pan-Slavist dreams of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the early 1900s. See Clegg, *Art, Design, and Architecture in Central Europe 1890–1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 145–146

⁷³ Ignjatović, “Images of the Nation Foreseen,” pp. 830–831.

needed to include not only Yugoslavs, but also potentially all socialist nations allied with Yugoslavia as part of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In Albania, there was decidedly less of a sculptural tradition in the prewar period, but there was at least one important precedent for socialist monumentality, one that was construed to possess a markedly ‘realist’ orientation that would also accord with the principles of Soviet Socialist Realism. The sculptor Odhise Paskali⁷⁴ was in some ways an artist comparable to Meštrović, although his output was more modest, and his role in establishing a blueprint for subsequent versions of unified Albanian identity was decidedly less.⁷⁵ Paskali was commissioned to create some of the most important works of monumental sculpture produced in socialist Albania—including the sculpture of Joseph Stalin at the Stalin Textile Factory (1949) [Figure 1.10] and the equestrian statue of Skanderbeg in the center of the capital city of Tirana (1968) [Figure 1.11]. Paskali’s participation in the first generation of Albanian artists to move into modern modes of artistic production and expression at the turn of the century—coupled with his creation of the first monumental sculptures to grace Albania’s urban landscape, in the 1930s [Figures 1.12–1.13]—led to his canonization as the father of modern Albanian monumental sculpture.⁷⁶ However, Paskali’s training in Italy and his artistic production

⁷⁴ Relatively little has been written on Paskali, and what has been written largely seeks to promote an uncritical, nationalist picture of him as a master devoted to the cause of exploring Albanian identity and history. Socialist-era considerations of Paskali tend to emphasize the importance of his role as a realist sculptor and nationally-minded intellectual, while postsocialist considerations tend to frame him as exploited by the socialist regime, rather than complicit in its project. For more, see Odhise Paskali, *Gjurmë Jete* (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1986); Ferid Hudhri, *Arti i Rilindjes Shqiptare, 1883–1945* (Tirana: Onufri, 2000); the three-volume collection Odhise Paskali, *Për Paskalin, nga Paskali: Përmbledhje Shënimesh nga Media e Shkruar* (Tirana: Ilar, 2005); and Leonardo Voci, *Odhise Paskali: Themelues i Skulpturës Shqiptare* (Tirana: Universiteti Kristal, 2012).

⁷⁵ In Albania, at least until the socialist period, literature rather than the visual arts dominated the field of the construction of shared cultural identity.

⁷⁶ On the historiographic treatment of Paskali, and on the discursive framing of his work as a ‘realist’ predecessor to Albanian socialist art, see Raino Isto, “‘Modeling Reality’: Writing the History of

under both the Albanian interwar leader King Zog and during the period of Italian (fascist) control of the country created an ideological and aesthetic problem for socialist critics. These problems were acutely felt by Albanian writers and commentators, especially during the late 1960s, when Paskali was working to realize the equestrian statue of Skanderbeg that would symbolically link the medieval leader credited with establishing a united Albanian nation and Stalinist dictator Enver Hoxha.⁷⁷

Thus, despite quite real differences in the models of socialism that they followed (self-management and national Stalinism, respectively), Yugoslavia and Albania shared not only the recent Partisan liberation struggle, but also a problematic but promising interwar monumental sculptural tradition. Socialist monumentality in each country in the postwar years was importantly correlated with shifting definitions of identity that related to the international and transnational ideologies at work in Cold War Europe and Asia. From the viewpoint of ideology, the socialist context produced a unique historical situation, insofar as the dual representative function of monuments (as visually and visibly significant alterations of both the urban and rural landscape) was explicitly thematized. That is, public monuments always reflect—to varying degrees—both the present in which they are created and its horizons of expectation *and* some event that is

(Socialist) Albanian Sculpture—The Case of Odhise Paskali,” paper delivered at *Art History and Socialism(s), 1940s–1960s* conference, Tallinn, Estonia, October 29, 2016.

⁷⁷ Published on December 20, 1964 in the Albanian weekly cultural newspaper *Drita*, critic Andon Kuqali’s article “Dyzetvjetori i një skulpture” helped frame an origin for Albanian sculpture—as a specifically realist phenomenon—in Paskali’s (by then lost) 1924 sculpture *I Urituri (The Starving Man)*, created while Paskali was studying in Turin. See Isto, “Modelling Reality,” for a fuller discussion.

This nation-building project (the one linking Hoxha and Skanderbeg) was important because a shared national consciousness linked to the territory of socialist Albania was actually far from solidified in the minds of the country’s citizens. Although Albania’s interwar leader King Zog had done much to attempt to canonize a shared identity between the northern and southern regions of Albania, under socialism the two regions were still culturally quite distinct. I return to this point in Chapter 2.

presumed to belong to the past.⁷⁸ Under socialism, and in particular in Southeastern Europe in cases in which the Partisan struggle was commemorated, the disjunction between these two times was in some ways eased (by the ways this very struggle was construed as a reconfiguration of history before and after). However, a certain set of relations (which sometimes transformed into tensions) remained, relations between the monument as a dialectical reflection of the present and as a reflection of the past⁷⁹—but the past in its ‘revolutionary development.’⁸⁰ The Partisan resistance was often

⁷⁸ Another way of putting this is that monuments must always aesthetically reflect a certain art historical and political situation, even as they also must adapt themselves to an event that belongs—usually—to an earlier period. See Young, *The Texture of Memory*, pp. 8–11.

⁷⁹ There were of course many other ways besides monumental representation through which the tensions between the past and (socialist) present were navigated. Svetlana Boym, in her pioneering examination of nostalgia in modernity, suggests that nostalgia (and thus the past itself) was of comparatively little use to the revolutionary conception of teleological time presented by the Russian Revolution and subsequent communist movements. (See Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. 59.) However, there are cases of comparative temporal frameworks developing (through nostalgia or otherwise) within socialist societies on Southeastern Europe. For example, Cristofer Scarboro describes the critical nostalgia developed by the Socialist humanist brigadier movement in late socialist Bulgaria, which looked back to an earlier stage of socialist development in the country in order to criticize the complacency of contemporary conditions of collective volunteer labor. (See Scarboro, “Today’s Unseen Enthusiasm: Communist Nostalgia for Communism in the Socialist Humanist Brigadier Movement,” in *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, ed. Maria Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), pp. 46–60.)

This is one reason why (as I have touched upon in the Introduction) I believe that anthropologist Alexei Yurchak’s characterization of late socialism as a period of stagnation and an ‘eternal present’ (Yurchak, “Soviet Hegemony of Form,” p. 504) is problematic when applied to Southeastern Europe, and especially to Albania and Yugoslavia. Socialist monuments, at least, evidence ways that the navigation of the past, present, and future continued to be productively envisioned. Below in Chapter 2, I suggest that socialist monumentality was related to the notion of contemporaneity, to a horizontally shared temporal state that was at least national and potentially also global. This shared present-ness, however, was also characterized (as today’s global world is) by the coincidence of different kinds of time, mediated by different bodies and embodied experiences of socialism.

⁸⁰ In a sense, this transformation of the past accords with a phenomenon that Igor Golomstock identifies as a characteristic of what he calls ‘totalitarian art’: “history in each of the totalitarian countries was considered to have begun with the coming to power of their respective totalitarian party, or perhaps with the beginning of its struggle for power.” There are, however, important differences between Golomstock’s characterization of how history functions in art produced in totalitarian systems and the way that history appeared in monuments created under socialism in Southeastern Europe. On the one hand, these visualizations of history extended further back than the existence of the Partisan struggle (and not simply in the sense that that socialist monuments appealed, for example, to classical antiquity). More significant than this difference is the character of the past that socialist monuments presented: history itself became a source of rupture at the same time that it served as a source of continuity, and definitions such as Golomstock’s are limiting insofar as they treat history as it appears in works of art created in Stalinist (or other socialist) countries as unproblematic attempts to present direct continuities between the heroes of the

incorporated into, or grafted onto, other monumental projects, as a way of linking earlier histories to the ‘monumentality of socialist life,’ and of securing the anti-imperialist, popular character of prior revolutions and uprisings in the region.

The two monuments that serve as the central case studies in the next two chapters are both examples of this creation of a temporal slippage between prior revolutionary actions, the Partisan movement, and the socialist present. In Albania, the Vlora *Independence Monument*—officially dedicated to the country’s independence from the Ottoman Empire—was discursively framed in terms of both the National Liberation War and the building of socialism. The monumental complex in Kruševo, Macedonia—dedicated to the Ilinden Uprising against the Ottomans and short-lived Ilinden Republic of 1903—likewise aimed to narrate not only that event, but also Partisan actions there in 1944,⁸¹ and to link both events to a utopian vision of the socialist present in Yugoslavia. These attempts to define the ‘revolutionary’ quality of the Second World War and the rise of socialist society through monuments help establish a framework for understanding what is at stake in postsocialist encounters with monumentality in Southeastern Europe. Specifically, they present the possibilities and limitations of the socialist project of emancipatory politics as it related to representing history and memory alike.

IV. Conclusion: Socialist Monuments, Radical Politics, and Postsocialism

The fate of socialist-era monuments after the 1980s in Southeastern Europe—both their material survival and their discursive survival through new interpretations—has

past and the present. See Golomstock, *Totalitarian Art in the Soviet Union, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy and the People’s Republic of China*, trans. Robert Chandler (New York: Overlook, 2011), p. xxviii.

⁸¹ It did so despite—or perhaps precisely because of—the fact that the Partisan resistance was relatively less active in the Macedonian territory during the Second World War.

followed a pattern similar to that in other nations of the former socialist bloc.⁸² Postsocialist reactions to these monuments have generally been characterized by public destruction, dismantling, or relocation, especially in cases in which the monuments depicted leaders or ideologues, such as Marx, Lenin, and Stalin.⁸³ In many territories, where national rhetoric framed the Soviet period as one of ‘occupation,’ a similar fate befell monuments commemorating the Red Army—either as liberators or as fallen warriors to be mourned.⁸⁴ Sometimes the justifications given for this removal were overtly ideological (or counter-ideological); at other times, political arguments were bolstered by aesthetic evaluations that suggested that socialist monuments possessed little authentic artistic value.⁸⁵ As Katherine Verdery has noted, despite the relatively universal phenomenon of the destruction of monuments following political changes, there were at least two distinct features of the postsocialist remaking of the monumental landscape. First, the scale and intensity of the change was significant. Second, the degree to which socialism had enforced itself as a unique spatio-temporal regime on its citizens—often by

⁸² In Southeastern Europe, the literature on the (after)lives of socialist monuments and their relationship to new ideologies continues to grow. I have already mentioned some of these scholarly and documentary efforts in the Introduction, but here we should note the important work of several researchers: Vladimir Kulić, Maroje Mrduljaš, and Wolfgang Thaler’s *Modernism In-Between*; Srdjan Jovanović Weiss and Armin Linke, *Socialist Architecture: The Reappearing Act* (Berlin: The Green Box, 2017); Gal Kirn, “Anti-fascist Memorial Sites”; Gal Kirn, “Transformation of Memorial Sites in the Post-Yugoslav Context,” in *Retracing Images: Visual Culture After Yugoslavia*, Daniel Šuber and Slobodan Karamanic (London: Brill, 2012), pp. 251–281; and Gal Kirn, “Transnationalism in Reverse: From Yugoslav to Post-Yugoslav Memorial Sites,” in *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales*, ed. Chiara de Cesari and Ann Rogney (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), pp. 313–338.

⁸³ See Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution* (London: Reaktion, 1997), pp. 51–90, and Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 4–13.

⁸⁴ One of the most iconic examples of this latter situation is the controversial *Bronze Soldier* memorial in Tallinn, which first occupied a central space in the city but was later moved to a space of relative invisibility on the outskirts of the Estonian capital. On the sculpture, see Andres Kurg, “The Bronze Soldier Monument and Its Publics,” in *Kristina Norman: After-War*, ed. Andreas Trossek (Venice: Center for Contemporary Arts, Estonia, 2009), pp. 49–65.

⁸⁵ Gamboni, pp. 85–89.

means of monuments—meant that the transformation of monumental sites likewise participated in a particularly marked symbolic restructuring of space and time.⁸⁶

In Yugoslavia and Albania, certain additional factors have shaped the reception of monuments from the socialist years in the past three decades. In Yugoslavia, the emergence of localized nationalisms—and the inherently nationalistic character of the ‘third’ Yugoslavia, which was essentially a project to establish Greater Serbia⁸⁷—meant that the transnational character of many Yugoslav monuments was no longer desirable. Some did not survive the wars of the 1990s, such as Vojin Bakić’s *Monument to the Victory of the People of Slavonia* (1968) [Figures 1.14–1.15], in Kamenska, Croatia, which was destroyed in 1992. Those that did survive were sometimes co-opted or re-framed as nationalist monuments,⁸⁸ and sometimes criticized as remnants of a totalitarian past. As Gal Kirn notes, the rise of democratic rhetoric in the postsocialist period in the former Yugoslavia was linked uncompromisingly with the critique of the past as totalitarian: “No matter how undemocratic some of the new political practices were (the destruction of the welfare state, nationalist outbursts, exclusion of minorities, etc.) ... the most crucial criterion was their ideological presupposition: anticommunism at any price.”⁸⁹ Much the same thing could be said of Albania’s postsocialist political developments. This ideological imperative produced a flattening out of the variety of experiences that had prevailed under socialism in both countries, and the corollary loss of

⁸⁶ Verdery, *Political Lives*, pp. 6–12.

⁸⁷ On the third Yugoslavia, see Ramet, *Three Yugoslavias*, pp. 495–535.

⁸⁸ In some cases, there were already nationalist discourses related to the creation of these monuments, but these discourses heightened significantly after the fall of socialist Yugoslavia. One example is the Ilinden Memorial in Kruševo, which I discuss in Chapter 3. In Albania, those monuments that seem to have weathered the transition to postsocialism most easily are those that possess a significantly nationalist character, such as the Vlora *Independence Monument* (the subject of Chapter 2). There is also an anti-Islamic tone to some of these nationalist discourses, which tend to valorize monuments related to struggles against the Ottoman Empire.

⁸⁹ Kirn, “Transformation of Memorial Sites,” p. 252.

appreciation for the radical or revolutionary politics of emancipation that was at least the utopian goal of many of these monuments' commemorative project.⁹⁰

At the same time, new projects of commemoration (undertaken since the early 1990s) have often been couched in frameworks of trauma and victimhood.⁹¹ Controversies that began in the socialist period—related to the dynamics of victimhood and aggression—have continued to develop around existing memorial sites, such as Jasenovac, the site of a concentration camp established by the fascist wartime Independent State of Croatia.⁹² Some of the controversies surround the ethnicities of the sculptors who created the monuments, and the perceived disjunctures between who is tasked with creating commemorative sculptures and what ethnic group the victims commemorated belonged to.⁹³ One exception to this memorial discourse of victimhood might be the memorialization of warriors who were part of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA; *Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës*, or UÇK in Albanian), in both Kosovo and Albania. The monumental model for these memorials is essentially indebted to Socialist Realism—no doubt because some of the key memorials have been realized by Muntas Dhrami, one of Albania's best-known sculptors of the socialist era. For example, the statue of Zahir Pajaziti (2000) that stands in the center of Prishtina, was created by Dhrami in a paradigm that is indistinguishable from many Partisan figures that the artist created in Albania.

⁹⁰ On the fate of radical leftist politics in the postsocialist republics of the former Yugoslavia, see the essays in Srećko Horvat and Igor Štiks, eds., *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism: Radical Politics After Yugoslavia* (New York: Verso, 2015).

⁹¹ Kirn, "Transnationalism in Reverse," p. 314.

⁹² On Jasenovac, see Heike Karge, "Mediated Remembrance: Local Practices of Remembering the Second World War in Tito's Yugoslavia," *European Review of History—Revue européenne d'histoire*, 16:1 (2009): pp. 49–62, and Karge, "Sajmište, Jasenovac."

⁹³ On this topic, see some of the interview in the film by Andrea Rossini, *Circle of Memory* (Italy: Osservatorio sui Balcani—ITA, 2007), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxC0IUPb2y8> (accessed May 6, 2018).

Architect Srdjan Jovanović Weiss suggests that socialist architectural sites (including public monuments) in Yugoslavia are now “emptied of the ideology that made them,” but “full of a new kind of life.”⁹⁴ However, in the four chapters that ensue, I instead argue that these sites are not quite as empty of their original ideology as we might expect, or at least that the restoration of their ideological content is one of the keys to offering them ‘a new kind of life.’ If we come to understand more completely the (sometimes conflicting, always multivalent) kinds of meaning that circulated in and around monumentality in socialist Southeastern Europe, we will have the tools to uncover the ways that postsocialist artistic (re-)interpretations of monuments *do* in fact take up some of the radical potential that once belonged to these sites, structures, and figures. Postsocialist artistic encounters with monumentality are not only encounters with empty or spectral ruins of past ideologies, nor are they simply critiques aimed at the power structures of the past. They constitute, in some cases, nuanced attempts to move beyond this duality, and to understand the tensions that were present when these monuments were created: tensions of time, and of the possibilities of collective experience.

⁹⁴ Weiss, *Socialist Architecture*, p. 3.

Chapter 2:

The Dictator Visits the Studio: Monumental Industry and Forms of Collective Experience in Communist Albania

Our monumental sculptors and architects face particularly important challenges. Just as life in our country is developing with a dynamism hitherto unseen, so must our monumental art also advance To meet these challenges, we must make great efforts: "We must conceive of, search for, and discover new forms of work and organization, to meet the demands of new situations, to open up possibilities for new phenomena, and to assist in the development and refinement of those phenomena," Comrade Enver [Hoxha] declared in his speech, held at the 10th plenum of the Central Committee of the Albanian Party of Labor.—Kujtim Buza¹

I. Introduction

In the postwar period, and especially in the late 1960s through the early 1980s, the People's Socialist Republic of Albania witnessed a sweeping series of projects focused on monumental production. These projects were largely aimed at the production of monumental sculpture, memorial complexes, busts, and plaques devoted to the commemoration of the National Liberation War and the Albanian Partisan antifascist resistance, since this resistance movement was framed as synonymous with the genesis of the Albanian Communist Party. However, monumental projects also represented older, medieval heroes, such as the Albanian national hero Skanderbeg; statesmen and cultural figures that had played a key role in the period of National Awakening in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; important personages of socialist political thought (such as Stalin, Mao, and Albanian socialist dictator Enver Hoxha); allegorical figures symbolizing socialist progress (especially in agriculture); and (although these were less frequent) those who had sacrificed themselves in the ongoing 'building of socialism' in the postwar years. Taken as a whole, this body of monumental production is diverse—

¹ Buza, "Puna Krijuese Kolektive".

although many of the works produced in these years adhere to the tenets of Socialist Realist figuration. The conditions of commission, production, and reception vary considerably amongst monuments of differing types, scales, and geographic locations. However, it is without a doubt that this boom in monumental industry in Albania, especially during the 60s and 70s, contributed significantly to the establishment of a shared national consciousness and the development of an understanding of socialist historical progress. It also established new paradigms for presenting the symbolic relationship between political power, local traditions and histories, and both urban and rural² spaces.

In this chapter, I argue that monumental production in socialist Albania during late socialism also served to produce, represent, and model forms of collective experience in ways that transcended and synthesized straightforward paradigms of shared national or socialist identity. Monuments were able to play this role because monumental industry served—not universally, but in particular cases—as a form of meta-production and a site for the delegation and transference of embodied experience. In this way, the construction of monuments (which almost always necessitated collaboration between multiple artists,

² While studies of socialist sculpture (including the present chapter) have tended to focus on urban space, the importance of socialist monuments located in rural areas must be noted. Such works served to strengthen the ‘historical’ work done by monuments, since they linked together material instantiations of socialist-era construction (monuments) with specific historical geographic locations that were often encountered only rarely—or essentially only by locals. This created possibilities for pilgrimage to remote sites, but it also served—as art historian Bojana Pejić has noted in the context of Yugoslavian monuments to the Partisan struggle—to “suggest [that] revolution [was] a natural process” by establishing the natural surroundings of memorials as one of their most striking visual and conceptual elements. See Bojana Pejić, “Yugoslav Monuments: Art and the Rhetoric of Power,” in *MONUMENTI: The Changing Face of Remembrance*, ed. Daniel Brumund and Christian Pfeifer (Belgrade: ForumZFD, 2012), p. 13. On pilgrimage and socialist monuments in Albania, see Konstantinos Giakoumis and Christopher Lockwood, “Pilgrimage Centered at Text and Memory: The Lapidar in Qukës-Pishkash,” in *Lapidari*, ed. Vincent WJ van Gerven Oei (New York: Punctum, 2015), pp. 89–96.

architects, and craftspeople³) established examples of collective participation in the production of historical meaning—and furthermore, in the production of a fully material form of historical meaning. This exemplary role strengthened the connection between the transformative industrial, architectural, and agricultural projects of the socialist present (the unceasing ‘building of socialism’) and the significance of history as a collaborative endeavor undertaken under the aegis of socialist development. The collective experiences that can be read in socialist monuments as forms of meta-production, however, are not necessarily forms of being-together that involve mutual recognition in a context of sociopolitical intersubjectivity. These experiences are just as often characterized by the slippage of embodiment and its significance from one figure to another, from one group to another. These experiences and relationships were particularly crucial during late socialism because this period saw a restructuring of transnational and international patterns of alliance and cooperation,⁴ and with them a struggle to encompass a historical experience of socialism that was at once universal and geographically, linguistically,

³ The collaborative character of monument-building was not only celebrated in state socialist contexts. One of the key texts on 20th-century monumentality—Sigfried Giedion, Fernand Léger, and Josep Lluís Sert’s 1943 “Nine Points on Monumentality”—cited the necessity of multidisciplinary collaboration for the realization of new monuments that would truly speak to the contemporary spirit. Giedion, Léger, and Sert wrote that the people’s “aspiration for monumentality, joy, pride, and excitement” could “be accomplished, with the new means of expression at hand, though it is no easy task. The following conditions are essential for it: A monument being the integration of the work of the planner, architect, painter, sculptor, and landscapist demands close collaboration between all of them.” They noted that this integrated work had rarely succeeded in the modern era because architects were not trained for this process. (See Giedion, Léger, and Sert, “Nine Points on Monumentality,” in *Architecture, You, and Me: The Diary of a Development*, ed. S. Giedion (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 49–50.) In the state socialist context, the list of actors involved in the process of monumental production could realistically have been expanded to include the historian, the local politician, the Party representative, the war veteran, and sometimes—as this chapter shows—the leader of the regime.

⁴ For some, the political restructuring of the period was only a pale recapitulation of the earlier dream of a global Leftist revolution. For example, Aleš Erjavec argues that “socialism as world progress” (the rallying cry of many socialist nations during the Cold War) was merely “a late and more benign variant of ‘world revolution.’” (See Aleš Erjavec, “Introduction,” in *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition*, p. 3.) However, my approach to the period acknowledges greater complexity at work in the attempts to navigate local and global socialist cultures in the 60s, 70s, and 80s. See Chapter 1 above.

nationally, ethnically, racially, and sexually diverse.⁵ In other words, the pressure to find both modes of representation and modes of creation that would—at least ostensibly—unify the diverse socialist globe and a plethora of equally diverse socialist localities was heightened, and artists and political actors often responded to this pressure by emphasizing the myriad ways that historical significance and contemporaneity could transfer between and across bodies. The instances of slippage, transference, and delegation that I consider in this chapter are at once positive elements in the production of collective political bodies, and sites in which certain bodies and histories are effaced or the particularities of their meanings are distorted and substituted.

The chapter examines two case studies from socialist Albania: the *Independence Monument*, inaugurated on November 28, 1972 in the southern port city of Vlora, the work of sculptors Kristaq Rama, Shaban Hadëri, and Muntas Dhrami,⁶ and the *Four Heroines of Mirdita* monument, inaugurated on October 24, 1971 in the northern town of Rrëshen, created by sculptors Andrea Mano, Fuat Dushku, Dhimo Gogollari, and Perikli Çuli.⁷ The *Four Heroines of Mirdita* monument commemorated Marta Tarazhi, Prenda Tarazhi, Shkurte Skuraj, and Mrikë Lokja,⁸ four young women from the northern regions of Albania who were killed by conservative dissidents that resisted the emancipation of

⁵ This phenomenon was not of course unique to late socialism and the restructuring of geopolitical alliances that took place in the Cold War. It also importantly characterized the experiences of the historical avant-garde, as aptly argued by Steven S. Lee in Lee, *The Ethnic Avant-Garde: Minority Cultures and World Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

⁶ The sculptors worked with architects Koço Çomi and Sokrat Mosko. See Ksenofon Dilo, *Monumentet: Skënderbeu, Pavarësia, Katër Heroinat* (Tirana: Galeria Kombëtare e Arteve, 1988), n.p.

⁷ The sculptors worked together with architects Sokrat Mosko and Bujar Ferra. See Dilo, *Monumentet*, n.p.

⁸ The women were also frequently referred to in the Albanian press by their full names, Marta Pjetër Tarazhi (1926–1948), Prenda Llesh Tarazhi (1926–1948), Shkurte Cara Skuraj (1925–1949), and Mrikë Zef Lokja (1930–1948). This longer form of the name includes their father's names (as the middle name)—which meant that despite the fact that the four women were celebrated for their roles in the struggle for women's emancipation in Albania, they were never fully released from the familial structures of patriarchy that structured Albanian society. I think Stavri Çifligu for bringing my attention to the significance of the socialist media's use of the women's full names.

women under socialism. The *Independence Monument* commemorates the country's declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912, and prominently features the Ottoman statesman and first Prime Minister of Albania Ismail Qemali,⁹ in addition to a group of warriors and intellectuals from various ethnic and geographic regions located within and adjacent to the territory now encompassed by the Albanian state. These two monuments—the first featuring four women, the second seven men—are both exemplary of the aesthetics of Socialist Realism that prevailed in Albania until the fall of socialism, and as such they raise an important set of questions about the body and its significance for materialized historical narratives. However, the genesis and themes of both monuments highlight not only the relationship between the depicted bodies and the bodies of their various viewers, but also between the bodies and agencies of political and artistic subjectivities (the dictator, state sculptors, technicians in foundries for the casting and reproduction of public sculpture) spatially and temporally removed from the immediate phenomenological experience of the monuments. These monuments functioned as spatial and material instantiations of different kinds of collective experience, but they also functioned as and in relation to discursive paradigms that established new possibilities for bodies distributed in time and geography.

I begin the chapter with a consideration of the genesis of the *Vlora Independence Monument*, a work that—not through its finished form but through the discussions surrounding its lengthy process of creation—established an important paradigm in

⁹ Qemali, born into a prominent family in Vlora, is a complicated figure in the history of the region. Although he is typically regarded in Albania as one of the protagonists of Albanian national independence and thus a hero of Albanian nationalism, Qemali devoted a great deal of effort to pursuing a union of Balkan states and territories that would join with the Ottoman Empire to assure regional stability and prosperity. On the complexities of Qemali's role in regional politics in the early twentieth century, see Isa Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800–1912* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 118–123.

socialist Albania for monuments as sites of the production of history as a collective endeavor.¹⁰ I then consider the *Four Heroines of Mirdita* monument, one of the works created during the same years that the debate over the *Independence Monument* was reshaping the discursive landscape of Albanian public sculpture, exploring how the representation of collective sacrifice for the sake of modernization was represented in relation to new notions of the body and gender under socialism.¹¹ Finally, I consider the different ways that both the Vlora monument and the *Four Heroines* monument reveal the navigation and creation of forms of historicized, socialist subjectivity in Albania during late socialism. These forms of subjectivity privileged some bodies over others, and allowed some subjects to be part of a collective history while excluding others. However, acknowledging the uncertain, frequently partial nature of the intertwinement of monumentality and collective identities allows us to understand the complexities of how both universal (or global) histories could become linked with local ones during the geopolitical re-alignments of the 1960s and 70s.

II. Beginnings of a Monument

A 1969 photograph shows Albanian sculptors Kristaq Rama, Muntas Dhrami, and Shaban Hadëri, engaged in discussion regarding an early model of the Vlora *Independence Monument* [Figures 2.1–2.3]. The image appeared in the photobook

¹⁰ This section of the chapter draws heavily on my article “The Dictator Visits the Studio: The Vlora Independence Monument and the Politics of Albanian Monumental Sculpture, 1962–1972,” *Third Text* (forthcoming 2018), as well as my thesis, *‘In It We Should See Our Own Revolution Moving Forward, Rising Up’: Socialist Realism, National Subjecthood, and the Chronotope of Albanian History in the Vlora Independence Monument* (Master’s Thesis, University of Maryland, College Park, 2014).

¹¹ After the end of socialism in Albania, in the early 1990s, the *Four Heroines* monument was destroyed, presumably to be sold for scrap. (It was not officially removed by the municipality.) The monument’s destruction indicates, in many ways, the failures of socialism to change ideas about women’s emancipation in the north: the monument persisted as a symbol of socialist intrusion, rather than as a symbol of social progress, and it is in fact possible that many residents resented the image of the four emancipated women given such a prominent place in the city of Rrëshen.

Shqipëria Socialiste Marshon (Socialist Albania On the March)—also published in 1969—where its accompanying descriptive caption read: “Through collective work, our sculptors often realize works of value to immortalize the major historical events of the Albanian people.”¹² The clarity of the photograph’s visual rhetoric¹³ is striking: against an almost completely blank backdrop of a beige studio wall, the dark clay of the model rises to a sharp point that just breaks the top edge of the photo. Arranged in a semi-circle, the bodies of the three sculptors bracket the monument’s base: Dhrami at center and Hadëri to the right look on as Rama, on the left, leans forward intently and articulates his speech with an extended hand. The photo captures his gesture at the precise moment when his hand overlays the aggressively worked clay of the model’s base, suggesting the transformation of the artists’ thought and discourse into material form. The trio of sculptors is balanced by a tripartite distribution of the monument itself, which in fact appears in three articulations: two smaller models located at the level of the artists, and the larger version towering above their heads. Furthermore, the way the sculptors are grouped horizontally around the base of the model finds a parallel in the grouping of figures in the monument itself, surrounding the flag and flagpole that draw the composition upwards to its apex. Above all else, then, the photograph weaves together the strands and stages of socialist Albanian history, and shows this history as a collective event: the present, the sculptors grouped in dialogue, becomes the ground from which the collectivity of past experience achieves clarity, form, and metaphysical significance.

¹² Translation in original. *Shqipëria Socialiste Marshon* (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1969), p. 13.

¹³ This clarity also suggests that the photograph was staged, as many such photographs appearing in official photobooks and periodical publications were under socialism.

The photograph is at least as interesting for what it does *not* show us.¹⁴ In the summer of 1969, Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha¹⁵ made a visit to the studio of the three sculptors to observe their progress on the Vlora monument. Following this visit, Hoxha wrote a letter to the three sculptors in which he synthesized and expanded upon comments that he had made to the sculptors in person during his visit. The letter was published on the front page of the weekly cultural periodical *Drita*. Its publication marked the first time that the Albanian dictator's aesthetic commentary and participation in the creative processes of state artists were made public, and in the ensuing years it was held up as an example of the dictator's concern with art's importance, as well as his guiding role as cultural critic (not coincidentally, at the height of socialist Albania's Cultural Revolution). The three sculptors also wrote a letter of response, which was published together with Hoxha's letter on the front page of *Drita*.¹⁶ This letter exchange served to establish a collaborative paradigm for understanding the creative artistic process, explicitly showing the ways that officials and their commentary were taken up by artists and refined, transformed, and made tangible. Although the photograph of the three sculptors engaged in debate was probably taken prior to Enver Hoxha's visit to the sculptors' studio,¹⁷ in the wake of that visit it becomes difficult not to read the artists' absorbed conversation as a discussion of the dictator's aesthetic and ideological suggestions (which I describe in greater detail below).

¹⁴ I thank Jessie Labov for her insightful questions about the photograph of the three sculptors, questions that pushed me to further explore the photograph's publication history and context.

¹⁵ Hoxha (1908–1985) was the leader of socialist Albania from 1944 until the time of his death. For a succinct overview of his regime and its characteristics, see Bernd J. Fischer, "Enver Hoxha and the Stalinist Dictatorship in Albania," in *Balkan Strongmen*, ed. Bernd J. Fischer (London: Hurst, 2007), pp. 239–268.

¹⁶ See Enver Hoxha, "Në Gurrën e Pashtershme e Jetëdhënëse të Krijimtarisë së Popullit, Do të Gjejmë Atë Frymëzim të Madh për të Realizuar Vepra të Bukura e Madhështore për Popullin Tonë," and Kristaq Rama, Shaban Hadëri, and Muntas Dhrami, "I Dashur Shoku Enver," both in *Drita*, July 13, 1969.

¹⁷ Muntas Dhrami, conversation with the author, August 2016.

Whether the photograph was taken before or after Hoxha's visit to the sculptors' studio, however, the image nonetheless reveals the importance of co-operative, intersubjective effort in representing the past. Such collective work became essential to the socialist Albanian cultural industry beginning in the second half of the 1960s, when the country experienced a frenzy of memorialization aimed at consolidating a shared national historical consciousness. During these years, as artist and critic Kujtim Buza would write in 1973, socialist Albania's landscape would be transformed into "a landscape of stone, of marble, a landscape of bronze."¹⁸ The country witnessed a proliferation of monuments to counter their relative absence in the Albanian territory prior to the socialist years.¹⁹ This prior absence of monuments can no doubt in part be attributed to the relative political instability of the region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: the infrastructure and resources necessary for large scale monumental projects were simply not available, or else such resources were devoted primarily to creating a modern urban architectural environment.²⁰ The late 1940s and 50s saw relatively less monumental construction in Albania, no doubt in part due to Albania's

¹⁸ Kujtim Buza, Kleanth Dedi, and Dhimitraq Trebicka, *Përmendore të Heroizmit Shqiptar* (Tirana: Shtëpia Qëndrore e Ushtrisë Popullore, 1973).

¹⁹ This increase can also be seen elsewhere in the region, in countries like Romania, Bulgaria, and the former Yugoslavia. Indeed, many socialist publications from this period in Southeastern Europe chronicle the proliferation of monuments, and also seek to establish legacies of monumental construction, framing socialist monumentality as a continuation of ancient (often nationally delimited) traditions. See especially Veneta Ivanova, *Българска монументална скулптура: развитие и проблеми* (Sofia, 1978), but also Mircea Grozdea, *Arta monumentală în România socialist* (Bucharest: Editura Meridiane, 1973), and Drago Zdunić, *Revolucionarno Kiparstvo* (Zagreb: Spektar, 1977). In Albania, however, the situation of monumental art was slightly different; the introduction to the monumental survey by Buza, Dedi, and Trebicka, *Përmendore të Heroizmit Shqiptar*, clearly associates the emergence of monumental practices with socialism, noting the relative paucity of monuments in the Albanian territories prior to the Second World War. Of course, treating the Albanian territory as a *tabula rasa* prior to socialism obscured earlier monumental efforts, such as those created during Ahmet Zogu's rule, but it also allowed for monumentality in Albania to be framed as an innovative practice in step with the newness of socialist life.

²⁰ Such was the case, for example, with the Italian transformation of the capital city Tirana, especially its main axial boulevard. See Indrit Bleta, *Influences of Political Regime Shifts on the Urban Environment of a Capital City, Case Study: Tirana* (Master's Thesis, Middle Eastern Technical University, 2010), pp. 39–48.

alliance with the Soviet Union in these years and the corollary lack of urgency of narrating a shared national history in public spaces. The monuments of the late 1940s and 50s in Albania were, on the whole, single figures executed by individual artists in an essentially naturalistic style: Odhise Paskali's *Statue of Comrade Enver Hoxha* (Tirana, 1948) and *Stalin Monument* (Tirana, 1949) [Figure 2.4], Andrea Mano's *Partisan Monument* (Tirana, 1949) [Figure 2.5], Kristina Koljaka's *Lenin Monument* (Tirana, 1954), and Janaq Paço's *Skanderbeg Monument* (Kruja, 1959) [Figure 2.6] are all exemplary of the gradual production of sculptures of key figures from both the Soviet and the Albanian historical pantheons.

It was not until well into the socialist period in Albania that monuments (which often served as localized architectural interventions into rural areas, symbolically creating a 'modernized' urban space without the need for larger-scale transformation²¹) were profusely produced. In the beginning of the 1960s, as Enver Hoxha broke decisively with Khrushchev's Soviet Union, the need for different kinds of monuments was no doubt felt: monuments that could tell a story not only of great figures from both ancient and recent history, but also stories of the unified struggles of the Albanian people. Many of these monuments were constructed as centerpieces for Partisan cemeteries, a large number of which were completed in the late 1960s. In addition, a trend towards the construction of multi-figure sculptural ensembles is evident (though single-figure monuments certainly persisted), and these more complex monuments often called for larger working groups of artists. At the same time, the production of monuments dedicated to generalized types (the Partisan soldier—by far the most commonly monumentalized figure in socialist

²¹ On this topic, see the state-produced film *Lapidari* (1984-86), written by Viktor Gjika and directed by Esat Ibro. For an analysis of the film, see Julian Bejko, "About the Film *Lapidari*," in *Lapidari*, pp. 125–128.

Albania—the agricultural worker, the miner, the welder) allowed for a more abstracted style of Socialist Realism to develop, one less focused on modeling recognizable historical figures and more focused on representing universalized members of socialist society.

The inception of the *Vlora Independence Monument* predates the surge in monumental construction of the late 1960s. The monument was initially commissioned in 1962, coinciding with the fiftieth anniversary of independence from the Ottoman Empire, and the first plans for the work were significantly different than the sculpture that was finally inaugurated ten years later. The most detailed plan for the first version of the project was put forward by Odhise Paskali, one of the few sculptors who had realized works of a monumental scale on the territory of the Albanian state prior to the socialist period. Paskali belonged to an older generation of artists than those who—in the early 1960s—were just returning from training at the Ilya Repin Institute in Leningrad, the artists who would help establish the forms of Socialist Realism that subsequently characterized artistic production in Albania through the late 1980s. Paskali, trained in Turin in the 1920s, proposed an entire monumental complex that was essentially neoclassical in character: a central stone statue of Albania personified as a mother-warrior, holding aloft a flag in one hand and dangling a golden garland in the other, was to be surrounded by three separate groups of warriors.²² These groups would represent the 1) the politicians, intellectuals, and militants associated with the Albanian National Awakening, including Ismail Qemali; 2) the soldiers who fought in the 1920 Vlora War

²² A detailed description written by Paskali together with sketches for several variants on this initial plan for the monumental complex can be found in AQSh, f. 490, v. 1962, d. 992, fl. 4–34.

against Italian forces; and 3) the soldiers who fought in the National Liberation War, the struggle to free the Albanian territory from fascist forces during the Second World War.

Although many aspects of Paskali's concept for the monument would survive in the version ultimately realized, it appears that Paskali himself was never contracted to work on the project.²³ Instead, in 1963, the Central Committee of the Political Bureau announced an open competition for proposals for the monument,²⁴ and finally in the middle of 1965 the Political Bureau approved a concept put forward by Kristaq Rama, Shaban Hadëri, and Muntas Dhrami.²⁵ The sculptors were contracted to complete the monument within three years. One condition of this contract, however, was the construction of a centralized studio space in Tirana for the purposes of national monumental construction—a fact that reveals the lack of monumental infrastructure in the country prior to that point. The construction of the new studio was also delayed, and in 1967 the sculptors agreed to complete the Independence Monument by the close of the year 1969—the year that marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Partisan victory over fascist forces and Albania's subsequent liberation.²⁶ However, 1969 would ultimately

²³ It is unclear why not, but there is at least one plausible explanation: almost from the beginning, Paskali insisted that—given his prior work in Vlora, on Ismail Qemali's monumental grave—he should be the lone and primary artist tasked with the project, assisted by a larger group. Paskali maintained that he wished to avoid a situation in which several groups worked in competition but one was ultimately chosen (thus reducing the efficiency of the process of constructing the monument). See Paskali's letter to Spiro Koleka in AQSh, f. 490, v. 1962, d. 992, fl. 13–18.

Additionally, Paskali's essentially classicizing concept for the Vlora monument—an allegorical female figure on a pedestal, surrounded by other groups of figures likewise on pedestals—might have seemed both aesthetically and ideologically unsuited to the construction of a new image of Albanian socialist art that took place in the 1960s. While Paskali continued to be one of the regime's favored artists, his training in Italy and his prior artistic production under Albania's interwar leader King Ahmet Zogu and during the Italian fascist occupation of the country presented certain problems for a country attempting to define its art as innovative and socialist in essence. While the connection to traditional sculptural styles was crucial—as it so often was for Socialist Realism in both sculpture and architecture—it was also necessary that this link to tradition avoided too close an association with fascist neoclassicism.

²⁴ AQSh, f. 490, v. 1963, d. 979, fl. 9

²⁵ AQSh, f. 490, v. 1967, d. 521, fl. 5

²⁶ AQSh, f. 490, v. 1967, d. 521, fl. 5

mark not the completion of the Vlora *Independence Monument* but instead the aesthetic and ideological re-evaluation of the monument's significance in the wake of Enver Hoxha's visit to the sculptors' studio and his comments upon their labors.

III. The Albanian Cultural Revolution, Monumental Sculpture, and Collective Artistic Production

To better understand the significance of the collective labor of the three sculptors, and the significance of the dictator's visit to their studio, we must understand the political and cultural situation in socialist Albania leading up to 1969. As noted above, these years saw the beginning of a period of heightened monumental industry. This commemorative surge—which lasted well into the 1970s—formed part of Enver Hoxha's own Cultural Revolution, carried out in partial coincidence with Mao's, primarily between 1966 and 1969.²⁷ The 1960s were a tumultuous period in the country's international relations: at the beginning of the decade, Albania broke off relations with Khrushchev's Soviet Union, and gradually shifted towards an alliance with the People's Republic of China. This alliance made it logical for Hoxha to look to Mao's policies as a model for socialist development, but the character of the Cultural Revolution that occurred in Albania was markedly different than China's.²⁸ Hoxha viewed the transformation of China's politics and culture beginning in 1966 with concern: to him, Mao's Cultural Revolution was too frenzied, too potentially dangerous to merit imitation; a more controlled, top-down

²⁷ On the Albanian Cultural Revolution, see Isa Blumi, "Hoxha's Class War: The Cultural Revolution and State Reformation, 1961–1971," *East European Quarterly*, 33:3 (September, 1999): pp. 303–326, and Peter R Pifti, *Socialist Albania Since 1944: Domestic and Foreign Developments* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978), pp. 143–149.

²⁸ For an excellent overview of the political relationship between Albania and China during the Cultural Revolution, see Elidor Mëhilli, "Mao and the Albanians," in *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*, ed. Alexander C. Cook (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp 165–184. See also Elez Biberaj, *Albania and China: A Study of An Unequal Alliance* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986), pp. 53–78.

method seemed prudent.²⁹ While Hoxha ultimately leant vocal support to the changes occurring in China, the Albanian Cultural Revolution was characterized by a greater consolidation of state power and national consciousness, coupled with a decidedly different version of the personality cult.

At the Fifth Congress of the Albanian Party of Labor in 1966, Hoxha outlined his model for “the deepening of the ideological and cultural revolution.”³⁰ The “further revolutionization of life in the country” would manifest itself in many ways. The ensuing years witnessed an intensification of Hoxha’s anti-religious policies—especially vis-à-vis the Catholic tribes in the north of Albania, whose loyalty to familial ties presented an ongoing challenge to centralized governmental control.³¹ At the same time, the construction of a civil religion centered on the national hero Skanderbeg began, and this civil religion in turn established a link between Skanderbeg’s alleged role as medieval unifier of the Albanian people (against the Ottomans) and Hoxha’s socialist state.³² (In this and other ways, Hoxha’s cult of personality was constructed obliquely, by first establishing other national heroes such as Skanderbeg and Ismail Qemali, and subsequently associating Hoxha’s role with theirs.) The year 1966 saw the inauguration of the Palace of Culture in Tirana, home to the Opera and the National Library,³³ and the

²⁹ Mëhilli, “Mao and the Albanians,” pp. 172–175.

³⁰ It is significant that the language used treated the policies as a continuation, a ‘deepening’, rather than a break. See Enver Hoxha, *Mbi Letërsinë dhe Artin* (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1977), p. 241.

³¹ Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), p. 197.

³² On the cult of Skanderbeg as a civil religion, and the association of Skanderbeg with Hoxha, see Egin Ceka, “Muzeu Kombëtar dhe Muzeu i Skënderbeut si Institucione të Religjionit Civil Shqiptar të Komunizmit,” *Përpyekja* 11:21 (Fall 2005): pp. 121–147. The inauguration of the equestrian monument to Skanderbeg (created by another trio of sculptors—Odhise Paskali, Janaq Paço, and Andrea Mano) in Tirana’s central square in 1968 was emblematic of the monumental aspect of the construction of this civil religion. The monument displaced the statue of Stalin that formerly stood in the square.

³³ Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, Instituti i Historisë (Academy of Sciences of the People’s Republic of Albania, Historical Institute), *Historia e Shqipërisë, Vëllimi i Katërt (1944-1975)* (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1983), p. 473.

number and diversity of newspapers in the country started to increase, with local publications overseen by regional Party committees beginning publication.³⁴ The final years of the 1960s also saw the publication of the first volumes of Enver Hoxha's collected works—a set of writings that would eventually stretch to seventy volumes and would become the single most important reference point for all published criticism and analysis in the later years of Albanian socialism.³⁵

Hoxha's own writings on the arts in particular seem to indicate, however, that he was not primarily interested in directly participating in culture. Many of his writings on art and literature (including those from the period of the Cultural Revolution³⁶) are quite general, and only in a few specific cases (such as that of the Vlora monument) did he make concrete suggestions. However, it is clear that Hoxha did at least see a need for his involvement in artistic and cultural matters to become public, even if he himself did not emphasize his own artistic sensibilities, and there is documentation of other cases in which his artistic preferences shaped public commissions.³⁷

³⁴ Artan Fuga, *Monolog: Mediat dhe Propaganda Totalitare* (Tirana: Dudaj, 2010), p. 59.

³⁵ Akademia e Shkencave e RPS të Shqipërisë, Instituti i Historisë, *Historia e Shqipërisë, Vëllimi i Katërt*, p. 362. As Ardian Vehbiu has noted, the practice of citing Hoxha eventually (d)evolved to an absurd excess in the latter years of his regime (aided by the breadth and number of the dictator's published writings), to the point that theses and dissertations on the most diverse topics inevitably began by acknowledging that 'Comrade Enver' had already indicated the findings within. As Vehbiu writes, this resulted in introductory statements such as "Comrade Enver has said that Albania's subsoil is rich in minerals." See Vehbiu, *Shqipja Totalitare: Tipare të Ligjërit Publik në Shqipërinë e Viteve 1945–1990* (Tirana: Çabej, 2007), p. 71.

³⁶ See the writings in Hoxha, *Mbi Letërsinë dhe Artin*.

³⁷ One such case involved Hoxha's role in deciding the form of the monument that would grace the Cemetery of the Martyrs of the Nation in Tirana, under construction in the same years. The monument in the cemetery was created by the same three sculptors as the Vlora monument, a fact that reveals the relatively elite status of particular artists in the socialist Albanian artworld. On the monument in the Tirana cemetery, see Isto, "Dynamisms of Time and Space," pp. 42–67.

It is difficult to assess the full impact of the (at least partially) shared Cultural Revolution on the development of the arts in Albania.³⁸ Many Albanian artists travelled as part of cultural delegations to China and other Asian countries (although such visits began well in advance of the Cultural Revolution).³⁹ Exhibitions of art from China and Korea visited Albania (including a replica of the massive sculptural ensemble *The Rent Collection Courtyard*), and Albanian artists such as Andon Kuqali, Andrea Mano, and Foto Stamo drew on their travels to China to represent the landscapes and working classes of that socialist nation for Albanian audiences. What is clear is that cultural exchanges during this period allowed Albania to solidify a position as the last truly socialist nation in Europe (holding out against various ‘revisionist’ neighboring states), while at the same time attempting to create a socialist art that would be both nationally specific and global in accessibility.⁴⁰

Above all else, the model for the arts developed during the Cultural Revolution in Albania was intended to be popular in character and appeal.⁴¹ As Hoxha asserted,

³⁸ In the realm of public space, one of the most concrete influences of Mao’s Cultural Revolution on Albania was the adoption of the ‘big character poster’, or *fletë-rrufe*, as it was called in Albanian. On this phenomenon, see Ardian Vehbiu, “Me Shkronja të Mëdha,” *Përpyjekja* 20:32-33 (Spring 2014): pp. 216–227.

³⁹ Unfortunately, a fuller examination of Albanian artists and the influence of both Chinese socialist art and visits to China exceeds the scope of the current discussion. Much work remains to be done on the topic, as the current research is partial in nature. The topic was examined in some detail in papers and discussions at the panel “Building an Alternative Modernity: Artistic Exchange Between Postwar Socialist Nations,” chaired by Vivian Li, at the College Art Association Conference, Washington, DC, February 6, 2016.

⁴⁰ See Raino Isto, “Between Two Easts: Albania, the USSR, China, and the Ontology of a Transnational Socialist Reality in Postwar Albanian Visual Art,” paper delivered at the College Art Association Conference, Washington, DC, February 6, 2016, and Boris Groys, “Memories of Hybrid Communism,” in *Albanian Trilogy: A Series of Devious Stratagems*, ed. Marco Scotini (Berlin: Sternberg, 2015), pp. 89–97.

⁴¹ As such, part of socialist Albania’s attempt to consolidate national consciousness involved documenting rural practices and gathering ethnographic information on rural populations. Publications such as Zihni Sako’s *Folklori Shqiptar (Albanian Folklore)* (Tirana: Instituti i Folklorit, 1963), and later the journal *Kultura Popullore (Popular Culture)*, begun in 1980, were emblematic of these practices. Albanian cultural periodicals such as *Drita* and *Nëntori* often featured critical and occasionally scholarly examinations of folklore, popular costume, and decorative arts, and numerous studies focused on

Our socialist art and culture must base themselves firmly upon our ancestral homeland, upon our miraculous people; they must spring forth from the people and be fully in their service, be clear and understandable to them but not in the least ‘banal and without ideas.’ The Party supports artistic and cultural production in which deeply ideological content and expansive, popular inspiration are brought into harmony with an elevated artistic form: [artistic and cultural production] that touches the feelings and hearts of the people, and inspires and motivates them to do great things.⁴²

It seems clear, however, that artistic production was not meant to relate to the masses solely through its content. The process of artistic production was also supposed to mirror the collective efforts that the socialist populace was supposedly undertaking, and such collectivity was ideally modeled in the creation of monumental sculpture. By the year 1970, Kujtim Buza would survey the plethora of public art projects (chiefly sculptural and architectural) underway at the time, and write that “*nearly all* of our sculptors, no matter their age, have joined together to form collectives.”⁴³ While Buza’s assessment may be exaggerated, his observation indicates the shift taking place in creative work during the period of increased monumental construction—a shift that the 1969 photograph of the ‘Monumental Trio’ (as Rama, Hadëri, and Dhrami came to be called) at work on the *Independence Monument* images quite succinctly.

Many of the major monuments produced in the country during the late 1960s and 1970s were the work of multiple sculptors (to say nothing of the collaboration with architects in designing the environments for the installation of the sculptures), including

cataloguing regional dialects (ironically in a period when the Albanian language, in 1972, was standardized by the state). It is no doubt not accidental that the photo of the three sculptors at work on the Vlora Independence Monument appeared, in *Shqipëria Socialiste Marshon*, opposite a photo of artfully displayed crafts, such as textiles, copper pots, and elaborate wooden-inlaid boxes.

⁴² The quotation is drawn from Hoxha’s speech at the Fifth Congress of the Albanian Party of Labor in 1966, published in Hoxha, *Mbi Letërsinë dhe Artin*, p. 255.

⁴³ Emphasis added. Kujtim Buza, “Puna Krijuese Kolektive.” Buza also made clear the centrality of monuments to socialist Albanian life: “The ideological-aesthetic education of the working masses is an important duty of our artists, painters, and sculptors. Their works play a key role in shaping the masses’ notion of beauty, in creating a rich spiritual life [for the people]. Architects and monumental sculptors have a particularly significant role in this process.”

the equestrian statue of Skanderbeg in the main square of Tirana (the work of Odhise Paskali, Janaq Paço, and Andrea Mano, inaugurated in 1968) [Figure 2.7] and the *Four Heroines of Mirdita* in Rrëshen (the work of Andrea Mano, Perikli Çuli, Fuat Dushku, and Dhimo Gogollari, inaugurated in 1971) [Figures 2.8–2.10].⁴⁴ The collaborative aspect of monument-building in socialist Albania served both a practical and an ideological function. Multiple sculptors were often necessary to complete the works in time for the established inauguration dates, and artistic collectives allowed younger sculptors to work with older, more experienced ones.⁴⁵ The collective character of the creative process was also seen as vital for the development of artists as creative individuals in the course of building socialism. Collaboration allowed for group discussions of artworks, which was considered vital to unlocking their full aesthetic-didactic potential, and co-operative work in the studio facilitated the exchange of both experience and ideas out of which individual artistic styles were able “to crystallize.”⁴⁶ At the same time, collaborative artistic effort assured that individual style did not transform into individualism or intellectualism.⁴⁷

This conflict, between the artist’s individuality as evidence of socialism’s cultural fecundity and the drive to model a collectivized mode of artistic creation, was never fully resolved in socialist Albania. Albania never really saw, for example, the kind of mass

⁴⁴ Relatively little scholarship exists in any language on Albanian monumental sculpture, or even on Albanian sculpture more broadly. In English, the catalog *Lapidari*, edited by Vincent WJ van Gerven Oei, surveys commemorative sculpture from socialist Albania with several scholarly contributions. In Albanian, Suzana Varvarica Kuka is the author of several monographs on Albanian sculptors, including one on Kristaq Rama: *Kristaq Rama* (Tirana: Zenit, 2005). On Odhise Paskali’s artistic activity, see his memoirs: Odhise Paskali, *Gjurmë Jete*, and Ferid Hudhri, *Arti i Rilindjes Shqiptare* (Tirana: Onufri, 2000), pp. 87–114.

⁴⁵ Suzana Varvarica Kuka, *Andrea Mano: 1919–2000* (Tirana: Ilar, 2009), pp. 123, 127–128.

⁴⁶ Kristaq Rama, “Arritje dhe Perspektiva të Skulpturës Sonë Monumentale,” *Nëntori* 1 (January, 1978): pp. 19–20.

⁴⁷ Buza, “Puna Krijuese Kolektive.”

cultural production characteristic of Mao's China, although the move towards collective artistic processes in the late 1960s can certainly be seen as a response to Mao's Cultural Revolution.⁴⁸ Thus, there was always a degree of tension between the concept of collaboration—implying individual subjects joining together in the work of creation—and that of an achieved artistic collectivity, in which such individuals would cease to matter as individuals. Thus, although 'collective' creative work was repeatedly celebrated in official discourse, the individual and indeed elite status of artists was retained both practically and to a degree ideologically.⁴⁹ However, the imperative to collaborate, and to study 'popular' sources of culture, attempted (in a way analogous to some of the changes in artistic practices in Maoist China) to place artists in direct contact with social groups with whom they would not otherwise interact.

By the year 1969, Rama, Hadëri, and Dhrami were the paradigmatic artistic collective in Albania. Together, they had achieved notoriety as prolific and popular sculptors; indeed, their collective success was such that the three were caricatured *as a monument* by cartoonist Bujar Kapexhiu in a 1969 issue of *Drita*. All three first studied in the Jordan Misja artistic lyceum in Tirana and later (as was common for artists in Albania during the 1950s and early 1960s, prior to the break with the Soviet Union) in the Ilya Repin Institute in Leningrad.⁵⁰ Upon returning to Albania, Rama worked first as an

⁴⁸ On the development of mass art in China during the Cultural Revolution, see Joshua JH Jiang, "The Extermination or the Prosperity of Artists? Mass Art in Mid-Twentieth Century China," *Third Text* 18:2 (2004): pp. 169–182, and Christine I. Ho, "The People Eat for Free and the Art of Collective Production in Maoist China," *The Art Bulletin* 98:3 (2016): pp. 348–372.

⁴⁹ Likewise, as we shall see, although Hoxha's interaction with the sculptors of the Vlora monument could certainly be termed collaboration, it cannot be said that the dictator's own subjectivity disappeared into the artistic collective—rather, the leader appeared to emerge all the more clearly *out of* his participation in the genesis of the monument.

⁵⁰ Hadëri, the oldest of the three sculptors, was a Partisan in the National Liberation Army during the National Liberation Struggle. He attended the Jordan Misja lyceum in Tirana from 1947 to 1950 and then served for two years as the first director of Albania's National Gallery of the Arts. Subsequently

inspector for the Ministry of Art and Culture, then as Director of the National Gallery of the Arts (in 1960), and later as a director in the Ministry of Art and Culture (in 1966).⁵¹ Hadëri and Dhrami both returned from Russia to work as professors of sculpture in the Institute of the Arts in Tirana. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Monumental Trio was at work not only on the *Vlora Independence Monument*, but also on the *Mother Albania* monument destined for the Cemetery of the Martyrs of the Nation in Tirana (also inaugurated in 1972), the *Monument to 1920* near Vlora (inaugurated in 1970), and a monumental relief on the façade of the Prime Ministry building (completed in 1974).⁵² The event that fully solidified the significance of the Monumental Trio's position in socialist Albanian art history, however, came with Enver Hoxha's visit to their studio.

IV. The Letters

The genesis of the *Vlora Independence Monument* established that the collaborative aspect of monumental industry did not occur *only* between artists. Enver Hoxha visited the sculptors' studio in the summer of 1969, and the subsequent exchange of open letters between the Hoxha and the artists established the paradigmatic involvement of the dictator in cultural affairs, assigning him a role that hovered between enlightened benefactor and educated critic. Hoxha's intervention in the Vlora monument's creation was highly strategic: it not only clearly established the meanings the monument would have upon completion, but it also contributed to Hoxha's own transformation from military leader into a figure of intellectual and socio-cultural

he studied at the Ilya Repin Institute until 1958, when he returned to Albania. Rama was in the lyceum at the same time and finished in 1951; he studied in Leningrad from 1954 to 1960. Dhrami, the youngest of the three, studied at the lyceum from 1952 to 1957 and then in Leningrad from 1957 to 1961. See Drishti, Kuka, and Memaga, *Monografi*, pp. 76–77, 92–93, 106–107.

⁵¹ Drishti, Kuka, and Memaga, pp. 76–77.

⁵² These latter two works were created by Rama, Hadëri, and Dhrami in collaboration with sculptor Hektor Dule, who was slightly younger than the other three.

authority.⁵³ As Albania entered the 1970s, Hoxha would wield this authority more aggressively, eventually declaring war on all “foreign influences” in Albanian culture in 1973.⁵⁴ However, he also used this authority to establish himself as the leader of a *culturally and historically* unified people, not merely of a politically delineated state. Coming as it did at a key moment in the political, cultural, and social transformation of socialist Albania, Hoxha’s letter to the Monumental Trio paradoxically indicated both the ‘correct’ interpretation of national history and the degree to which the interpretation of that history was still an open question. Put differently, Hoxha’s observations to the sculptors proscribed a set of meanings that the monument was intended to convey, but in doing so it also indicated that those meanings were not self-evident, that collaboration and discussion were necessary between artists, the state, and the people in order to fully comprehend (and to *make*) history.

Hoxha made several things clear in his letter. First, he insisted that the Vlora monument should present not merely the events surrounding the Albanian declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912, but the entire history of the Albanian people’s struggle against “centuries-long enslavement and [against] every impediment” to national unity. Second, he emphasized that this historical synthesis should be embodied in an image of ceaseless and violent forward motion: he wrote, “The whole

⁵³ On Hoxha’s gradual rise as a military figure, see M. J. Alex Standish, “Enver Hoxha’s Role in the Development of Socialist Albanian Myths,” in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, ed. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 116–123.

⁵⁴ This declaration was made at what would become the infamous Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Albanian Party of Labour, a meeting where ‘liberal’ trends evident in the Ninth Albanian Radio and Television Song Festival were condemned. Hoxha’s speech at the plenum indicated the isolationist (and comparatively paranoid) political direction that would characterise the later years of his regime, and after 1973 artists in Albania often faced a greater threat of censorship, and greater consequences for creating ‘revisionist’ art. On the effects of the Fourth Plenum in Albanian art, see Fjoralba Satka Mata, “Albanian Alternative Artists vs Official Art Under Communism,” in *History of Communism in Europe, Volume 2: Avatars of Intellectuals Under Communism*, ed. Cristian Vasile (Bucharest: Zeta, 2011), pp. 79–89.

ensemble of the monument should be on the attack, so that the figures that make it up are not in static positions. [...] Independence must be protected, the war must be continued, the revolution must rise.” As a result of these two suggestions, Hoxha argued that the monument should present a clear connection between the moment of independence and the ongoing project of Albanian socialism: “In it we would see our own revolution moving forward, rising up. The people’s imagination should see, in the work you will create, that which [they] realised in the glorious National Liberation War, that which [they are] realising today in the building of socialism.” Additionally, and perhaps most significantly, he commented on the role of Ismail Qemali as it appeared in the sculpture: “I agree with you that the figure of Ismail Qemali should be the central figure, as you have made him, but from the entire ensemble it should be clear that his act is a consequence of the legendary struggle of the people.”⁵⁵ That is, Hoxha desired the *Independence Monument* to reflect not only the past as history but also the *present* as history, and that history was meant to be a collectively popular one; if heroes emerged in this history, they emerged out of the kind of communal effort that characterised the creation of the monument itself, as a paradigmatic instance of socialist labor.

Hoxha made other concrete suggestions regarding both form and content in his letter, most of which were integrated into the finalized version of the monument. He lamented the absence of a representative figure from the period of the Albanian National Awakening, a movement of intellectual and nationalist consolidation that Hoxha clearly wished to establish as a parallel to his own administration.⁵⁶ He also noted that the degree

⁵⁵ All citations in this paragraph are from Hoxha, “Në Gurrën e Pashtershme.”

⁵⁶ The figure that the sculptors later added bears a strong resemblance to the poet and writer Naim Frashëri, one of the three Frashëri brothers, all major figures in the Albanian National Awakening. On the

to which the artists had attempted to represent the specific dress of fighters from different ethnographic regions within Albania, but suggested that the figures should be more generalized in their appearance, since—as he put it—war cast aside the need for costumes and finery. Finally, he remarked upon the flag’s rather crestfallen character, suggesting the need for a more dynamic form.

In their letter of response—published on the front page of the same issue of *Drita* in which Hoxha’s letter appeared—Rama, Hadëri, and Dhrami for the most part accepted Hoxha’s suggestions regarding the monument’s content. The sculptors’ letter indicates, in many ways, both the possibilities open to and the limitations constraining artists in socialist Albania. On the one hand, the sculptors take issue with none of Hoxha’s observations. They praise his incisive sense of both aesthetics and Marxist-Leninist history, and describe at length the inspiration that his letter caused amongst themselves and their colleagues. In short, the letter of response would appear to confirm that the artists themselves had little or no agency in the creation of the monument, that their work was suddenly effaced by the dictator’s intervention. However, this interpretation ignores the degree to which the publication of the two letters places the emphasis precisely on the dialogic character of the creative process, the need for discussion and exchange, for

National Awakening period, see Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening 1878–1912* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

debate about history and its proper representation.⁵⁷ The dictator's letter published alone would have meant something quite different.⁵⁸

Furthermore, the changes to the monument that Hoxha proposed by no means fully encompass the changes that the sculptors subsequently carried out. First of all, the final monument in fact increases the number of warriors dressed in recognizable (though still generalized) costumes that locate them in various different ethnographic regions within or adjacent to Albania's national boundaries under socialism. As sculptor Hektor Dule—a colleague of the Monumental Trio—wrote,⁵⁹ the four warriors flanking Qemali appeared to represent a *malësor* (a resident of the mountainous regions of northern Albania and Kosovo, known to Albanians *Gegënia*), a *myzeqar* (a resident of the region of southwest-central Albania once known as *Myzeqeja*, around present-day Fier and Lushnja), a *lab* (a resident of *Labëria*, a region in the south of Albania stretching between present-day Vlora south to Saranda and east to the Vjosa river), and a *tosk* (a resident of *Toskëria*, a historical region in southeastern Albania, east of Myzeqeja and Labëria and

⁵⁷ In other words, the sculptors' letter enacted a specific kind of immaterial or affective labor, though obviously of a kind different than that typically discussed in the context of advanced capitalism, by authors such as Michael Hardt. (See Hardt, "Affective Labor," *boundary 2* 26:2 (Summer 1999): pp. 89–100.) The emotional response of the sculptors, and their acknowledgement of the dictator's investment in their labor by means of his 'friendly advice,' was as important in establishing the *Independence Monument's* paradigmatic character as a locus of socialist history as were its content and aesthetics.

⁵⁸ Importantly, Hoxha's exchange with the sculptors evidences a paradigm in fact quite different from the one put forward by Boris Groys in his interpretation of Stalinist culture in *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*, trans. Charles Rougle (New York: Verso, 2011). Groys sees the Stalinist aesthetic project as one in which the dictator takes up the avant-garde project of transforming of reality into art, treating reality itself as artistic 'material' susceptible to transformation by the will to power. While one might certainly expect a Stalinist leader like Hoxha to follow a similar path, his intervention in the *Independence Monument's* genesis avoids the role of 'shaper' of reality, instead aiming to facilitate the emergence of (historical) reality in the sculpture by staging a dialogue with the sculptors. In a sense, the model of socialist reality in relation to art that the *Independence Monument's* story presents is closer to that put forward by Petre Petrov in "The Industry of Truign: Socialist Realism, Reality, Realization," *Slavic Review* 70:4 (Winter 2011): pp. 873–892.

⁵⁹ Hektor Dule, "Një Vepër nga më të Fuqishmet në Skulpturën Tonë," *Drita*, December 3, 1972.

south of the Shkumbin River).⁶⁰ Thus, the sculptors in fact heightened the ‘popular’ character of the figures in the monument, at once fulfilling Hoxha’s call for an art based upon direct contact with the people and in a sense rejecting his preference for a generalized image of historical Albanian fighters for independence.

Perhaps the most fundamental change to the model involved the flag form at the center of the monumental ensemble, a change that affected not only the composition but the meaning of the work as well. In their letter, the sculptors emphasized that one of the most salient pieces of advice the dictator had given had been that regarding the need for the monument’s contemporaneity.⁶¹ They wrote,

[Our] subject also always calls not only for deep historic truthfulness but also a solid connection to the present. Precisely in this connection between the subject of history and that of today, we artists sometimes have difficulties, since we may present the highest achievements of various periods of history as if they were disconnected from [our] present.⁶²

To bridge the abyss between history and the present, the sculptors ultimately transformed the crestfallen flag into a sharp upward protrusion of the stony base, and crowning this

⁶⁰ The term ‘Tosk’ is also used as the name for the southern dialect of Albanian. The other major dialect is ‘Geg’ (or ‘Gheg,’ spoken in the north and in Kosovo, and by Albanians living in Macedonia and Montenegro). The precise division of various linguistic and cultural regions within and around Albania historically remains a point of significant debate in albanological studies. In the late Ottoman period, and well into socialism, a broad division existed between northern residents of Gegënia and southern residents of Toskëria (a region encompassing Myzeqeja and Labëria), but the precise borders or defining characteristics of these regions are not firmly established. For a discussion of how Gegënia and Toskëria related to Hoxha’s state-building, see Isa Blumi, “The Politics of Culture and Power: The Roots of Hoxha’s Postwar State,” *East European Quarterly* 31:3 (September, 1997): pp. 381–386.

⁶¹ It should be noted that the notion of ‘contemporaneity’ (*bashkëkohësi*, in Albanian) did not play as crucial a role in Albanian aesthetic criticism as it did in other Eastern European contexts. As Peter Osborne points out, the notion of contemporaneity in art “was first stabilized...in Eastern Europe, as part of the Soviet reaction against the categories of ‘modernity’ and ‘modernism.’” See Osborne, *Anywhere Or Not At All*, p. 18, and Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 362, n. 119. As Osborne writes, key authors such as Georg Lukács theorized socialist realism as “‘contemporary realism,’ since the actuality of socialism defined the contemporary historical present.” Furthermore, it was in Southeastern Europe, in Zagreb, that the one of the earliest uses of the term ‘contemporary’ to describe a major art institution can be found: The City Gallery of Contemporary Art (now the Museum of Contemporary Art). The usage of the terms ‘contemporary’ and ‘contemporaneity’ in relation to Albanian art has not received thorough historical or theoretical development.

⁶² Rama, Hadëri, and Dhrami, “I Dashur Shoku Enver.”

vertical element with a flagbearer—a youth representing the ‘New Man’ of socialist Albania.⁶³ In this way, the sculptors satisfied both the monument’s historical character and the requirement that the work function as a reflection of the transforming socialist present.

The completed result of this exchange of ideas between the dictator and three sculptors was the most impressive (in both scale and complexity) work of monumental sculpture created during the socialist period in Albania. Standing approximately seventeen meters high, the monument faces east and slightly northwards, looking out over Flag Square in Vlora’s city center, in the direction of the hill where city’s Martyrs’ Cemetery (*Varrezat e Dëshmorëve*) is located. Just north of the monument, in a wooded area, is the grave of Ismail Qemali, and passing before the monument is Ismail Qemali Boulevard, which stretches south to Independence Square (*Sheshi i Pavarësisë*), located near the National Independence Museum (located in the house where the declaration of independence was first signed and where Qemali and Luigj Gurakuqi raised the Albanian flag). The monument is situated on a rectangular raised stone platform (designed by architects Koço Çomi and Sokrat Mosko), with flights of steps leading up to the platform on the west and south sides, and on the northeast corner. The bronze sculpture itself rests on an irregular rectilinear patch of grass close to the west side of the platform.

The base of the monument thrusts up from the earth and resolves into two distinct levels: a lower shelf where a group of six figures are aligned in a semicircle along the eastern side of the monument and a single rising pillar, atop which stands the massive

⁶³ In some ways, the flag bearer represented one of the monument’s clearest ideological tensions, discussed above: that between the significance *in its own right* of collective collective struggle and effort, and the coalescence of that collectivity into an individual figure (whether Qemali, the ‘New Man,’ or—by extension—Hoxha as dictator and leader of the nation).

figure of the flagbearer. The monument's lack of a distinct base of stone or cement—the fact that the boulder rises directly from the grass—serves to accent its connection to the earth itself. At the same time, the fact that the work is made entirely of bronze contributes to its monolithic quality, uniting the figures with the stone upon which they stand.⁶⁴

While the back side of the boulder tapers away (albeit quite sharply), dissolving into a series of irregular facets, the front (east-facing) side of both the lower register and the pillar crystallize into virtually sheer surfaces; the front areas of the lower register of the base become entirely flat and geometric, losing all resemblance to stone. This flatness effects a sharp division between the viewer, who—standing directly before the work—is confronted by an implacable steeply inclining surface and must look up to see the feet of the six figures looming above. The front of the pillar is marked by slightly more variation in its surface, but its outward-leaning face serves primarily as a blank slate from which the year '1912' stands out in stark relief.

The central figure of the group is Qemali, the 'old man of Vlora' (*plaku i Vlorës*), who wears a suit, his tie tucked into a vest, and a long coat extending below his knees. He strides purposely forward, his right foot extending just over the lip of the sheer front face of the base; his right arm also swings forward, the right hand clenched in a fist, while his left arm hangs motionless at his side. His face is stern: his balding brow appears furrowed and the droop of his mustache lends him an unyielding air. His body is rigid, and there is little evidence of a shift in weight—indeed, it is more the position of his right arm than the comportment of his body that suggests that he is moving forward. The surfaces of Qemali's clothes are rendered with little variation in relief, and his figure takes on

⁶⁴ This monolithic sense of unity resulting from the use of bronze for both sculptural base and figures was noted in a 1973 article by sculptor Odhise Paskali. See Paskali, "Monumenti i Pavarësisë," *Drita*, April 29, 1973.

something of the flat verticality of the pillar that rises behind him. His gaze is aimed directly forward, heightening the perceived distance between him and the viewer (since their gazes never meet).

Behind and slightly above Qemali, just to his left, is the figure of an intellectual from the time of the Albanian National Awakening (*rilindës*). Only his upper body is visible: he too wears a suit and jacket, and with his left hand he clutches a book to his chest. His bearded features bear a striking resemblance to those of Naim Frashëri, the Ottoman official (from a village near Përmet, Albania) who—together with his brothers Abdyl and Sami—is known for his contributions to the construction of Albanian national identity.⁶⁵ The presence of the *rilindës* lends Qemali's movement a particular weight: it is not simply a political step forward, the achievement of statehood, but also an intellectual achievement, the realization of the struggle waged by Albanian arts and letters in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.

To Qemali's left and right are four figures (two to each side) representing warriors from various regions of Albania, discussed above. On his immediate right is a *malësor* and further to the right, a *myzeqar*. The *malësor* stands on the same level of the sculptural base as Qemali; his body is angled backwards, but he too (like all the figures on the monument) stares directly ahead. His chiseled cheekbones and mustache, together with the skullcap just visible beneath the cloth draped over his head and shoulders, mark him as a northerner. He wears a vest with short sleeves, tight-fitting trousers, and a

⁶⁵ The clearest resemblance to a sculpture of Naim Frashëri extant at the time is to Odhise Paskali's *Bust of Naim Frashëri*, created in 1950 for a small park in central Tirana.

woolen cloak draped over his shoulders.⁶⁶ His right hand grasps a rifle while his left holds a revolver thrust into a sash around his waist. The *myzeqar* stands on an outcropping that places him slightly above the level of the *malësor* (making him more visible when the monument is viewed frontally). He wears a long jacket, which extends below his knees, and a cartridge belt around his waist. His left hand holds the barrel of a rifle while his right is raised directly upward, palm open, in a gesture at once ecstatic and contrived. If the *malësor* appears relaxed—his shoulders back and his chest thrust forward boldly—the figure of the *myzeqar* shares something of the stiffness evident in Qemali. His raised arm, however, serves to reinforce the verticality of the pillar of rock, even as his elevated position leads the viewer's eye down and to the center, back to Qemali.

The two flanking figures to Qemali's left are the *lab* and the *tosk*. The *lab* stands with his right foot on the platform occupied by Qemali and his left foot on a lower level, his rifle planted vertically with the butt adjacent to his right foot. He wears a short, cylindrical white felt cap. Draped over his shoulders is the long, heavy woolen cloak worn by shepherds, and he wears a shepherd's pointed shoes.⁶⁷ Though he stands stalwart like the other figures on the lower register of the monument, the forward thrust of his right knee juxtaposed against the rigid line of his left leg reinforces the directness of the *lab*'s gaze and posture. To his right, and standing entirely on an incline that gradually rises up to the level of the *lab*'s left foot, is the *tosk*. His hair, unlike that of the other Albanians, is neck-length, and he wears the skirt, or *fustanella*, that was once common in

⁶⁶ For an extensive, though by no means exhaustive, illustrated inventory of traditional Albanian dress, see Dhimitër Mborja and Rrok Zoizi, *Popular Art in Albania: Costumes, Textiles, Clothing, Works on Metal and Wood, and Houses* (Tirana: State University of Tirana, 1959).

⁶⁷ This heavy cloak, called a *bërruc* in Albanian, was also used in conflicts such as the Vlora War to aid in crossing patches of barbed wire. See Ago Agaj, *Lufta e Vlorës: Tregim i një Pjesëmarrësi* (Tirana: Toena, 2002), p. 226.

many regions of Albania. His right hands holds the handle of a revolver thrust into his cartridge belt, and his left grasps the barrel of a rifle held over his shoulder. The swirls of his *fustanella*, coupled with his stance and the angled line of his rifle, bring the eye sweeping upward again to Qemali, the unifying point of this ensemble.

The overall effect of the lower register of figures is both to create a dramatic diagonal flow (from the raised hand of the *myzeqar* to the angled rifle of the *tosk*, or vice versa) and to establish two distinct movements (down from the *myzeqar*, up from the *tosk*) that coalesce in the forward step of Ismail Qemali. This forward motion, however, is ultimately sacrificed for an emphasis on verticality. (In fact, from a distance the viewer has much greater difficulty reading Qemali's step forward. The principle thrust of the lower register instead appears to derive from his upright posture, the *rilindës* standing a level above him, and the stiffly raised arm of the *myzeqar*.) The pillar-boulder carries this rising movement aloft to where the flagbearer stands atop it. From the front, the sheerness of the stone face accomplishes this elevating motion, while from the sides the incline of successive stone shelves upon which the figures are placed implies a more gradual upward transition. The top of the pillar is itself inclined, taking the form of a wave that arcs from the front face backwards and then levels off, leaving a space for the flag-bearer to brace himself.

The flag-bearer, like the *lab* and the *tosk*, stands with his right leg forward and bent at the knee, planted on a higher level than his left. Unlike the two figures below, however, the flag-bearer nearly lunges forward: the angle of his knee is aggressive, and his left leg curves back sharply, accented by the swirling wave of his cloak, which blows over his right shoulder in an unseen wind. He grasps the flagpole to his chest with both

hands, allowing his head to appear fully in profile while the flag—adorned with the double-headed eagle of Albania—ripples out behind him, blending with the folds of his cloak. In fact, his figure is fully legible only in profile: seen from the front (especially from below, where his form is unclear to a viewer standing directly before the monument) he acts only to extend the upward-directedness of the boulder, but from the side his forward motion is also apparent, his gaze directed outward. The flag-bearer, unlike most of the figures in the group below, seems to have almost no distinguishing characteristics. His face is youthful, but his garb lacks the specific historical and ethnographic references found amongst the Albanians who accompany Qemali. This generic quality suggests—taken together with the overall composition of the monument—that he represents the unity of the figures below, embodying the coalescence of their action and its product.

The ‘contemporaneity’ of the Vlora Monument lies in precisely this coalescence, the way it brings together diverse times (the age-long struggles of the Albanian people, the emergence of national consciousness in the National Awakening, the rise of the ‘New Man’ of socialism) in the historical present. In this sense, the monument is not simply a representation of the ‘new’, of socialist *modernity*. As Peter Osborne points out, “The subject of modernity (and there is ultimately a singular one) has a ‘collective’ dialectical unity; the equally speculative, but differently unitary, subject of the contemporary has a ‘distributive’ unity.”⁶⁸ In Albania during late socialism, there was a distinct political and existential clash between the attempt to construct a ‘modern’ subject (one characterized by the dialectical unity achieved through, say, the nation, the social class, or the ethnic

⁶⁸ Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, p. 25.

identity) and a ‘contemporary’ subject (one characterized not by dialectical transformation, but defined through its differential distribution across times or geographies). The Vlora Monument’s depiction of a unified history was not just about the synthesis of that unity, but also about its distribution: it suggested that the warriors of the mountainous north of Albania (who had not yet been fully ‘modernized’), the late Ottoman political and literary elite that helped establish the Albanian state, and the socialist youth all represented instantiations of a historical reality that was being constructed most emphatically in the socialist present.

If the Vlora Monument conceptually navigates modernity and contemporaneity, it also navigates traditional figurative sculptural modes and aesthetically modernist experimentations with abstract form (although the latter play a decidedly lesser role in the overall visual impression the monument makes). The figures of the sculpture are exaggerated in their weightiness, their poses stiff, but they also lack the hard contours and geometric partitions of form that characterized the Cubo-Futurism of much socialist sculpture in countries such as Bulgaria. Still, the entire aesthetic of the figures and the rocky base of the monument eschew the delicacy and smooth flowing surfaces of neoclassical sculpture in favor of roughness and a blocky visual paradigm. In the base and in the swirling curves of the flag-bearer’s cape, the monument fully embraces aesthetically modernist abstraction, embracing geometry as a culmination of representational forms. Indeed, the contrast between figuration and abstraction is made particularly evident by the fact that, when one stands close to and directly before the monument, one is confronted with the blank flat expanse of the rectangular block upon which Qemali stands.

The ‘distributive’ unity of contemporaneity imaged in the Vlora Monument raises the issue of a similar kind of differential distribution, the delegation of embodied meaning inherent in the formation of subjectivity (in this case, both socialist subjectivity and national subjectivity, but also artistic subjectivity and dictatorial subjectivity). Here, I wish to sketch an outline of the sort of navigation of subjecthood that seems to be occurring the genesis of the Vlora *Independence Monument*’s creation. This sketch is preliminary; I will develop it more fully below, following my discussion of the *Four Heroines of Mirdita* monument, and its full significance will emerge in subsequent chapters.

Put simply, Enver Hoxha’s letter to the Monumental Trio, the sculptors’ response, and the *Independence Monument* itself all represent processes of the delegation of historical agency, its redistribution in ways that both detach the subject from history and entwine him with it.⁶⁹ Hoxha’s letter effectively transfers both an artistic and a historical agency to the sculptors: in order for Hoxha to appear as a benevolent patron of culture, the agency to shape history must be delegated to the sculptors. In turn the sculptors, in order to appear as artists empowered to learn from the people and from Hoxha as socialist visionary, must appear to delegate the full import of their historical agency elsewhere. The monument itself, as a material object, functions as a kind of ambiguous third point in this set of exchanges. Even within the form of the monument itself, in the flux between past (the figures arrayed below) and present (the flagbearer as the New Man of socialism), there is an ambiguity to the precise *localized embodiment* of history. This

⁶⁹ Because of both the artists involved and the figures in the *Independence Monument* itself, I have opted for the use of the male pronoun in a way that is perhaps problematic. However, I hope that the following sections of the chapter will shed more light on a gendered historical subject, and the limitations of historical agency that could be attributed to that subject in the socialist Albanian context.

ambiguity—a struggle to both enact history abstractly and reify it as a legible material entity—cannot be accidental, in an era when Albania was navigating precisely how to participate in, to exemplify, a global socialist endeavor that existed uneasily between the present and the utopian future. This was at once a source of conflicted identity (the project to construct a stable national identity) and an example of a particular narrative aporia. This aporia is that discussed in Chapter 1 above: that the present became at once the time of dynamic transformation (that is, of History proper), *and* the culmination or coalescence of History proper. In this context, monuments were never simply called upon to consolidate and symbolize power, but also to serve as points of transferal across which, through which, and out of which one history could both stand outside of itself and achieve its fullest meaning.

V. The *Four Heroines of Mirdita* (Re)Produced

On May 16, 1971, a short article appeared in the Albanian weekly cultural periodical *Drita* entitled “Where Works of Art Are Reproduced.” The author of the article described in vivid detail the goings-on of a recently established enterprise for the reproduction of monumental and public sculpture:

Crouched over the body of one of the four heroines of Mirdita, workers Dhimitër Çakalli and Shaqir Boka—both specialists in bronze casting—chiseled away at the upper section of the monument, which is part of a sculptural group rising over three meters in height. Beyond them, Pali Dhimitri and Mezan Shkurti, the brigadiers of the foundry and experts in working with bronze, stood working with compasses and other tools, measuring, overseeing, and directing the efforts of the work brigades. A young worker, Kastriot Kolpeja, worked with rhythmic strikes of hammer and chisel to finish chiseling [the figure of] another of the heroines that make up the sculptural group, created by sculptors F. Dushku, A. Mano, Dh. Gogollari, and P. Çuli.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Correspondent for *Drita*. “Atje Ku Riprodhohen Veprat e Artit,” *Drita*, May 16, 1971.

The article was accompanied by an image of two male workers, Dhimitër Çakalli and Shaqir Boka, at work with chisels on the bust of one of the four heroines. Both men are intensely focused, fully absorbed in their labor [Figure 2.11]. One of them rests his left hand gently but firmly on the shoulder of the bust, guiding his chisel. In contrast to the gazes of both men, which focus on the bust, the heroine's eyes gaze obliquely out of the frame of the photograph. Her gaze provides the image with a double orientation, or perhaps more precisely a double absorption, that stages a curious relationship between workers and monument.

The peculiar character of the relationship between workers and monument is heightened by the sharp line of what is presumably the scaffolding upon which the workers stand, a line that sharply cuts along the lower edge of the photograph and throws the lower portion of the heroine's chest into shadow. This line suggests a sharp severance of the body from the realm of the image and the interplay between gaze and focused labor that are taking place above the horizontal interjection of the plank. On the one hand, the heroine's gaze emerges as the privileged one in the image: it gestures beyond both itself and the immediate situation, and is—in its own way—as coldly detached as the concentrated faces of Çakalli and Boka. However, the photograph also transforms the female monumental body into a site of male production—or, more accurately according to the title of the article, of male *reproduction*. At the same time, the body as a complete or holistic material entity has been removed from view, at once severing it from attention and creating a mysterious absence that gestures precisely at the significance of the body thus obscured from view.

The *Four Heroines* monument, as both an example and an object of socialist monumental industry, raises a number of questions and expands the previous discussion of historical delegation and collective effort that I began above in my analysis of the *Vlora Independence Monument*. It introduces the topic of gender (which is so glaringly absent as an explicit theme in the *Independence Monument*) into the present discussion of socialist monumentality, and at the same time raises the issue of sacrifice to the socialist cause. These two topics are intertwined, since attending to the ways that women were represented (and materially ‘produced’) in socialist sculpture also sheds light upon those members of the socialist ‘collective’ whose bodies and subjectivities functioned more frequently as objects of production, or whose embodied *sacrifice* played a more significant role in the establishment and perpetuation of socialist collective history. Thus, the *Four Heroines of Mirdita* presents not only an example of the way that collective artistic production took place in socialist Albania in the wake of Enver Hoxha’s visit to the ‘Monumental Trio,’ but also a paradigmatic example of how female bodies and female sacrifice emerged as the objects of male labor in art and as essential aspects of communal identity.

VI. The *Four Heroines* and Collective Creative Work

The ‘four heroines’ represented in the monument are Marta Pjetër Tarazhi,⁷¹ Prenda Llesh Tarazhi,⁷² Shkurte Cara Skuraj,⁷³ and Mrikë Zef Lokja.⁷⁴ The tragic story of

⁷¹ Marta Tarazhi was born in the village of Livadhëz in the Mirdita region of northern Albania, and directed the activity of the youth organization in the village of Maraj. Later, she became the a member of the Bureau of Communist Youth in the Mirdita region in 1946, and—despite being married at a young age according to the customs of the Kanun—she travelled south to volunteer in the construction of the Durrës-Peqin railroad in central Albania. Together with Prenda Tarazhi, she was murdered by a group of criminals on April 25, 1948. See Aleks Buda, et al., eds, *Fjalori Enciklopedik Shqiptar* (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave të RPSSH, 1985), p. 1076.

⁷² Prenda Tarazhi was born in the village of Paten in the Mat region of northern Albania, and worked to assist Partisan forces during the National Liberation War. After the war, Prenda—like Marta—

these four young women became one of the central narratives of socialist Albania's claims regarding the urgency of advances in women's emancipation in the country.⁷⁵

When the completed monument was installed in the northern Albanian city of Rrëshen—one of the principal cities in the region known as Mirdita—it presented (in contrast to the image presented with the short article in *Drita*) a compelling visual argument for the autonomy of the female body. The four heroines stand grouped together in a quadrilateral arrangement that avoids the hierarchical implications of a work such as the Vlorë *Independence Monument*, although the figure of Prenda Tarazhi stands slightly forward from the rest. Her figure is also raised slightly, standing upon a plateau of sculpted stone that protrudes slightly above the rest of the otherwise generally level bronze base.

Although it is difficult to ascertain from photos, the sculpture and its bronze base were situated in a roughly triangular spot at the intersection of the road with the town's central square, with a short set of stairs leading up to the level of the base.⁷⁶ The simplicity of the architectural context for the sculpture, and of its base, left the full emphasis on the four figures, who also maintain a kind of absolute autonomy from each other.

travelled to central Albania to take part in the construction of the Durrës-Peqin railroad, and was subsequently ambushed and murdered for her outspoken encouragement of women's emancipation on April 25, 1948. See Aleks Buda, et al., eds, *Fjalori Enciklopedik Shqiptar*, p. 1076.

⁷³ Shkurte Skuraj was born in the village of Lami, in the Mat region, where she grew up an orphan. She was apparently one of the first members of the Communist Party of Albania (which she joined in 1947) in her region. She was married at a young age, but nonetheless left in 1947 to volunteer in the building of the Durrës-Peqin railroad. She was ambushed and murdered on July 5, 1949, by dissidents discontent with the Communist Party's efforts to undermine and refashion the traditions and customs that had previously defined life in northern Albania. See, Aleks Buda, et al., eds, *Fjalori Enciklopedik Shqiptar*, p. 140.

⁷⁴ Mrikë Lokja was born in Zajs, in the region of Mirdita, and her family home became a base of the National Liberation Army during the fight against fascist occupation. After the war, Mrikë worked as an organizer for both youth and women in the Mirdita region, becoming a member of the Communist Party of Albania in 1947. Like Shkurte Skuraj, she took part in the construction of the Durrës-Peqin railroad. She was tortured and murdered on May 25, 1948, by anti-communist dissidents. See Aleks Buda, et al., eds, *Fjalori Enciklopedik Shqiptar*, p. 630.

⁷⁵ In 1987, a lengthy novelization of the lives of the four women was published, based on interviews with their living family and friends. See Luçie Doçi, *Jetë me Dritë* (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1987).

⁷⁶ Aleks Buda, et al., eds, *Fjalori Enciklopedik Shqiptar*, p. 462.

The bodies of the four heroines are represented using a sculptural vocabulary common to Socialist Realism: their feet are planted firmly, their arms rigid and muscled, their bodies stocky and their shoulders broad. Their faces are wide and their expressions are stern and unyielding. Stylistically, the solidity of their forms recalls the archaism of earlier sculptures such as Vera Mukhina's famous *Peasant Woman* (1927),⁷⁷ and thus the *Four Heroines* likewise occupy a middle ground between Socialist Realism's ideologically charged simplification of bodily forms and the regal and massive compositions common to certain early-20th-century forms of classicism. Although the faces of the four figures are distinct, it is their clothing, hair, and accessories that most clearly set them apart from each other and establish them as individuals. Three of the four carry symbolic items associated with the development of socialist society: Prenda Tarazhi grips a book in her right hand, Marta Tarazhi holds a rifle slung over her shoulder, and Mrikë Lokja holds a pick at waist level, its stark horizontal line sharply contrasting with the vertical line of Shkurte Skuraj's ecstatic upward gesture. In some sense, the division of symbolic attributes among the figures serves to preserve their anonymity, since there is no direct correlation between the particular items and the particular stories of the women that hold them; the attributes belong to a more general socialist iconography. This anonymity was reinforced at the time by the practice of discussing the monument almost exclusively as a monument to the 'four heroines'; only very rarely did articles published in newspapers or magazines discuss the particular heroines, or refer to the figures in the monument by their names.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ On Mukhina's *Peasant Woman*, see Bettina Jungen, "Vera Mukhina: Art Between Modernism and Socialist Realism," *Third Text* 23:1 (2009): pp. 35–43.

⁷⁸ Hence, it is entirely plausible that most viewers never knew which of the four heroines was which, and thus that the monument also functioned to present a far more universal image of the

The four women gaze resolutely forward, but the rigid frontality of the sculpture as a whole is tempered by the suggestion of a breeze blowing back the hem of Mrikë's dress and by the forward, braced strides of Shkurte and Marta. A further suggestion of forward motion in the sculptural group comes from Shkurte Skuraj's outstretched left hand, which rests supportively on Mrikë's right shoulder. This is the sole physical contact between the four figures in the monument, and it returns us to the issue mentioned above, regarding the autonomy of the four heroines. A comparison between the *Four Heroines* and the contemporaneous *Five Heroes of Vig* (1969) monument⁷⁹ by Shaban Hadëri—paced in the central plaza of the northern city of Shkodra is illustrative.⁸⁰ The five heroes—Partisans who were besieged and killed by forces in league with the fascist occupation of Albania—stand in a tight circle, their bodies blending together into a unified pillar of resistance. One figure rests his hand on the shoulder of another, while two others hold hands tightly. This sheer bodily coalescence is absent from the *Four Heroines* monument: while the composition is undeniably unified, the figures stand separate from each other. This separateness is significant, I think, because it marks the

emancipated Albanian woman at the same time that it narrated and commemorated the sacrifice of four particular individuals.

⁷⁹ The monument was once located in one of the central plazas of Shkodra, near the Migjeni Theater. The first version, cast in concrete and inaugurated in 1969, was replaced by a larger, bronze version in the early 1980s. After the end of socialism, it was removed from the city and installed in the Martyrs' Cemetery on the outskirts of Shkodra (a cemetery that already possessed its own sculptural centerpiece). More recently, the sculpture was moved back to a traffic circle within the city limits, but not to its original, central location. On the history of the monument during socialism, see Kujtim Buza, "Monumenti i Heronjve të Vigut," *Drita*, August 26, 1984. On the return of the monument to within the city limits, see "70 vjetori, shtatorja e 5 Heronjve të Vigut do të rivendoset në Shkodër," *Gazeta Dita*, November 7, 2014, <http://www.gazetadita.al/letra-e-prefektit-te-shkodres-gabuam-me-5-heronjte-e-vigut/> (accessed June 28, 2017).

⁸⁰ Vig is a village located in northern Albania in the Mirdita region, where (in August of 1944) a group of five Albanian partisans (Ndoc Mazi, Naim Gjylbegu, Ndoc Deda, Ahmet Haxhija, and Hydajet Lezha) fought against forces allied with the fascist occupation and were eventually surrounded and killed. According to official histories, the five partisans wrote a letter to the Shkodra regional committee of the Communist Party, declaring their unshaken belief that the party would triumph over reactionary and fascist forces in the region. See Aleks Buda, et al., eds, *Fjalori Enciklopedik Shqiptar*, p. 641.

apparent becoming-individual of particular subjectivities in death, and this individuality in turn relates (as I will argue below) to the ways in which history was delegated to the (sacrificed) female body in socialist representation. For the moment, however, it is important to consider the political context of the monument's construction, and how this context relates to its subject matter.

All four of the heroines hailed from villages in northern regions of Albania that had been historically occupied by Catholic tribes with conservative local honor codes. These conservative local honor codes are often collectively referred to as the *kanun* (canon)⁸¹—after the most famous of these codes, the *Kanun* of Leka Dukagjini—and in general they outlined a firmly patriarchal social structure that places significant limitation on women's freedom both in and outside the home. The 'four heroines' were all women who—both through their activity on local youth and women's committees and through their travel to central Albania to help construct the Durrës-Peqin railroad—had departed significantly from the roles outline for women in northern Albanian society. They were all killed—in differing circumstances⁸²—by dissidents resistant to the Communist Party's efforts to transform northern Albanian society.⁸³ In their death, the Communist Party of

⁸¹ Although there were many local variations of this honor code (including variations in the more remote areas of southern Albania, such as Labëria), the phenomenon of the *kanun* is almost exclusively associated with the north of Albania in the popular imagination. On the *kanun* and its role in Albanian social conceptions and practices, see Nebi Bardhoshi, *Antropologjia e Kanunit* (Tirana: Pika Pa Sipërfaqe, 2016).

⁸² Although the four heroines were represented together in the monument, they did not necessarily know each other well in life. According to official sources, Marta and Prenda Tarazhi were both dragged from their homes at night and murdered. Shkurte Skuraj was stabbed at night, returning home from a Party meeting. Supposedly, she screamed at her attackers, "You can kill me, but you cannot kill all the women of Mirdita!" (This particular element of the story was, in all likelihood, created or embellished by official sources.) Details were seldom given about Mrikë Lokja's death. See Sulejman Mato, "Gra Heroina të Dërdhura në Bronx," *Drita*, October 31, 1971.

⁸³ The Albanian socialist regime's attitude towards the *kanun*, and the communities that lived by these honor codes, was complicated. The socialists certainly did not simply wish to wipe out all trace of the *kanun* (although this was sometimes close to the regime's stated goal). Rather, as Stephane Voell points out, socialist ethnography sought to codify and use the *kanun* and knowledge about it for political purposes.

Albania elevated the four women to symbolic martyrs of the struggle for women's advancement in Albania, and especially for the emancipation of women living in the conservative regions of the north. This struggle for women's emancipation played a crucial role in Albania's Cultural Revolution, and the *Four Heroines* monument reveals a great deal about navigations of political power and gender roles that characterized the 1960s and 70s.

The *Four Heroines of Mirdita* monument was one of nine major monumental projects planned for the 25th anniversary of liberation from fascism and the victory of the popular revolution in 1969. (It should be noted that many of them were not in fact finished by 1969; as was the case with the Vlora *Independence Monument*, organizational changes and fluctuating resources delayed the production of several monuments, and many of the sculptures were not completed until the early 1970s or later.) A document detailing the plans from the Albanian Communist Party's Central Committee meeting in September 1968 indicates that these projects were: the monument to the Mirdita heroines, in Rrëshen; the aforementioned monument to the five Heroes of Vig, in Shkodra; a bust of Shkurte Pal Vata,⁸⁴ in Lushnja; a memorial dedicated to the massacre of Borova; a

See Voell, "The Kanun in the Ethnographic Self-Description: Research into Albanian Traditional Law during Socialism," in *Sociology and Ethnography in East-Central and South-East Europe: Scientific Self-Description in State Socialist Countries*, ed. Ulf Brunnbauer, Claudia Kraft, and Martin Schulze Wessel (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2011), pp. 277–294.

⁸⁴ Shkurte Pal Vata was a young girl from the Dukagjin region of northern Albania, near Shkodra. She worked in her village's cooperative, and subsequently was sent to central Albania to help in the construction of the Rrogozhina-Fier railroad. She was killed there by a landslide on November of 1967, at age 15, and was subsequently immortalized as one of the martyrs of Albania's socialist modernization. Her family, reportedly, refused to cry for her, honoring her heroic death in the midst of labor. See Konstantinos Giakoumis, "From Religious to Secular and Back Again: Christian Pilgrimage Space in Albania," in *Pilgrimage, Politics and Place-Making in Eastern Europe: Crossing the Borders*, John Eade and Marko Katić (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), p. 111; Peter Prifti, "The Albanian Women's Struggle for Emancipation," *Southeastern Europe* 2 (1975): pp. 123–124; and Shannon Woodcock, "The Absence of Albanian Jokes about Socialism, Or Why Some Dictatorships Are Not Funny," in *The Politics and Aesthetics of Refusal*, ed. Caroline Hamilton, Will Noonan, Michelle Kelly, and Elcine Mines (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007), pp. 51–66.

memorial to the victory against Greek incursions of August 2, 1949, in Bilisht;⁸⁵ a memorial dedicated to the second meeting of the National Liberation Council, in Berat;⁸⁶ a monument to the Resistance of April 7, 1939, in Durrës;⁸⁷ a memorial for the Battle of Mushqeta, in Tirana;⁸⁸ and, finally, setting the stone foundations in place for the construction of the monument in the new Cemetery of the Martyrs of the Nation in Tirana.⁸⁹ While these nine projects were all commissioned by the Central Committee, numerous other smaller-scale projects were also mandated and executed by local governmental units and municipalities.⁹⁰

The *Four Heroines* monument was one of those monuments not finished by the 1969 anniversary; it was instead completed in time for the anniversary of the founding of the Albanian Communist Party in 1971. However, this meant that its continued construction took place in the wake of the publicized letter exchange between Enver Hoxha and the sculptors of the Vlora Independence Monument, during the height of debates on the importance of collective artistic production. Indeed, critic Kujtim Buza cited the genesis of the *Four Heroines* monument as a key example of artistic

⁸⁵ Both the monument to Shkurte Pal Vata (created by sculptor Muntas Dhrami in 1968, installed adjacent to the railroad in the village of Dushku, near Lushnja) and the monument in Bilisht are cited in the *Drita* article as works cast or reproduced by the new workshop in Tirana.

⁸⁶ The memorial in Berat subsequently drew criticism from painter and art critic Kujtim Buza, who observed in 1978 that the work “suffer[ed] from an incomplete understanding of the event, of its [historical] moment, of the psychology and character of the figures.” Buza argued that the figures in the scene were “realized drably, in a manner out of touch with the emotional state that the core idea of the monument demand[ed].” See Kujtim Buza, “Tipare Dalluese të Skulpturës Monumentale dhe Probleme të Zhvillimit të Saj,” *Nëntori* 1 (January, 1978), p. 57.

⁸⁷ This monument was not completed until well after the 25th anniversary of liberation, in the 1980s. Documents pertaining to its conception can be found in Tefta Cami, “Miratim Projektmonumentesh,” AQSh, f. 490, v. 1977, d. 456, fl. 64–77, 73.

⁸⁸ This sculpture was the work of Hektor Dule, in collaboration with architect Koço Miho.

⁸⁹ For a more complete discussion of the construction of the Cemetery of the Martyrs of the Nation in Tirana, see Isto, “Dynamisms of Time and Space.”

⁹⁰ See Enver Hoxha, “Vendim: Mbi Vendosjen e Disa Monumenteve, Busteve, dhe Përmendoreve me Rastin e 25-Vjetorit të Çlirimit të Atdheut,” AQSh, f. 490, v. 1968, d. 568, fl. 6.

collaboration in his 1971 article on collective artistic work.⁹¹ Buza explains that—in the beginning—work on the monument lagged because of poor internal organization: the artists had divided the figures amongst themselves and each worked essentially individually. Buza notes, however, that after meeting and conversing with young women from the Mirdita region, and after considering the advice that Hoxha had given to the three sculptors of the *Independence Monument* in his letter, the artists at work on the *Four Heroines* monument adjusted their approach and sought to collaborate more extensively on all aspects of the monument. Buza also comments upon the mentor role played by the oldest sculptor in the group, Andrea Mano,⁹² and praises the opportunities that collective creation afforded for older sculptors to pass on their expertise to younger sculptors.⁹³

It is significant that Buza's account identifies the *Four Heroines* monument as one of the key instances in which Albanian artists began to take up the ideological and artistic model put forward by the exchange of letters between Hoxha and Rama, Hadëri, and Dhrami, and no less significant that the work was discussed as one of the first ventures of the new enterprise tasked with the casting and reproduction of works of monumental sculpture. Both discursive frames established the monument as a site where old hierarchies and modes of artistic production were dissolved, and replaced by new kinds of hierarchies that established new paradigms for (inter-)relationships between bodies in a collective society. The passage quoted at the outset of this section, for

⁹¹ Buza, "Puna Krijuese Kolektive."

⁹² On Mano's role in the creation of the *Four Heroines* monument, see Kuka, *Andrea Mano*, pp. 126–129.

⁹³ Essentially, Buza credited monumental sculptural production with revitalizing a traditional model of the artist's workshop, but without the rigid hierarchy of an experienced artist working with assistants.

example, describes the creation of works of art in language that is drawn directly from large-scale industrial production. The term ‘reproduction’ in the title of the 1971 *Drita* article strengthens this association in different ways, while at the same time rejecting the Modernist notion of the work of art (and sculpture in particular) as possessing an absolutely ‘original’ state.⁹⁴ In other words, the sculpture functions not only as a memorial to the four young women whose lives were lost and as a celebration of women’s emancipation under socialism, but also as a paradigmatic example for how large-scale sculptural projects provided both practical and ideological situations in which artists, craftsmen, and politicians worked together in a mode of production similar to that which advanced Albania’s industrialization.

VII. Women’s Emancipation and the Cultural Revolution in Socialist Albania

The *Four Heroines* monument is also, however, an illustrative example of the *limitations* to the kinds of collective history and communal labor that were put forward by artists and politicians alike in socialist Albania. This has no doubt become at least partially evident in the brief discussion of gender above, and in the essentially patriarchal image of male craftsmen finishing a monumental representation of the female body that accompanies the 1971 article in *Drita*. To understand precisely how the female body was both included in and excluded from the kinds of collective history that socialist monumentality in Albania aimed to construct, we must consider the way that Hoxha’s regime approached women’s issues and the role of women in society.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ On this topic, see Rosalind Krauss, “The Originality of the Avant-Garde: A Postmodernist Repetition,” *October* 18 (August, 1981): pp. 47–53.

⁹⁵ For a series of ethnographic interviews with Albanian women about the socialist years, see Susan E. Pritchett Post, *Women in Modern Albania* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 1998), pp. 119–206.

While the actual advances or changes that took place for women under socialism in Albania are debatable, the key role that women's emancipation played as an aspect of official ideology is not. The Party took care to emphasize both the negative aspects of women's conditions in Albania prior to the National Liberation War (a time when they were treated as servants and property, especially in northern regions of the country where marriages were arranged for women when they were still extremely young),⁹⁶ and the new opportunities that bloomed in a socialist society free of notions of women as servants and chattel. Enver Hoxha began a large-scale campaign against "bourgeois" and "patriarchal"⁹⁷ social structures in rural areas in the early 1960s. Beginning in 1963 (no doubt inspired by China's example), the dictator began sending city-dwellers and other members of 'bureaucratic' institutions to rural areas to take part in physical labor, a policy that heightened in 1965, leading into Hoxha's more open embrace of the model of the Cultural Revolution in 1966–67.⁹⁸ In 1967, the plenum of the socialist government's Central Committee was dedicated to the 'woman problem,' and the Party began a series of initiatives to address the education and social conditions of women, including programs of exchange in which women from the north traveled to southern Albania, and vice versa, and the construction of resources such as bread ovens in villages, allegedly to reduce the amount of work demanded of rural women in the home.⁹⁹ Ultimately, however, the majority of the Party's policies regarding the emancipation of women served more directly to "mobilize them [women] in order to expand the Party's control

⁹⁶ Prifti, "The Albanian Women's Struggle," p. 112.

⁹⁷ Qtd. in Blumi, "Hoxha's Class War," p. 308.

⁹⁸ Luljeta Ikonomi and Shannon Woodcock, "Imoraliteti në Familje: Nxitja e Ankesave të Grave për të Përforcuar Pushtetin e Partisë në Revolucionin Kulturor Shqiptar," *Përpyjekja* 32–33 (Spring 2014): p. 161.

⁹⁹ Ikonomi and Woodcock, pp. 162–163.

over the family, society, and production.”¹⁰⁰ The Cultural Revolution and the effort to emancipate women coincided with Hoxha’s attempts to dismantle—or at least weaken—the structure and ideologies of localized family and tribal groups in the north, whose loyalty to kin presented as much of a challenge to centralized control for the socialists as it had to previous regimes.¹⁰¹ One central premise of the socialist drive to ‘modernize’ the religiously conservative regions of northern Albania was the broader project of women’s emancipation, since these localized honor codes harshly delimited women’s roles and rights in a rigid patriarchal hierarchy.

The drive to include women in a greater number of positions in contemporary society also coincided with a desire to depict the role played by Albanian women in history. Central Committee Secretary Ramiz Alia, in a 1968 report on the development of monumental propaganda, expressed “extreme dissatisfaction [with] the representation of themes related to the treatment of the figure of the Albanian woman,” chiefly because of the absence of such themes in extant public art. He insisted that it was urgent that Albanian women “be symbolized as fighters who played an important role in all periods of the history of our people.”¹⁰² In many cases, the inclusion of women in public art meant the inclusion of female partisan figures, an acknowledgement of the role played by women in the country’s liberation. Some monuments created in these years were allegorical representations of women, such as the massive *Mother Albania* monument¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Ikononi and Woodcock, p. 166.

¹⁰¹ Vickers, p. 197. In some sense, the struggle against religion and other cultural institutions such as localized honor codes (like the *Kanun* of Leka Dukagjini) reinscribed the division between Toskëria and Gegënia: Hoxha was from the south and his attempts to industrialize Albania and increase production were by far more successful in southern and central Albania. See Blumi, “The Politics of Culture and Power.”

¹⁰² Ramiz Alia, “Relacion: Mbi Gjendjen dhe Masat për Zhvillimin dhe Revolucionarizmin e Mëtejshëm të Propagandës Monumentale,” AQSh, f. 511, v. 1968, d. 27, fl. 6.

¹⁰³ On this monument, see Raino Isto, “‘We Raise Our Eyes and Feel as if She Rules the Sky’: The *Mother Albania* Monument and the Visualization of National History,” in *Lapidari*, pp. 73–80.

in the Tirana martyrs' cemetery, while others depicted the perennial female peasant as a hero of socialist modernization. Finally, a few monuments—the *Four Heroines of Mirdita* among them—depicted women who had fallen for the socialist cause *after* the country's liberation, whether in the course of labor¹⁰⁴ or (as with the four heroines) to conservative, anti-communist elements within society.

We should dwell on the implications of the fact that the *Four Heroines* became heroines of socialist society precisely in death. The deaths of the heroines at the hands of anti-communist citizens emphasized ongoing conflicts in Albanian society at the time: it suggested both that social changes emerged primarily from sacrifice, and that the complete transformation of society was far from complete, that it would require further conflict and further sacrifices. This narrative reflects Hoxha's turn—at the outset of the Cultural Revolution (even if the murders took place well before the late 60s)—to a more pessimistic view of how far socialist Albania had come in establishing a stable society. As Peter Prifti notes, the late 1960s saw Hoxha turn to a position that acknowledged the ongoing existence of struggle between communist and anti-communist elements in Albanian society (a stance no doubt in part based upon Mao's theory of contradictions in society and their necessity for continued political transformation).¹⁰⁵ At the same time, the importance of collective monumental production to the narrative of the *Four Heroines'* genesis indicates a distinct biopolitical narrative: it stages the (re)production of monumental female bodies (by male sculptors and artisans) as the simultaneous denial of death and acknowledgement of the necessity of sacrifice for the construction of a socialist community. This representational process also raises the question of the delegation of

¹⁰⁴ The monument to Shkurte Pal Vata near Lushnja is the paradigmatic example.

¹⁰⁵ See Prifti, *Socialist Albania since 1944*, pp. 143–149, and Blumi, “Hoxha's Class War.”

history (that is, of how subjectivities take on significance as historical agents), and of how certain bodies are established as bearers of history.¹⁰⁶ This question, of the connection between viewers' bodies and represented, sacrificed bodies, is the subject of the following section.

VIII. The Sacrificed Body and History

Art critic Gëzim Qëndro has examined the issue of the relationship between the viewer's body and the sacrificed body represented in socialist commemorative sculpture. Qëndro's discussion of Odhise Paskali's sculptural ensemble *Shokët (Comrades)*—created in 1964 and located in the martyrs' cemetery in the southern Albanian town of Përmet—serves as a starting point for my own consideration of the issue of bodily substitution and delegation in the context of socialist sculpture [Figure 2.12]. Paskali's sculpture, as Qëndro emphasizes, owes much of its emotional gravity to its compositional similarities to the Christian paradigm of the *Pietà*, in which the Virgin holds the body of the dead Christ in her arms.¹⁰⁷ In fact, the composition seems to clearly reference the genre of Christian images of the Lamentation more broadly, with the body of the dying partisan cradled by his two comrades, one male and one female. For Qëndro, the body of the dead Partisan in *Comrades* exemplifies the utopian potential inherent in the body, elaborated by Foucault in his discussion of heterotopias and utopian embodiment.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ The representation of female bodies as bearers of particular kinds of histories—and the necessity for their sacrifice for the historical narrative of the broader socialist community—took place in a context where almost no women produced monumental art. There was only one well-known female Albanian sculptor, Kristina Koljaka, who created a public monument—the statue of Lenin (created in 1954) that stood along Tirana's central boulevard. However, Koljaka was rarely discussed alongside the male sculptors who created the majority of monuments in socialist Albania beginning in the 1960s. On Koljaka's biography, see Suzana Varvarica Kuka, *Kristina Koljaka: Skulptorja e Parë Shqiptare e Shekullit XX* (Tirana: Aferdite, 2002).

¹⁰⁷ Gëzim Qëndro, "The Thanatology of Hope," in *Lapidari*, pp. 62–63.

¹⁰⁸ See Michel Foucault, "Different Spaces," *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: The New Press, 1998), pp. 175–185,

Qëndro argues that the body of the fallen Partisan is split: it is both an organic (and thus material and mortal) body and a political body, a body that is created out of his sacrifice and that “radiate[s]” beyond itself to create the hope for a communist future.¹⁰⁹

Qëndro’s analysis draws attention to the centrality of sacrifice to the ways in which the body mediates between any particular space (in his example, the space of the martyrs’ cemetery) and “elsewhere.” (As Foucault argues, the body is always in some sense ‘elsewhere’ than the world, since it provides the coordinates by which the world is structured.)¹¹⁰ However, in this same analysis, the partisan’s ‘political body’ is almost entirely abstract: precisely insofar as it “brings a metaphysical concept”¹¹¹ (from Christian mythology) into atheistic Socialist Realism, the partisan’s political body becomes dematerialized. Thus, questions of gender—to name just one clearly relevant aspect of both the *Comrades* sculpture and the *Four Heroines* monument—disappear from Qëndro’s reading of Albanian socialist sculpture. I would like to propose that the distinction between organic and political body (and the way in which the sacrifice of one enables the utopian possibilities of the other) is not quite as simple as Qëndro makes it seem. At the very least, we must admit that there are certain utopian potentials constructed for the sacrifices of bodies that have been gendered and sexed in particular ways. Alongside an analysis like Qëndro’s, we might consider one like that offered by Tatjana Aleksić, in her consideration of the paradigm of the sacrificed body as an element

and Michel Foucault, “Utopian Body,” trans. Lucia Allais, in *Sensorium: Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art*, Caroline A. Jones (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), pp. 229–234.

¹⁰⁹ Qëndro, “Thanatology,” p. 65.

¹¹⁰ Foucault, “Utopian Body,” p. 233.

¹¹¹ Qëndro, “Thanatology,” p. 65.

of symbolic community-building in literature, art, and culture more broadly in the Balkans.¹¹²

Aleksić's discussion considers the significance of sacrificed bodies both "material and metaphorical,"¹¹³ but her understanding of the slippage between the two does not proceed as directly to a spiritualized metaphysics as Qëndro's does.¹¹⁴ This is not to say that Aleksić views communities in terms of concrete material realities: for her, any community formed on the basis of sacrifice is as utopian and imaginary as the communist future envisioned in relation to the dead partisan that Qëndro discusses. She writes, "Sacrifice is not performed for an extant entity or for an achieved idea, but only for a concept that is still a distant promise or that has as of yet no referent in objective reality. [...] A body, a corpus, dies for an incorporate construct."¹¹⁵ Qëndro's case study—Paskali's *Comrades*—ultimately abstracts both the utopian referent (communism) and the figure or body of the partisan, however, while Aleksić is concerned with defining the *specificity* of the sacrificed body in relation to the imagined community and to the real situation in which the sacrifice is required. For her, the sacrificed body occupies a particular liminal position vis-à-vis the community: it is necessary for the founding of the community, and as such is both excluded from and included in that community.¹¹⁶ The

¹¹² Tatjana Aleksić, *The Sacrificed Body: Balkan Community Building and the Fear of Freedom* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013).

¹¹³ Aleksić, p. 189.

¹¹⁴ Qëndro's analysis is, I think, hampered by the fact that the Ur-utopia of his discussion of *Comrades* is communism as a hoped-for future state, while the organic body of the Partisan is a contrasting "irremediable here" (Foucault, "Utopian Body," p. 233, qtd. in Qëndro, p. 65). While the horizon of the communist future was of course crucial for socialist culture, it must be kept in mind that there were other utopias and heterotopias at play: the world of the global socialist present, the utopia of industrial advancement and modernization, the innumerable spaces of a restructured socialist society, and so forth. These spaces were presented as real, actualized material spaces and contexts, and their existence depended just as much on the sacrifice of bodies like the partisan in *Comrades* as the hope of a communist future did.

¹¹⁵ Aleksić, p. 6.

¹¹⁶ Aleksić, pp. 7–8.

four heroines occupy a similarly liminal position, in a number of specific ways: first, they are established as a group of women who stood outside their own communities (the patriarchal rural communities of the north) and in this way served to establish an enlightened position for women as subjects in socialist society; second, their deaths in the early years after liberation link their sacrifice to the establishment of socialism (in the way that Partisans' deaths were framed as opening up the socialist present) and at the same time to the ongoing struggle to liberate Albanian women carried out as part of the Cultural Revolution; and third, their monumental bodies are produced out of a system of primarily male collective labor that emphasizes not only the coalescence of artistic practice in the work of art, but also the industrial reproduction of that work.

One could perhaps succinctly characterize the treatment of the bodies represented in the *Four Heroines* monument by discussing them in terms of *transference* as opposed to *coalescence*. A contrasting example is useful: in Dhimitër Anagnosti's¹¹⁷ poetic documentary film *Përjetësi (Eternity)*¹¹⁸ (created in 1974, but tellingly never broadcast in socialist Albania), the director brings to life— as an organic body—the massive *Mother Albania* monument in the Cemetery of the Martyrs of the Nation in Tirana by cutting together images of the graves of fallen soldiers and living visitors to the cemetery space to the rhythm of the sound of a beating heart [see **Figures 2.13–2.15**]. Audibly linked to

¹¹⁷ On Anagnosti's films and their significance in Albanian cinema, see mention of films such as *Komisari i Dritës* (1967) and *Përralla nga e Kaluara* (1987) in Julian Bejko, "Albanian Cinema in Transition: A Comparative Analysis of Motion Pictures from the End of the Communist Era," *KinoKultura*, Special Issue 16 (March, 2016), <http://www.kinokultura.com/specials/16/bejko.shtml>, and Konstantinos Giakoumis, Christopher Lockwood, and Trudy Anderson, "The Making of the Socialist Martyr: Pjetër Llesh Doda and *White Roads*," *KinoKultura*, Special Issue 16 (March, 2016), http://www.kinokultura.com/specials/16/giakoumis_lockwood_anderson.shtml (accessed June 1, 2017). A short discussion of Anagnosti's place in the history of Albanian film can be found in *Arti dhe Dizajni i Filmit Shqiptar* (Tirana: Galeria Kombëtare e Arteve, 2016), pp. 4–5.

¹¹⁸ A low resolution version of the film can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8EYq8FE6M1w&t=9s> (accessed May 31, 2017).

both the dead and the living, the figure of *Mother Albania* provides the fully imagined and materialized body in which the fragmentary collage of images and sounds that make up the bulk of the film. In other words, it serves as the coalescence of sacrifice and the continued building of the socialist present.

By contrast, the *Four Heroines* monument performs a different—and more complicated and ambivalent—set of movements related to the establishment of historical, socialist subjectivity. On the one hand, its production is mediated far more explicitly by contemporary history: it was constructed in a time when monuments were functioning to model the establishment of historical meaning not only in and out of the past, but also in the present, and as such it reifies both past and present simultaneously. The ‘present’ of the monument is peculiar, however: the four heroines were all northern women, and as such belonged to a culture effectively occupying ‘another’ time in the ethnographic sense.¹¹⁹ The north of Albania—a loosely defined (and at least partially imaginary) region that the four heroines had first left (to work constructing railroads in central Albania) and to which they subsequently returned—served as a chronological foil for socialist modernization in the rest of the country,¹²⁰ and as such the heroines never fully belong to ‘the present.’ Although their lives seem to embody the dream of women’s emancipation under socialism, their deaths indicate the impossibility of realizing that dream in ‘another’ time and space (the conservative north) and at the same time insist on the

¹¹⁹ The construction of an ‘other’ time for the subject of ethnographic investigation—which the northern regions certainly constituted during socialism and in many ways continue to constitute—was first elaborated by Johannes Fabian in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983). The author’s further considerations of the topic can be found in Fabian, “The Other Revisited: Critical Afterthoughts,” *Anthropological Theory* 6:2 (2006): pp. 139–152.

¹²⁰ On the construction of the north as a ‘backwards’ region, see Blumi, “Hoxha’s Class War,” p. 307, and Carrie Ann Morgan, “Post-socialist Language Ideologies in Action: Linking Interview Context and Language Ideology through Stance,” *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 21:1 (2017): pp. 40–41.

possibility of its realization in ‘this’ time (the present of a unified Albania where cultural distinctions between north and south have been eliminated).¹²¹

As Aleksić points out, the sacrifice is always ‘other’ within the community,¹²² and in fact the bodies of the four heroines are not only ‘othered’ in a temporal construction that juxtaposes the vanguard position of socialist development with entrenched conservative social norms. The heroines’ bodies also undergo a parallel process in which they emerge as the (re)productive, collective effort of male bodies laboring together, a labor from which female bodies are notably absent. The monumentalization of the bodies of the four heroines is, in effect, a way of ensuring their attachment to history in a particular way: their sacrifice becomes one that can only be properly registered and reified from the perspective of the development of socialist society (most clearly and materially manifested in the emphasis on collective artistic labor in the production of the monument). As such, they can only *be* the history of the present *because of* the radical dynamism of the socialist present—at least this is the implicit claim of the discourse surrounding the monument’s creation. To put it differently: they enact a history that they never fully possess, both because they did not live to see the fruits of their respective efforts to change the conditions of Albanian women living in rural communities in the north, and because their role as sacrificial bodies for that cause places them apart in certain ways from the community formed out of that sacrifice.

This relation returns us to the notion of the transference of historical agency discussed above, in connection with the Vlora monument, but here the relationship is inflected even further by the materiality of the body. The *Four Heroines* monument

¹²¹ This dream of a united Albania is also present in the Vlora *Independence Monument*, discussed above.

¹²² Aleksić, pp. 8–9.

exemplifies a series of transferences and reflections of both labor and history. As one of the works created in the years immediately following Hoxha's exchange of letters with the Monumental Trio, the *Four Heroines* monument represents a continuation of the delegation of historical representation and reification that occurred between the dictator and the three sculptors. Further, however, the explicit commentary on the monument as the product not only of artists, but also of craftsmen working to enlarge, cast, and prepare monuments for installation around the country established the monument as an example of industrial reproduction: effectively, the artists' historical agency was partially delegated to the workers in the enterprise for the casting and assembly of monumental sculpture, which both functioned as a new aspect of 'collective' labor and as a way to reduce emphasis on the authority of 'original' aesthetic or historical agency. The *Four Heroines* monument evidences the challenges faced by socialist Albania when it attempted to commemorate events and persons that were much—so to speak—'closer' in time to the socialist present: it became necessary to shift a great deal of the historical significance of the heroines' sacrifice onto those laboring in the present to commemorate them, while at the same time reifying them as figures belonging to the past.

IX. Conclusion

Monumental sculpture in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania emerged as a significant aspect of socialist culture during a period when the country was undergoing widespread political and social transformations. These transformations—in the structure of everyday life, in attitudes towards religion and the family, in agricultural and industrial production—coincided with rapid changes in the country's international relations as well. As Albania navigated alliances with other socialist nations—some near, and some far—

artists and politicians alike struggled to define the nation's role within global socialism. Hoxha's particularly staunch dedication to Stalinism made Albania—in effect—a center of socialist culture: it represented (not only to itself, but also for a time to certain communist nations in East Asia) the last bastion of 'true' socialism in the European continent. Within the country, this period—roughly, the 1960s and 1970s—also saw attempts to codify a unified culture, to overcome the significant linguistic and cultural differences that had long distinguished southern Albania (or Toskëria) from the northern regions (Gegëria). Monumental sculpture served as an artistic medium through which the state, artists, architects, and craftsmen oriented themselves towards communal life through collective endeavors, but the creation of monumental sculpture was also a process whereby the limits of a collective history were established. In the processes of monumental construction, certain bodies became—as it were—inextricably tied to history as something 'other' than the present, and this was carried out paradoxically precisely in order to ensure that the present itself was established as the ground of historical understanding and development. In short, monuments raised a crucial set of questions about both how history was to be enacted in the present (and about the act of representing history as a historically significant act), and about who could fully embody historical agency. In Albania, where Socialist Realism remained the primary mode of artistic representation, these questions arose largely in the context of the body, and the relations between bodies. In subsequent chapters, we will see new facets of this navigation of history emerge in different national contexts—specifically, in the conflicting local and (trans)national contexts of socialist Yugoslavia, where ethno-national identities needed to be symbolically merged with the dreams of both global socialist revolution and a broader

South Slavic historical unity. I will also discuss how contemporary artists return to both the ideological premises and uncertainties of socialist monuments in order to suggest and explore new ways of founding and expanding communities in the postsocialist years.

Chapter 3:

The Vault of the Sun: Revolutionary Temporality and the Ilinden Memorial Complex

I. Introduction

On August 3, 1974, two photographs appeared on front page of *Nova Makedonija*, the principal daily of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, in Yugoslavia [Figures 3.1–3.2].¹ The first photograph showed the massive dome of the *Monument to the National Liberation War and to Ilinden* in the small mountain town of Kruševo, Macedonia, during the celebration of its inauguration on the previous day, August 2. Crowds of visitors gather around the base of the monument, and the ramp leading to the entrance of the dome is full. Through the protruding windows that establish the monument’s distinctively modernist silhouette, more visitors can be seen examining the relief sculptures installed in the four galleries distributed around the circumference of the dome. The text captioning the photograph proclaimed, “The monument in Kruševo symbolizes the National Awakening, the Ilinden Uprising, the National Liberation Struggle, and Freedom.” The second photograph showed another gathered crowd (some seated, others standing and carrying banners), this one assembled near the monastery of Prohor Pčinjski (located in the south of the Socialist Republic of Serbia, close to the Macedonian border). The caption to this photograph stated, “10,000 people from Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo attended the national assembly in Prohor Pčinjski.”

Taken together, these two photographs succinctly illustrate how socialist monuments in the former Yugoslavia navigated multiethnic histories, as well as how they transformed the past, present, and future through the lens of the Partisan antifascist

¹ “Свечености во Крушево и Прохор Пчински: АСНОМ ги трасира патиштата ха иднината,” *Нова Македонија*, August 3, 1974. Translations from Macedonian to English by the author.

struggle. *Nova Makedonija*'s headline on August 3, 1974, proclaimed "ASNOM Traces the Pathways of the Future." ASNOM was the Antifascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia,² a group established by the Partisan forces in the occupied territories that would later become the modern Macedonian state. The assembly met in Prohor Pčinjski in 1944, on August 2, and there it proclaimed³ the existence of a Macedonian state, with Macedonian as its official language. August 2 marked the anniversary of the Ilinden Uprising, an uprising against the Ottoman Empire in the region that took place in 1903, and which resulted in the creation of a short-lived multiethnic independent republic based in Kruševo.⁴ This 'Kruševo Republic' was subsequently harshly suppressed by Ottoman forces after existing for only ten days. August 2—historically celebrated in the region as 'Ilinden,' or St. Elijah's Day—thus held a special significance as the day on which the process of Macedonian independence from the Ottoman Empire was perceived to have begun, and the ASNOM assembly in 1944 was subsequently hailed by the socialist government as a 'second Ilinden.'⁵ The multiethnic

² In Macedonian: АСНОМ, Антифашистичкото собрание на народното ослободување на Македонија.

³ The declaration document from the assembly can be viewed here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-fascist_Assembly_for_the_National_Liberation_of_Macedonia#/media/File:DEKLARACIJA_na_asnom_za_prava_na_graganinot.jpg (accessed September 8, 2018).

⁴ The primary participants in the uprising were Slavs, Greeks, and Vlachs (also known as Vlahs, a Romance-speaking population who have lived in Southeastern Europe for centuries). Among those Slavs who took part, subsequent interpretations vary as to whether and how many identified as 'Bulgarian' or 'Macedonian,' as opposed to being unified instead by shared religious identities.

⁵ The rhetoric of Ilinden remains a key component of Macedonian identity, although it is ironically now more closely tied to a mono-ethnic nationalist vision of the country. The Ilinden Uprising recently returned to the center of political discussions in Macedonia. On May 19, 2018, in a meeting with Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras, the prime minister of the Republic of Macedonia Zoran Zaev proposed to rename the country "the Ilinden Republic of Macedonia" ("Република Илинденска Македонија"). Zaev argued, "The Republic of Ilinden Macedonia is a name that strengthens the foundation of our Republic, while Ilinden means the historical continuity of our aspirations, our statehood and our pride. Ilinden is our glorious past, Ilinden is our bright future." Zaev further insisted that "The Ilinden Uprising was about social rights and freedoms, and we have no territorial pretensions towards any neighboring country, including Greece." (Zaev quotations from Katerina Blaževska, "Заев: Илинденска Македонија ќе ни ги отвори вратите на ЕУ и НАТО!," *Duetsche Welle*, May 19, 2018, <http://www.dw.com/mk/заев-илинденска-македонија-ќе-ни-ги-отвори-вратите-на-еу-и-нато/a-43855760> (accessed May 31, 2018), and "Zaev

character of the Ilinden Uprising made it an aptly paradigmatic historical event for the narrative of socialist Yugoslavia's development.⁶ The pivotal role of the ASNOM assembly on its anniversary helped link the two histories together, and at the same time to establish the Ilinden Uprising as a blueprint for the unity of different linguistic and cultural groups that characterized Yugoslavia.

The attempt to discursively construct this unity is visible in the photographs from the front page of *Nova Makedonija* in at least two ways. It first appears in the aesthetics of the *Monument to the National Liberation War and to Ilinden*, a substantial memorial complex whose central dome is referred to as the 'Makedonium.' The Makedonium—designed by the husband-and-wife sculptor-and-architect team of Jordan and Iskra Grabul, with stained glass windows by painter Borko Lazeski—represents one of the most striking examples of Yugoslavian socialist modernism. The white sphere of the

Confirms 'Republic of Ilinden Macedonia' is Proposal to Resolve Macedonia Name Dispute," *The Sofia Globe*, May 20, 2018, <https://sofiaglobe.com/2018/05/20/zaev-confirms-republic-of-ilinden-macedonia-is-proposal-to-resolve-macedonia-name-dispute/> (accessed May 31, 2018), respectively.) Despite Zaev's enthusiasm, Greek officials did not consider the name the name acceptable, and the two countries ultimately settled upon a different variant, 'The Republic of North Macedonia'.

This proposed name change came after decades of debate with Greece over the very name 'Macedonia,' which suggests a historical region currently claimed by both nations. Although the conflict over the name dates back to conflicts between Yugoslavia and Greece in the Second World War, the issue of the name itself primarily became an issue after the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the emergence of nation-states from its constituent republics. The official name of the country is the Republic of Macedonia (pending parliamentary approval of the subsequent option, 'Republic of North Macedonia'), but it is more commonly known simply as 'Macedonia.' This colloquial usage has led to the controversy with Greece, which claims significant portions of the ancient kingdom of Macedon within its current boundaries. Historiography on Macedonia distinguishes between three separate regions: 1) Vardar Macedonia, or the region of the Macedonian state that was included administratively in Kingdom of Serbia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which is mostly equivalent to the boundaries of the current Macedonian state; 2) Pirin Macedonia, the portion of southwestern Bulgaria annexed by Bulgaria during the Balkan Wars but claimed as part of greater Macedonia; and Aegean Macedonia, the portion of northern Greece also claimed as historically 'Macedonian' by the Macedonian state. On these divisions, see Hugh Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. 101–115.

In this dissertation, I use the term 'Macedonia' to refer to the Yugoslav republic of that name, later the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), now the Republic of Northern Macedonia. This use is simply for the sake of brevity; it is not intended to reflect a judgment about the appropriateness of the use of the general term 'Macedonia' to refer to the modern nation-state that claims the name.

⁶ This was especially true given the ongoing struggle to integrate Macedonia into this historical narrative, despite its politically peripheral character vis-à-vis Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia, which had formed the core of Yugoslavia in the interwar period.

monument perches atop Gumenje Hill in Kruševo, the highest-elevation town in Macedonia, and its organic shape and radiating windows present a sharp contrast to the primarily traditional, 19th-century architecture that characterizes most of the town. The Makedonium's aesthetics formed part of socialist Yugoslavia's attempt to visually distinguish itself from the culture of the Soviet Union, a project that unfolded not only in urban construction projects but also in the building of relatively remote, large-scale monuments commemorating the Partisan antifascist struggle (and, in some cases, fusing this narrative with older histories, such as Ilinden).

Perhaps less striking than the monument's aesthetics, but just as significant in its own way, is a curious aspect of the second photograph. Among the several banners and signs held by those gathered in Prohor Pčinjski, only one is fully legible in the faded newspaper image, the banner closest to the viewer. It reads "30 Vjet Zhvillim i Lirë Socijalist" — "30 Years of Free Socialist Development" — in *Albanian*. The choice to highlight the presence of Albanians at the assembly cannot have been accidental; Albanians as a cultural and linguistic group presented a challenge to Yugoslavia's unifying narrative, since they were not Slavs, and spoke a language decidedly different from the South Slavic variants. Furthermore, they were often Muslim, challenging the predominantly Christian heritage claimed by most of the South Slavic peoples, with the exception of Muslim Slavs in Bosnia. The eventual dissolution of Yugoslavia was accompanied by inter-ethnic tensions between Albanians and Slavic-identifying groups that persist today in Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo alike. Thus, the juxtaposition of Albanian participation in the celebration of the antifascist struggle with the universalizing abstraction of the Makedonium shows the effort to bring together various paradigms of

inclusive, multiethnic history. The present—and its production of radically modernized commemorative structures—was framed as a point of synthesis, in which layers of both history and geography could be brought together despite their tensions, under the aegis of global socialist progress.

The Ilinden memorial⁷ comprised of a complex sequence of spaces culminating in the visually imposing Makedonium, and it represented not only a synthesis of historical narratives, but also a synthesis of the arts with technology. On the day of the monument's inauguration, *Nova Makedonija* described the structure as “the greatest monumental marker of our history,” a work that “represents the past of the Macedonian people” through “the medium of the most contemporary artistic language, combining mosaics, stained glass, and an eternal flame.” The article emphasized that the construction of the memorial had “required a special synchronization of time and technology.”⁸ As already noted, the site was planned and designed by a group of artists, including Jordan and Iskra Grabul, Borko Lazeski, and Petar Mazev (who designed the mosaics in the amphitheater in front of the Makedonium). This group worked in dialogue with an advisory team made

⁷ It should also be noted that while many contemporary English-language sources refer to the complex as the “Ilinden memorial,” in the socialist period it was referred to in the Macedonian press as being dedicated to both the National Liberation Struggle (in Macedonian, Народно-ослободителната борба, or НОБ) and to the Ilinden Uprising (Илинденско востание). At the time of its commission and for around a decade after its creation, the National Liberation Struggle was always listed first in the description of the monument. It was only later in the 1980s that the Ilinden Uprising began to be listed first in references to the monument in the press. This no doubt corresponds to the gradual decline in the credibility of the antifascist struggle as a shared historical event that united Yugoslavia, towards a more nationalistic model of historical understanding. I avoid consistently using the full name of the monument here simply in the interests of brevity.

In this chapter I use the terms “memorial” and “monument” to refer to the sculptural and architectural complex at Kruševo. While there are good reasons for distinguishing between these two concepts, the English-language literature on the site generally uses the term memorial. On the other hand, in Macedonian (and Bosnian-Serbian-Croatian), the term used to describe the site (or at least its most iconic element, the Makedonium) is “споменик,” usually translated as “monument.” Thus, I have chosen to interweave my use of the terms throughout my discussion.

⁸ Andon Dimitroski, “Споменикот ‘Илинден’—Грандиозно Дело,” *Нова Македонија* August 2, 1974. Translations from Macedonian to English by the author.

up of historians, officials, and artists⁹ selected to oversee the execution of the commission. Over the years between the initial selection of the Grabul's design in 1969¹⁰ and the completion of the project in 1974, the design underwent a number of changes, through an ongoing dialogue between the advisory committee and the artists.¹¹

The Ilinden memorial [Figures 3.3–3.21]—and more specifically the Makedonium, the building that serves as the culmination of a sequence of commemorative spaces that together form the memorial—has played an iconic role in the recent ‘rediscovery’ of socialist modernist architecture. It appears, for example, as *Spomenik #5 (Kruševo)* in Jan Kempenaers’ book of photographs¹² documenting Yugoslavian monumental sculpture, the publication that sparked a significant ensuing debate about the exoticizing tendencies of such photographs (which tend to present the monuments as abandoned ruins set in fantastical foggy landscapes) [Figure 3.22].¹³

⁹ One of the members of the team was Jordan Grabul’s professor, the well-known Macedonian sculptor Dimo Todorovski. See the State Archives of the Republic of Macedonia (Државен архив на Република Македонија, hereafter DARM), fond 1066, box 2, folder 25, 14/258–268, which contains the proceedings from the first meeting of the advisory board for the construction of the Ilinden monument (“Записник од Првата седница на Одборот за изградба на Споменикот на НОБ и Илинденското востание во Крушево”). Fond 1066 contains seven boxes, all with Jordan Grabul’s personal papers, photos, and plans. Boxes 2 through 6 contain various materials pertaining to the creation of the Ilinden Memorial. Information on Grabul’s other memorial commissions can be found in the first two boxes. (There are specific folders for Butel, Kičevo, and Gevgelija.) Later boxes contain files of photographs related to the various commissions, as well as exhibition flyers.

¹⁰ See the announcement from a 1969 issue of *Nova Makedonija*, found in DARM, fond 1066, box 2, folder 25, 2/157. This short announcement not only lists the three designs selected for further discussion, but also details the formation of the advisory committee. One design was simply for an eternal flame (*Vatra*, by Fegja Košir), which was ultimately integrated into one of the other designs selected, the *Makedonium* design put forward by Jordan Grabul, Iskra Grabul, and their assistant Slavko Josifovski.

¹¹ This ongoing dialogue—which was often quite tense, with occasional severe disagreements between Jordan Grabul and other members of the committee—is chronicled in a series of proceedings found in DARM, fond 1066, boxes 2 and 3. Unfortunately, space does not permit a detailed examination of the back-and-forth discussions that unfolded in these meetings.

¹² Jan Kempenaers, *Spomenik #1–26: The Monuments of Former Yugoslavia* (Amsterdam: Roma, 2010). A model of the Makedonium and a few sketches associated with its design are also currently exhibited as part of the exhibition *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980*, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, July 15, 2018–January 13, 2019.

¹³ See Owen Hatherley, “Concrete Clickbait.” Hatherley argues against the way in which the images of the monuments—and their strangeness, which also suggests associations with science fiction—

Despite its visual role in the recent notoriety of Yugoslavian socialist monuments,¹⁴ the work is absent from much of the emerging literature on socialist commemorative architecture and sculpture.¹⁵ This chapter centers on the Ilinden memorial, taking it as the catalyst for a reflection on Yugoslavian socialist monumental sculpture more broadly.

The previous chapter considered the development of monumentality in socialist Albania, and especially the ways that the increased production of monumental sculptures beginning in the late 1960s corresponded to new ways of envisioning the collective

has allowed them to enter circulation as vague references to a perceived ‘totalitarian’ past in Yugoslavia, severed from the actual histories they both reflect and commemorate.

¹⁴ At least part of this notoriety has grown—as Hatherley also notes—because of the ‘science fictional’ aesthetic that appears to characterize many of the modernist monuments created in the former Yugoslavia in particular. Some representative articles evidencing the surge in associating these monuments with the visual culture of science fiction include: Cyriaque Lamar, “Old Yugoslavian Monuments Look like TIE Fighters and Scifi Fortresses,” *io9*, April 27, 2011, <http://io9.gizmodo.com/5796297/old-yugoslavian-monuments-look-like-tie-fighters-and-scifi-fortresses>; “25 Abandoned Yugoslavia Monuments that Look like They’re from the Future,” *Crack Two*, April 15, 2011, <http://www.cracktwo.com/2011/04/25-abandoned-soviet-monuments-that-look.html>; and (a critical assessment of the phenomenon) Jasmin Mujanović, “Yugoslavia as Science Fiction,” *Jasmin Mujanović Blog*, December 29, 2013, <http://www.jasminmujanovic.com/blog/yugoslavia-as-science-fiction> (accessed May 18, 2016). The Yugoslavian monuments have inspired at least one science fiction film, directed by Kaleb Wentzel-Fisher and entitled *Sankofa* (2015). The film presents a future in which the few remaining members of the human race have left the Earth for Titan, but have lost their memories. They send a lone woman back to Earth to retrieve these memories, and in the course of her mission, she discovers portions of an old documentary about Yugoslav war memorials, a discovery that causes her to question the relationship between memory, history, and documentation. See <http://www.supernormals.org/sankofa/> (accessed June 4, 2018).

The Ilinden monument does indeed seem to resemble a ‘spaceship,’ and this resemblance is not solely an imposition from uninformed foreign audiences—the association is explicitly made in a relatively recent promotional photobook produced about the town of Kruševo and its history: Mikhailo Popovski, *Крушево 100 године по Илинденското востание* (Skopje, 2003).

It should be briefly noted that the association of monumentality with science fictional aesthetics also occurred in America during roughly the same period as the creation of many Yugoslavian monuments. Perhaps most famously, see Robert Smithson’s essay “Entropy and the New Monuments,” written in 1966, in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 10–23.

¹⁵ This absence may be due in part to two factors. First, the monument’s primary creators, the husband-and-wife team Jordan and Iskra Grabul, are not among the pantheon of Yugoslav sculptors that have received the greatest attention in recent publication (a group that includes Bogdan Bodanović, Vojin Bakić, Dušan Džamonja, and Miodrag Živković). For example, the first three of these sculptors form the core of Bojana Videkanić’s discussion of the role of the monument in the development of a ‘socialist modernist’ style. See Videkanić, *Non-Aligned Modernism*, pp. 123–166. Second, the Ilinden monument’s location in Macedonia—always peripheral in political and cultural debates focused on Yugoslavia—and the more overtly nationalist reading that it held from its inception, has no doubt contributed to its relegation to a separate status from the works that are being canonized as the most important examples of Yugoslav socialist commemorative sculpture.

character of history. These new collective models of historical experience were tied to the creation of particular monuments that—variously—reconfigured the spatial and temporal boundaries of the nation, and established new forms of embodiment for male and female bodies. The present chapter examines the development of monumental culture in late socialist Yugoslavia, taking the Ilinden Memorial in Kruševo as its primary focus. Here, I consider not only the confluence of histories at work in the creation of the monument, but also the representational modes that the Ilinden memorial incorporated in order to envision a comprehensive experience of time. The memorial complex as a whole was meant to invoke an experience of deep time, one that linked the socialist present to both cosmic and organic temporalities through biomorphic as well as geometric abstraction. The embodied character of this evocation of time is important because it is linked in turn to the memorial as a site that recognized sacrifice. This sacrifice was twofold, since the monument commemorated those who took part in the initial 1903 uprising against the Ottoman Empire *and* the Partisans who fought against fascist occupiers in the 1940s.

In many ways, the Ilinden memorial serves as a logical counterpoint to the Vlorë *Independence Monument*, discussed in the previous chapter: both sought to bridge different histories (and cultural groups) in order to assert the historical unity of prior struggles for liberation with the socialist present. Both wrestled—in very different ways—with the issue of abstraction in relation to historical representation. Both were collaborative projects, although the inflections of collaboration were different in each case. Finally, both were created in a period during which the primary focus of national commemoration was on the Partisan struggle and its legacy in socialist society. In the case of the Ilinden memorial, however, the interaction of nationalist sentiments with a

universalist socialist vision was complicated by the peripheral position of Macedonian national narratives in the mythology of socialist Yugoslavia. Like the Vlora *Independence Monument*—which struggled to effectively encompass the specificities of different regions and different historical time periods under the aegis of the socialist present—the Ilinden memorial combined incredible geographic specificity with formal characteristics that reflected a shared ‘supranational’¹⁶ vision of Yugoslav unity. The socialist Macedonian (Yugoslavian) interpretation of the Ilinden Uprising in the 1970s emphasized both economic and ethnic differentiations. The revolt was characterized in terms of economic dissatisfaction with the conditions in early 20th-century Macedonia, but it was also discussed as representing a unity of “all classes and all social forces.”¹⁷ Thus the event commemorated by the Kruševo memorial was framed as a prefiguration of the imagined unity of socialist society allegedly achieved by the military victory and subsequent political ascendancy of the Partisans.

The most thorough existing scholarly analysis of the Ilinden memorial complex is that given by anthropologist Keith Brown in his pathbreaking study of Macedonian national identity in relation to Kruševo’s history.¹⁸ Brown’s exploration of the Ilinden monument presents a nuanced consideration of the various elements of the memorial complex and the significance of their genesis, and my own analysis here is indebted to Brown’s work. However, while Brown presents a compelling reading of the memorial in

¹⁶ See my discussion of Andrew B. Wachtel’s use of the term ‘supranational’ to describe Yugoslavian culture, in Chapter 1 above.

¹⁷ Desanka Miljovska, “The Socio-Economic Conditions of the Ilinden Uprising,” in *The Epic of Ilinden*, ed. Boris Višinski (Skopje: Macedonian Review, 1973), p. 28.

¹⁸ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question*, pp. 153–180.

terms of the evolving and conflicting narratives of Macedonian national identity,¹⁹ he does not link the Kruševo monument to developments in Yugoslav memorial and public art during later socialism, nor does he delve deeply into the significance that the Ilinden memorial bears in relation to broader Southeastern European context of commemorating antifascist struggles and anti-Ottoman struggles. Finally, he does not seek to link the Ilinden memorial to Jordan Grabul's wider body of work, a context that helps us better understand certain aesthetic features of the site. Other analyses of the monument also exist (although they lack the thoroughness of Brown's): architect Srdjan Jovanović Weiss, for example, frames the Kruševo memorial in terms of the conflict between abstract, socialist ideals and nationalist ones.²⁰

This chapter argues that the Kruševo memorial complex serves as a particularly salient example of the prototypes of temporality produced and projected by socialist monuments. While the previous chapter discussed the way that monuments created

¹⁹ Brown's examination of the monument is invaluable because it demonstrates the complexity and contradictions involved in attempting to produce a national monument in the context of Yugoslavia's universalizing socialist ambitions; Brown resists attributing a single reading to the monument, and his attendance to the multivalency of the meanings the monument possesses is important. Furthermore, he effectively traces the complexities of the work's commission, and the conflicts between various stakeholders (the artists, local residents, teams of historians tasked with elaborating what histories were meant to be shown in the work, and so on). In this chapter, I would like to bridge the gap between Brown's anthropological and historical research on the monument in the context of Macedonian national identity and recent scholarly efforts to understand the proliferation of stylistically modernist monuments during socialism in Yugoslavia. At the same time, I aim to consider the kinds of temporal discourses at play in the Kruševo memorial by offering a close visual reading of the memorial complex, linking the monument to broader trends in the transformation of the experience of time that socialist monuments produced. Finally, Brown's analysis tends to juxtapose 'abstraction' and 'figuration' in a way that is too simplistic, although I believe he does this in order to stay true to the debates presented against the monument on stylistic grounds made by its contemporaries (see Brown, *The Past in Question*, pp. 158–162). Nonetheless, a more nuanced consideration of the *kinds* of abstraction that are present in the memorial, and the contexts in which they are encountered, sheds more light not only on the Kruševo memorial's meanings, but also on the kinds of representation that were appropriate to socialist experience in Southeastern Europe more broadly.

²⁰ Srdjan Jovanović Weiss and Armin Linke, *Socialist Architecture: The Reappearing Act*, pp. 33–35. One problem with Weiss's assessment is that it too easily suggests that 'abstraction' corresponds to an internationalist universalism more inherently than it does to national(ist) ideas. This way of framing abstraction ignores the rather rich history (especially in the countries of former Eastern Europe) of abstraction created in the service of nationalist discourses.

during late socialism in Southeastern Europe modeled socialist history as a collective endeavor still under construction in the post-Stalinist global context, the current chapter explores the concept of time. I argue that both in terms of its form and in relation to its content, the Ilinden memorial complex reveals the contradictory (but also complementary) forms of temporality that socialist monumentality intended to produce, especially in relation to both the Partisan legacy and the multinational political context of Yugoslavia.²¹ Specifically, the Ilinden memorial expresses the incongruity between accretive, linear historical narratives and the paradigm of revolutionary time, in which events suddenly occur that change the character of historical experience itself, projecting apparently extra-historical viewpoints. These extra-historical viewpoints are associated with vastly different scales of experience, from the development of the particular organic (human) body to the trajectory of celestial bodies. Ultimately, this discussion lays the groundwork for the analysis that will unfold in the subsequent chapters, focused on the way that socialist monumentality—broadly construed—has served as a resource for postsocialist artistic frames of experience, including historical and temporal ones.

II. Socialist Monumentality in Yugoslavia During Late Socialism

As in other nations in Europe, the Second World War necessitated an incredible amount of commemorative work in the postwar period.²² The struggles and losses of the war lived on in the memories of those throughout the region. The character of Partisan warfare meant that many lives had been lost and many battles waged in remote locations,

²¹ As discussed in the Introduction and in Chapter 1, I also consider socialist Albania to have possessed a form of national consciousness comparable in many ways to socialist Yugoslavia, precisely because the question of northern and southern (Geg and Tosk) unity in socialist Albania was far from definitively resolved by the early 1970s, when the Vlora monument was created.

²² See my discussion of the effects of the Second World War on postwar society and public art in Yugoslavia in Chapter 1 above.

and as such the memorialization of those who had taken part in the war could not occur solely (or even primarily) in central urban spaces. Instead, much of the memory of the war was constructed in popular media (including numerous films and novels) in relation to rural areas, and it was frequently also these more remote sites that were selected as sites for the construction of monumental sculptures and architectural ensembles.²³ The production of socialist monuments in relatively remote locations visually traced the extensive spread of socialist ‘modernization’—in Yugoslavia’s case, precisely through the production of modernist-style monuments in villages, fields, and mountainous territories.²⁴

These sculptures followed what Rosalind Krauss has termed “the logic of the monument”: they were created “in a particular place and [spoke] in a symbolical tongue about the meaning or use of that place.”²⁵ Krauss traces (in roughly the same historical period) the fading of this logic, the disjuncture that formed between sculptures and their place. In the case of socialist monumentality, we might trace the opposite of this process: the expansion of ‘place’ due to the immaterial character of socialist ideology as a global phenomenon. While essentially all of the monuments created during the socialist period

²³ As noted in Chapter 2, this practice was not unique to socialist Yugoslavia. It also occurred in Albania, and in many other nations in Europe after the war. In fact, in many cases, monuments served as a way of integrating the rural into the shared national imaginary centered on the urban. This integration of the rural with the urban presented an ongoing challenge for socialism, in both the practical and the ideological sense. The urban—since it was also the site of industrial development—served as the primary index of socialist progress, and in many cases the rural remained associated with ‘backwards’ or traditional ideas. At the same time, however, the narrative of the Partisan revolution relied heavily on the participation of peasants in the antifascist resistance, both as members of Partisan regiments, and as residents who assisted the Partisans with supplies, shelter, and so forth.

²⁴ One significant online resource for research into Yugoslavian socialist-era monuments is historian and travel-enthusiast Donald Niebyl’s *Spomenik Database*, which not only gathers together a wealth of historical and contemporary photographs of these monuments, but also provides significant information about their creation and meanings. Niebyl has made an effort to synthesize a vast amount of secondary literature on the monuments, providing concrete details about each site. See Donald Niebyl, *Spomenik Database*, 2016, <http://www.spomenikdatabase.org> (accessed July 16, 2018).

²⁵ Rosalind Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” *October* 8 (Spring, 1979), p. 33.

in Yugoslavia were importantly tied to their location (most often because of the proximity of the historical events commemorated, although also in stylistic or material ways), they also represented the notion of a ‘place’ whose boundaries were the boundaries of the socialist revolution itself. Such a place was simultaneously concrete (the fullest extent of the unified Partisan resistance to fascism) and utopian (the fullest future extent of the spread of the socialist political-economic model across the globe).²⁶

By the 1960s, however, this latter, utopian project was not totalizing; rather, it was dialogic and agonistic, since it relied geopolitically on Yugoslavia’s ‘third’ position between the Soviet Union, and the United States and Western Europe. The Non-Aligned Movement established Tito as a leader in what pretended to be a new global order, and it therefore also abandoned an abstract global imaginary in favor a more concretely inclusive imaginary that actually included specific socialist ally nations in the struggle against colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. As Bojana Videkanić argues, the Yugoslavian socialist government’s promotion of an aesthetic modernism in line with international modernist styles fit with the politics of the Non-Aligned Movement because it set forth a universalist viewpoint that could theoretically be shared by numerous socialist cultures.²⁷ In this same period (beginning in the 1960s) the Communist Party in Yugoslavia began to shift towards a more bureaucratic approach in which the state adopted a managerial role in the promotion of self-management socialism (as opposed to

²⁶ It is certainly the case that many of the Yugoslav monuments dedicated to the Second World War stylistically belong to the trend that Krauss identified in her 1979 essay: they witnessed the disappearance of the base—the transformation of the sculpture into its own base. However, far from becoming a primarily negatively ontologically defined entity (see Krauss, “Sculpture,” p. 36), socialist monumental sculpture seemed determined to expand its relationship to both landscape and architecture, and at the same time to retain the full significance of its temporal suggestiveness.

²⁷ Videkanić, *Non-Aligned Modernism*, pp. 112–116.

the revolutionary model it had previously championed and which it continued to discursively circulate).²⁸

Before the 1960s, many of the monuments created in socialist Yugoslavia—including those dedicated to the Partisans and the rise of the Communist Party to power—were figurative, or at least contained figurative elements similar in style to those produced in other nations of the Socialist Bloc, but production in this style also continued well after the close of the 50s decade. Sculptors such as Antun Augustinčić²⁹ created works that dramatized the antifascist struggle, including ones that highlighted the role of the Soviet Red Army in the conflict. Augustinčić's monument dedicated to a Red Army soldier, in the Liberators' Cemetery in Belgrade, was completed in 1954, while the same artist's massive monument to the battle of Batina (where the National Liberation Army fought alongside divisions of the Red Army against the Germans³⁰), in present-day Croatia, was completed in 1976.³¹ Many of the monuments dedicated to the victims of the fascist forces were also lyrical memorials that emphasized the suffering of the body through abstracted and contorted representations of the human form. However, by the close of the 1950s, a new wave of monuments were appearing in styles that were much more abstract in their conception, creating new formal and symbolic vocabularies for the commemoration of the antifascist struggle and the socialist present.

In order to understand the gamut of aesthetically modernist tendencies at work in Yugoslavian monumental sculpture from the late 1950s through the 80s, let us briefly consider two artists responsible for many of the best-known monuments produced in this

²⁸ On this managerial system, see Milovan Djilas, *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1957).

²⁹ I discuss Augustinčić's role in the history of Yugoslavian sculpture briefly in Chapter 1 above.

³⁰ On the battle, see Nikola Božić, *Batinska Bitka* (Belgrade: Rad, 1978).

³¹ Drago Zdunić, *Revolucionarno Kiparstvo* (Zagreb: Spektar, 1977), pp. 102–104.

period: Vojin Bakić and Bogdan Bogdanović. These two represent distinct approaches to the problems of representing the past in sculptural form, approaches that illustrate the way artists committed to formal experimentation met the challenges of historical representation and official thematic determinations.

Vojin Bakić studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb in the 1930s, and afterwards worked with first Augustinčić and then Frano Kršinić. Some of Bakić's earlier works are powerful examples of Socialist-Realist-influenced figuration, such as his 1947 *Monument to the Executed/ Call to Arms*, in Bjelovar. But by the early 1950s, he had begun to experiment with various forms of geometric abstraction, creating angular figures composed of intersecting planes. In this style, he created multiple monumental designs, including a monument to the Yugoslav Partisan³² poet Ivan Goran Kovačić (in Zagreb, not inaugurated until 1964) and a monument to Marx and Engels [**Figures 3.23–3.24**]. This latter sculpture (on which Bakić worked for a long time, and of which he created several variants) generated a great deal of controversy, a controversy that represented the shift away from (Socialist) Realism and towards a variety of other approaches to monumental sculpture. In the late 50s however, Bakić was selected to represent Yugoslavia at the Venice Biennale, and then at Documenta, among other global exhibitions.³³ In the 1960s, Bakić turned entirely away from figurative modes: "I no longer see in the figure any possibility of expressing anything," he explained in an interview from 1964.³⁴ He became involved with Yugoslavian neo-avant-garde groups

³² Bakić's connection the Partisan resistance was also a personal one: four of his brothers were killed by the fascists during the war.

³³ WHW, *Vojin Bakić*, p. 23.

³⁴ Vojin Bakić, quoted in WHW, *Galerija Nova Newspapers* 12 (2007), p. 6. Translation by the author.

based in Croatia, such as EXAT 51 and New Tendencies,³⁵ exhibiting several times with members of both (although he was slightly older than them, and did not participate as an active member of either group).³⁶ From the beginning of the 1960s through the early 1980s, Bakić completed his most famous monumental commissions, including the *Monument to the Victory of the People of Slavonija* (inaugurated 1968) and the *Monument to the Uprising of the People of Kordun and Banija* (inaugurated 1981) at Petrova Gora [Figures 3.25–3.26]. Both of these monuments represented variations on themes that he also explored in his smaller-scale sculptural works, but—as monuments dedicated to specific historical events—they also possessed purposes and associations for which the artist’s studio sculpture did not aim. Nonetheless, even in his monuments, Bakić sought to challenge notions of direct communication and symbolism. For him, the difference between representation and expression was paramount to the development of the style of his monumental commissions. Of his *Monument to the Victory of the People of Slavonija*, in Kamenska, he insisted “[It] is actually an abstract form, it doesn’t represent anything. It is no symbol, such as ‘the flame of the revolution,’ as some have tried to interpret it—I think it is no flame; it is a sculpture that has certain elements in its construction, in its logic, so to say, and when it is extended, it expresses that joy of victory.”³⁷ As the curatorial collective WHW (What, How, and for Whom) points out,

³⁵ On EXAT 51 and New Tendencies, and their role in Yugoslavian art, see Marijan Susovski, ed., *Constructivism and Kinetic Art: EXAT 51, New Tendencies* (Zagreb: Gallery of Contemporary Art, 1995); *EXAT 51 & New Tendencies: Avant-Garde and International Events in Croatian Art in the 1950s and 1960s* (Zagreb: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002); Ješa Denegri, “Inside or Outside ‘Socialist Modernism’? Radical Views on the Yugoslav Art Scene, 1950–1970,” in Djurić and Šuvaković, eds., *Impossible Histories*, pp. 170–209; Ješa Denegri, *Posleratni Modernizam, Neoavangarde, Postmodernizam: Ogledi o Jugoslovenskom Umetničkom Prostoru: 1950–1990* (Belgrade: Službeni glasnik, 2016); and Armin Medosch, *New Tendencies: Art at the Threshold of the Information Revolution, 1961–1978* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2016).

³⁶ See Ješa Denegri and WHW, “Interview,” in WHW, *Vojin Bakić*, pp. 49–51.

³⁷ Vojin Bakić, qtd. in WHW, *Vojin Bakić*, p. 3.

Bakić's modernist tendencies were part of socialism's project of social change: far from representing merely the gradual integration of Southeastern European art into a generally modernist paradigm of European culture, socialist monumentality—deeply influenced by its engagement with the antifascist resistance—envisioned an “emancipatory politics.”³⁸

If Bakić's monuments represented the metamorphosis of Cubist and (Neo-) Constructivist tendencies into a distinctive monumental style that was visually akin to nonrepresentational formalist sculpture, Bogdan Bogdanović's monuments represent the application of Symbolism and Surrealism's primordial and mythical associations to socialist monumentality, transforming the legacy of earlier Yugoslav artists like Meštrović. Unlike Bakić, Bogdanović identified primarily as an architect,³⁹ and his monuments were often conceived as complex environments involving interventions in the surrounding landscape as well as sculptural elements.⁴⁰ Bogdanović grew up within the sphere of the Belgrade Surrealist circle—whose members included Marko Ristić, Miroslav Krleža, and Koča Popović—and their modes of thinking influenced his development significantly.⁴¹ His monuments reflected an ongoing interest in the creation

³⁸ WHW, *Vojin Bakić*, p. 24.

³⁹ As Vladimir Kulić and Maroje Mrdulaš point out, Bogdanović's works in the 1950s were among those that—in Yugoslavia—established the possibility of ideologically acceptable memorial complexes that contained solely ‘architectural’ (that is, non-figurative) elements. See Kulić, Mrdulaš, and Thaler, *Modernism In-Between*, p. 223.

⁴⁰ For an overview of all of Bogdanović's extant works, including photographs of their present state of preservation, see Andrew Lawler, “The Memorial Works of Bogdan Bogdanović: Their Condition and Situation as of 2012” (2012), available from: https://www.academia.edu/5227153/The_Memorial_works_of_Bogdan_Bogdanović_Their_condition_and_situation_as_of_2012 (accessed September 4, 2018). See also Ivan Ristić, et al., *Bogdan Bogdanović: Memoria und Utopie in Tito-Jugoslawien* (Vienna: Architekturzentrum Wien, 2009), a catalog from an exhibition surveying Bogdanović's work. On Bogdanović's work in general, see Aleksandr Trumić, *Nacrtane riječi i napisani crteži; spisateljski i graditeljski opit Protomajstora Bogdana (Words in Drawings and Drawings in Words: A Literary and Architectural Experiment by Architect-designer Bogdan)* (PhD Diss., University of Sarajevo, 1988).

⁴¹ Interestingly, as an architect, Bogdanović saw his Surrealist approach come into opposition with modernist architects in socialist Yugoslavia, especially since his building materials often included stone—a decidedly non-modern material. See Vera Grimmer and Bogdan Bogdanović, “Cities Are Beings,” in Vera Grimmer and Sonja Leboš, eds., *Bogdan Bogdanović: Ukleti Neimar/ The Doomed Architect* (Zagreb:

of strange associations and uncanny experiences; later in his life, he reflected, “I must say that my monuments...were not real monuments. At least, they did not have the appearance of monuments. Rather, they were stories, interesting objects, fantastical ones”⁴² Bogdanović drew on various mystical traditions (including Kabbalah), numerous ancient architectural references, and the work of artists like Max Ernst, and his architectural and sculptural practice was intertwined with literary explorations. For him, language was closely tied to the development of forms in architecture.⁴³ Rather than functioning as formal experiments in creating abstract forms in a monumental scale, Bogdanović sought to multiply associations and deepen both the phenomenological and the psychological impact of his commemorative works; he embraced the powers of symbols to transmit metaphysical significance.⁴⁴ Bogdanović’s best-known work is the memorial complex at Jasenovac, commemorating victims of the fascists who died in the concentration camp at that site. The centerpiece of the complex is a massive concrete flower-form (known colloquially as the ‘Stone Flower,’ completed in 1966), which is surrounded by a series of circular burial mounds [**Figure 3.27**]. Among his other major monuments are the *Burial Mound of the Undefeated* in Prilep (1961), and the Partisan cemetery in Mostar (1965) [**Figures 3.28–3.29**]. In these works, as in many others,

Gliptoteka HAZU, 2012), p. 30. In fact, almost all of Bogdanović’s monuments utilized stone as a central material, his memorial at Jasenovac being an exception.

⁴² Bogdan Bogdanović and Alexandre Mirlesse, “Interview with Bogdan Bogdanović,” p. 5.

⁴³ He explained, “For me, words and forms always overlap in architecture. Very often I wrote things on my drawings in unknown languages, unknown symbols.” See Grimmer and Bogdanović, “Cities Are Beings,” p. 36. On Bogdanović as a writer, see Vladimir Vuković, *Bogdan Bogdanović: Das literarische Werke* (Salzburg: Pustet, 2009), and Vladimir Vuković, “Writing About Cities: Literary Works of Bogdan Bogdanović about Cities and Urbanism,” *Serbian Architecture Journal* 3 (2011): pp. 2–14.

⁴⁴ Bogdanović attributed the freedom he was given (for example, to invent new symbol systems—to completely transcend the common set of symbols typically associated with the Partisan resistance) to the Yugoslavian government’s desire to distance itself from the aesthetic of Russian socialist monumentality, which nonetheless did persist in the country due to the training of artists from previous generations. See Grimmer and Bogdanović, “Cities Are Beings,” p. 34.

Bogdanović created visually striking and lyrical forms that sometimes resemble natural phenomena (flowers, the flow of water) and sometimes seem to reference the human form (in the case of the anamorphic figures of the Prilep monument).

In both Bakić's and Bogdanović's monuments, there is an important element of mystery, of the unknown. In Bakić's case, this frequently derives from the apparent futurity of the modernist aesthetic; in Bogdanović's case, it more often stems from the implicit association with the esoteric secrets of a forgotten and primordial past. In each case, however, the urgency of the recent past and its effects in the present sanctions the transformative experience of time that unfolds in the encounter with a specific monument. Bojana Videkanić, building upon the art historical and political analyses of authors such as Boris Groys and Susan Buck-Morss, argues that "Yugoslavian socialist modernism was a form of utopian thinking that sought to transform the socialist revolution, its material relationships in architecture, design, and art along with the Yugoslavian people's sensorial apparatus."⁴⁵ Here, I want to advance a parallel argument with a different inflection: socialist monumentality—not only in Yugoslavia, but in Southeastern Europe more broadly—was a form of cultural production that sought to restructure the historical consciousness of socialist citizens in order to generalize the supposedly 'revolutionary' temporality of the Partisan resistance to other historical periods and modes of experience. This restructuring was in fact far more phenomenologically and aesthetically open-ended than accounts of Southeastern European states as 'totalitarian' would suggest, precisely because it sought to preserve the paradox created between the supposed dynamism of the past and that of the present,

⁴⁵ Videkanić, *Non-Aligned Modernism*, p. 35.

ongoing construction of socialist societies, national and regional identities, and global sociopolitical alliances.

The project of monumentality in the late socialist period was impressive in the diversity of its stylistic manifestations, and in its varied attempts to incorporate other historical events into the purview of the experience of ‘revolutionary temporality’ associated with the local antifascist resistance of the Second World War. To analyze the ways that the aesthetic modernist style of monumentality in socialist Yugoslavia was adapted to other, older histories, in order to link those pasts with the Partisan struggle and the building of socialism in the present, I now turn to an examination of the memorial dedicated to the Ilinden Uprising in Kruševo, Macedonia.

III. The Ilinden Uprising: A Historical Overview

Although it is beyond the scope of the current investigation to delve deeply into the Ilinden Uprising (an event whose interpretation is still much contested⁴⁶), it is still necessary to understand something about the character of the event and its significance in socialist Macedonia in order to understand the memorial complex constructed in Kruševo in the early 1970s. This section aims to lay out the major events of the uprising, as well as the ways its causes and aims were interpreted. I rely in particular on a Yugoslav-era publication, *The Epic of Ilinden*, published in 1973, on the occasion of the anniversary of the uprising.⁴⁷ (This was also the year in which the memorial complex was originally *intended* to be completed, but ongoing conflicts between the artists and the committee

⁴⁶ One of the values of Keith Brown’s *The Past in Question* is the way it shows how deeply contested the past is in Kruševo, especially surrounding the town’s role as historically established epicenter of the Ilinden Uprising. Brown traces not only the way competing ethnic identities shape interpretations of the site’s history, but also the ways that differing forms of writing and materializing history (monument-making, books, oral histories, the establishment of museums, and so on) have created narratives that diverge from each other significantly.

⁴⁷ Boris Višinski, ed., *The Epic of Ilinden*. One of the historians whose work appears in the publication, Ljuben Lapé, was also on the committee that oversaw the creation of the Ilinden Memorial.

established to oversee the commission—as well as what appears to simply have been a slower pace of work by sculptor Jordan Grabul—meant that the complex was completed and inaugurated the following year.)⁴⁸ This publication presents viewpoints on the events of 1903 and their protagonists that reflect the contemporary discursive context in socialist Yugoslavia, and as such it is invaluable in reading the monument constructed in Kruševo.⁴⁹

In the early 20th century, the region that would later become the Republic of Macedonia within socialist Yugoslavia was controlled by the Ottoman Empire, and was located within the Manastir Vilayet.⁵⁰ At the turn of the century, the situation in the Ottoman-controlled areas of Southeastern Europe was worsening, and unrest was frequent amidst various ethnic, cultural, and economic groups in the region. In the context of Macedonia—and especially among the Christian Slav populations there—resistance to Ottoman rule developed in association with two general organizations (although of course specific uprisings and other acts of resistance were often carried out in a highly decentralized manner): the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO) and the Supremists (shorthand for the Supreme Macedonian Committee).⁵¹ The former

⁴⁸ Brown, *The Past in Question*, p. 160. In one of the essays in the *Epic of Ilinden* volume, Niko Tozi notes that “The climax of his [Jordan Grabul’s] exceptionally rich artistic career will be the monumental memorial to the National Liberation Movement and the Uprising of Ilinden which is now being set up in Kruševo and will be officially unveiled on 2nd August, 1973 during the celebrations of the seventieth anniversary.” See Niko Tozi, “The Theme of Ilinden in Modern Macedonian Art,” in *The Epic of Ilinden*, ed. Višinski, p. 243.

⁴⁹ I do not suggest, of course, that the socialist-era publication is the most accurate or objective interpretation of the events in question.

⁵⁰ Regions once within this vilayet are now parts of the nation-states of Greece, Albania, and Macedonia.

⁵¹ It should be noted that the MRO in particular developed not only to resist Ottoman control and gain autonomy for the population, but also to resist the increase of Serbian propaganda that was spreading through the vilayets in the late 19th century. Thus, the early movements for Macedonian autonomy were not only directed against Muslims (the Ottomans) but also against the incursion of other Christian churches and states into the area. See Perry, pp. 38–41.

was founded in 1893 in Thessaloniki; the latter comprised multiple (competing) groups and was founded the following year in Sofia. Both groups organized *chetas*, or armed bands of guerilla fighters, that travelled throughout the region, ostensibly to carry out political military goals.⁵² In 1903, various plans for revolt came to a head in a general atmosphere of conflict: in February in Kosovo, Muslim Albanians likewise rose up in protest of Ottoman political and military actions, and in May, in the Macedonian village of Smilevo, the MRO organized a congress to plan a revolt that would span several towns and villages in the Manastir Vilayet. Despite the relative lack of preparedness (weapons were in short supply and training was poor), it was decided that the plans for revolt would move forward.⁵³ The MRO announced a few days before the uprising that it would take place on St. Elijah's Day, August 2; its primary goal was to draw the attention of the great powers to the "systematic persecution on the part of the [Ottoman] administration."⁵⁴ The violence that took place when the revolt began included the destruction of bridges, telephone wires, and haystacks, as well as the occupation of strategic buildings. A few days later, in the Adrianople Vilayet to the east, similar uprisings occurred. *Chetas* in Manastir Vilayet attacked Ottoman outposts and garrisons, as well as Turkish villages, which were raided and burned.⁵⁵

The MRO was later called the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO, or in Macedonian: ВМРО, Внатрешна Македонска Револуционерна Организација). The name has been used to establish an alleged continuity between the early revolutionary organizations in the region and contemporary political parties. Ironically, the politically party currently bearing the acronym VMRO is the major right-wing, ethnic Macedonian party in the country.

⁵² Thus the *chetas* were supposedly different from the armed bandits and mercenaries that had already existed in the region for some time. See Perry, pp. 48–49.

⁵³ Perry, pp. 131–133.

⁵⁴ Qtd. in Perry, p. 134. See also Nadine Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question 1893–1908, from Western Sources* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1998), pp. 125–127.

⁵⁵ Lange-Akhund, pp. 125–126.

Of all the sites that were involved in the Ilinden Uprising, the one that became most symbolically significant was Kruševo, where the MRO forces that managed to take control of the town established a democratic republic. Kruševo had served, perhaps because of its remote geographic location and relative inaccessibility, as a meeting place for dissidents in the region for some time, and the town was ultimately the largest urban center held by the rebels during the course of the uprising.⁵⁶ The socialist leader of the Kruševo rebels was Nikola Karev, a schoolteacher who also became a key organizer of the new government established in the town.⁵⁷ A manifesto produced in association with the republic proclaimed that its members were without “prejudice against faith or nationality,” and sought only liberation from feudal exploitation by imperial forces.⁵⁸ Indeed, many of the revolutionaries were Vlachs, who historically made up a sizable portion of Kruševo’s population, but other ethnic and religious groups took part as well. Although the town was eventually retaken (after ten days) by Ottoman forces, this short-lived republic proved to be one of the most enduring aspects of the uprising’s legacy.

While the facts of the Kruševo Republic remain contested, what is most important for the present discussion is the way it was framed and understood in the 1970s, at the time of the Ilinden memorial’s creation. As a whole, the Ilinden Uprising was a failure: as Duncan Perry argues, the movement ultimately gained the MRO and the residents of the region little. Because of the violence against Muslim villages on the part of the MRO, Muslim residents joined together to resist the movement, and there were harsh reprisals on the part of Ottoman troops against villages and towns that participated. The MRO

⁵⁶ Ljuban Lapé, “The Republic of Kruševo,” in *The Epic of Ilinden*, p. 122.

⁵⁷ See Ordé Ivanovski, “Nikola Karev—Organizer of the Kruševo Republic,” in *The Epic of Ilinden*, pp. 133–143.

⁵⁸ Qtd. in Ivanovski, “Nikola Karev,” p. 140.

itself became divided over the seemingly disastrous results, with those who had opposed the revolt in the first place turning against those who had supported it. While the events were widely reported abroad, the revolt did not spur the great powers to intervene on behalf of an autonomous Macedonia, as the organizers of the rebellion had hoped.⁵⁹

Despite the failure of the Ilinden Uprising—or perhaps precisely because its failure yielded a compellingly tragic narrative—it became a centerpiece of subsequent Macedonian rhetoric, both socialist and nationalist. Partisan (socialist) actions in the region during the Second World War were framed as “struggles for a new *Ilinden*, a victorious and creative one.”⁶⁰ As noted above, the Yugoslav Partisans declared the establishment of a ‘second Ilinden’ on August 2, 1944, on the occasion of the first meeting of ASNOM, which declared the existence of a Macedonian nation-state. August 2 was declared a national holiday, which effectively merged together three chronological periods or events: the traditional celebration of August 2 as St. Elijah’s Day (a widespread practice among Christians in the region), the Ilinden Uprising, and the founding of Macedonia as a socialist nation within the framework of Yugoslavia. In this fusion, the Ilinden Uprising itself took on new forms of significance as a historical event.

In socialist Yugoslavia, the uprising was characterized primarily as “an armed insurrection for national liberation,” rather than a “bourgeois-democratic revolution.”⁶¹ Despite the emphasis on the national character of the revolt, however, the struggle was also credited with having made the contribution of the Macedonian people to the

⁵⁹ Perry, pp. 139–142.

⁶⁰ Boris Višinski, “Preface,” in *The Epic of Ilinden*, p. 10. As noted in Chapter 1, the Yugoslav partisans declared the establishment of a ‘second Ilinden’ on the anniversary of the uprising in 1944. (See Ramet, *Three Yugoslavias*, p. 155, and Maja Muhić and Aleksander Takovski, “Redefining National Identity in Macedonia: Analyzing Competing Origin Myths and Interpretations through Hegemonic Representations,” *Etnološka Tribina* 44:37 (2014), pp. 139–140.)

⁶¹ Desanka Miljovska, “Socio-Economic Conditions,” pp. 27–28.

establishment of socialist Yugoslavia “so active, so definite, and so clearly defined.”⁶² At the same time, the multinational character of the revolt was asserted; the volume *The Epic of Ilinden* features a chapter devoted to the “participation of other nationalities” in the struggle, outlining not only the role played by Vlachs (especially in Kruševo), but also by Albanians, Turks, Greeks, and Jews.⁶³ The Ilinden Uprising thus presented a peculiar paradox for socialist-era Macedonian historians, but a productive paradox nonetheless. On the one hand, it was claimed as a national liberation struggle, but on the other hand it represented a possible blueprint for the genesis of the kind of inclusive and multinational society that Yugoslavia itself professed to be.

IV. The Ilinden Memorial Complex

The Ilinden memorial complex is relatively elaborate, and in order to understand the experiences that the site produces, we must engage in a detailed visual and spatial consideration of the monumental grounds as a whole. The Ilinden memorial is located on Gumenje Hill, to the north of the town of Kruševo. The complex consists of four distinct spaces that are encountered in sequence, gradually ascending to the top of the hill. These spaces are as follows: first, an open, cobbled area flanked by several white concrete sculptures [Figures 3.3–3.4]; second, some way up the hill along a path, a crypt set low in the ground with a series of cylinders inscribed with names, locations, and dates [Figures 3.5–3.6]; third, an open-air theater area with 70 seats, partially surrounded by walls featuring brightly colored geometric designs [Figures 3.7–3.8]; and finally, the Makedonium, an imposing building at the apex of the hill, designed by Iskra Grabul with interior relief sculptures by Jordan Grabul and four stained-glass windows by painter

⁶² Miljovska, “Socio-Economic Conditions,” p. 32.

⁶³ See Todor Simovski, “The Participation of the Other Nationalities of Macedonia in the Uprising,” in *The Epic of Ilinden*, ed. Višinski, pp. 173–194. The Roma are not mentioned.

Borko Lazeski [Figures 3.9–3.21]. The hill upon which the memorial complex is situated is now heavily forested, although photos of the Ilinden monument at the time of its inauguration indicate that it was once much more visible and the trees surrounding it were less dense.⁶⁴ The coniferous forest that now covers the top of the hill where the monument is located was planted by the first president of the town’s district court in the 1930s.⁶⁵ When ascending from the town upwards to the memorial, visitors also pass a sculpture of Nikola Karev [Figure 3.30], whose key role in the Ilinden Uprising and the formation of the Ilinden Republic is discussed above. The sculpture of Karev is also the work of Jordan Grabul, though it adheres to a naturalism that stands in significant contrast to the sculptures created for the memorial on the hilltop.⁶⁶

The first section of the memorial, the platform (also used as a parking area) featuring Jordan Grabul’s sculptures, is now located relatively close to two buildings constructed later than the initial monument: the Museum of the National Liberation War (located just to the west, built in 1989) and a museum dedicated to the life of popular rock musician Todor ‘Toše’ Proeski (located to the southwest, built in the 2000s after Proeski’s untimely death in a car accident). The first platform contains a series of sculptures created by sculptor Jordan Grabul [Figures 3.3–3.4], collectively entitled

⁶⁴ The forest surrounding the monument contains several types of trees, including Black pines, Nordmann firs, and Amur maples. See the plans for the site found in DARM, fond 1066, box 4, which include diagrams of the surrounding vegetation.

⁶⁵ Popovski, n.p. When I first visited the site in the summer of 2016, the caretakers of the monument complained about the proliferation of forest, noting that the build-up of pine nettles made it much more difficult to keep the grounds clean.

⁶⁶ The statue of Karev was completed two decades before the Ilinden memorial complex, in 1952–53, and—in 1973—was cited as evidence of Jordan Grabul’s longtime engagement with the themes of the Ilinden Uprising. He apparently also produced statues and busts of other protagonists from the revolt, such as one of Gocé Delchev in Novo Selo. See Tozi, “The Theme of Ilinden,” pp. 242–243. The statue of Karev originally stood atop Gumenje Hill, as shown in an undated photograph in Jordan Grabul’s archives, but it was later moved to make way for the Ilinden Memorial. See DARM, fond 1066, box 6, folder 25, document 208, which contains a binder of undated black and white photographs related to the siting and creation of the Kruševo monument.

Раскинати Прангии (Broken Fetters).⁶⁷ These sculptures resemble their name: white concrete arcs with abrupt formal terminations extending up from the ground, recalling ruptured chain links. From this first stage of the memorial complex, the Makedonium is already visible at the crest of the hill. The bare white of the sculptures is reflected in the building on the hilltop, and although they are placed to the sides of the platform, the chainlike forms recall a series of archways, establishing a processional experience from the outset.⁶⁸

Jordan Grabul began his career as a sculptor at the age of 15, when he was apprenticed to a stonecutter in the town of his birth, Prilep.⁶⁹ Later, he studied under Dimo Todorovski, at the School of Applied Arts in Skopje, and then graduated from the Academy of Arts in Belgrade, where he studied with Lojze Dolinar and Sreten Stojanović.⁷⁰ Upon Jordan's return to Macedonia, to Skopje, he became one of the

⁶⁷ Jordan Grabul's description of each of the elements of the various platforms, as well as the cupola (the Makedonium) and its interior reliefs, can be found in his project proposal, "Споменик на Национално/Ослободителната Борба и Илинденското Востание, Крушево: Идеен Проект," in DARM, fond 1066, box 2, folder 25, 4/161–185. The proposal contains general descriptions as well as detailed technical information on the necessary materials for the works.

⁶⁸ The initial plans for the first platform indicate that it probably underwent the most significant changes over the course of the complex's construction. The early versions of the first platform contain far more sculptural elements: arcing masses are distributed throughout the platform's space, not only along its edges. Some of them hang over the edges of the short border walls, and even those walls are more dynamic in their linear relation to the sculptures contained within. It appears that at one point, Jordan also intended there to be two semicircular trenches inset into the center of the platform, creating a variation in ground level. See some of the photographs in DARM, fond 1066, box 6, folder 25. Presumably the elaborate design for the first platform was reduced as the monument's construction dragged on, although it may also have been desirable to 'open' the space more to allow for manifestations and processions to pass through without many impediments.

⁶⁹ Overview of Jordan Grabul's career drawn from: Sonja Abidžieva-Dimitrova, *Јордан Грабулоски-Грабул* (Skopje: Muzej na Sovremenata Umetnost, 1988), and Bojan Ivoanov, "Jordan Grabuloski-Grabul," *Grove Art Online* (2003), <https://doi.org/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T033938> (accessed August 19, 2018).

Keith Brown notes that Jordan has also taken part in the National Liberation War as a teenager (Brown, *The Past in Question*, p. 158), meaning that—like the Albanian sculptor Shaban Hadëri (discussed above in Chapters 1 and 2)—Jordan was working in part to commemorate an even in which he had taken part.

⁷⁰ Dolinar was the creator of the famous *Monument to the Revolution* in Kranj, Slovenia, completed in 1961. Stojanović created the *Liberation Monument* in Iriški Venac, in Serbia, inaugurated in 1951, among others.

founders of the *Денес* [Today] group of artists (whose members also included Borko Lazeski), in 1953. This group constitutes an important element of the development of modern art in Macedonia. Created only two years after the official formation of EXAT 51 in Zagreb, *Денес* was in many ways comparable: it included painters, architects, and sculptors, it issued a manifesto focusing on the need to make art in Macedonia “contemporary” (“современа”), and it emphasized the creative synthesis of architecture with the visual arts.⁷¹ Although Jordan was not markedly active in the group’s discursive framing (as was Borko Lazeski, who published numerous articles engaging in debate with other members of the group on artistic and ideological issues), his membership in the group is noteworthy. He was the most prolific Macedonian-born creator of public monuments working in aesthetically modernist styles, and his involvement in *Денес* indicates the radical aesthetic genealogy of monumental sculpture as it emerged in the late 1950s and continued through the 1980s in Yugoslavia.

While Jordan Grabul’s *Broken Fetters*—in both its title and its form—has a clear referent, we should also observe how much the sculptural ensemble resembles Grabul’s more overtly formalist, nonrepresentational sculptural works from the same period. In 1970 (during the period when the artist was also at work on completing the Ilinden Memorial commission, which was first initiated in 1968), Jordan had a solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje, in which he exhibited a number of sculptures in a style subsequently described by Macedonian art historians and critics as

⁷¹ On the *Денес* group, see the extensive catalog *Денес: 1983–1985* (Skopje: Уметничка галерија, 1983). The catalog contains several essays on the group’s activities, biographies of the founding members, numerous critical texts published by its members in periodical publications, and reviews of shows by the group and its members that appeared in the press of the time. It is significant that Borko Lazeski was also involved in the creation of many murals and mosaics for official buildings in socialist Yugoslavia; his commitment to an avant-garde artistic vision mutually reinforced his work on large-scale official commissions, rather than coming into conflict with it.

‘Minimalist’ [see **Figures 3.31–3.32**].⁷² The visual and spatial relationship between Jordan’s works for gallery display and those in the context of the memorial is striking and significant: it means that from the first level of the Ilinden complex, the viewer is, in a sense placed in a context that emphasizes an epistemologically open spatial and temporal encounter with the monument.⁷³

From this first platform, the visitor proceeds a short distance uphill to enter the crypt, a circular space set low in the ground [**Figures 3.5–3.6**]. The walls of the crypt rise to approximately ten feet at their highest point, well over the head of a person standing within the space, and produce the sensation of having entered an underground space. The two semicircular walls of the pit are white and lightly textured, and they are segmented by a series of vertical grooves that recall the stylized lines of ‘breakage’ in the *Broken Fetters* sculptural ensemble. From each of the two walls of the crypt protrude a series of

⁷² I discuss the relation between Minimalism broadly understood and Jordan’s sculpture at greater length below. On the idea of Jordan’s works from this period in relation to the global development of Minimalism, see Boris Petkovski, *Museum of Contemporary Art—Skopje, 1964–1976* (Skopje: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2001), pp. 75, 150, and Marika Bočvarova Plavevska, *Minimalism, Constructivism, and Monochrome in Macedonian Contemporary Art* (Skopje: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2010), pp. 2–3.

At the beginning of the 60s decade, Jordan Grabul also created a number of sculptures in welded iron that corresponded to a decidedly *informel* paradigm (at the same time that he was at work on monumental commissions that were more figurative in character). In some ways, the reliefs in the Makedonium seem to represent a convergence of Jordan’s monumental style and the style of his sculptural experimentations in gallery settings. Over the course of the 1960s, Jordan’s sculptures seemed to become less explicitly expressive in their surface qualities and the treatment of their material, although they remained richly lyrical in their associations. On his *informel* works, see Marika Bočvarova Plavevska, *Informal Art and Relations: Sculptures 1960–1970* (Skopje: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2009), pp. 30–33.

⁷³ *Broken Fetters* presents itself in a mode comparable to Minimalist objects, although it of course also draws attention to its narrative and metaphorical meanings. The tension between these two modes of presentation—one that attempts to be phenomenologically open-ended, and one that calls for metaphorical and literal readings of recognizable signs—prevails throughout Jordan and Iskra Grabul’s collaboration in the Kruševo complex.

The earlier plans for the first platform, discussed in the footnote above, even more closely resemble the aesthetic of Jordan’s exhibition. In other words, it seems that the initial layout of *Broken Fetters* would have directly mirrored the kind of immersive environment that Jordan sought to create at the Museum of Contemporary Art, with sculptures seamlessly and directly interacting with the spaces instead of appearing as isolated compositions.

drum-shaped forms,⁷⁴ each capped with a bronze plaque. These plaques feature names of people and places, and sometimes dates. There are a total of 58 of these drums, 29 on each side. The places and people listed in the vault are various in their significance, although they are meant to present a historical overview of the protagonists and geography of a uniquely Macedonian national history. Many of the people and locations identified relate to the Ilinden Uprising, but there are also some that belong to older historical moments, and which extend the spatial boundaries of history beyond those places that were key to the 1903 revolt.⁷⁵

The ground within the crypt is covered by small square black and white cobblestones laid in a radial pattern, with the white stones inscribing the form of an eight-pointed star (with inset lights at each star) [Figure 3.5]. The star or sun is a recurring symbol of Macedonian ethnic and national identity.⁷⁶ A 16-pointed star appears on the flag of the state of Macedonia; this design was implemented in August of 1992, and subsequently caused a significant political uproar with Greek nationalists, who view the

⁷⁴ Jordan Grabul explained that the protruding cylinders might suggest the forms of cannons created from the trunks of cherry trees, a weapon used by the rebels during the Ilinden Uprising and associated with that conflict in folk narratives. He explained, “Do these forms symbolize the legendary cherry-wood cannon? They don’t have to ... but of course they might remind us of them. That’s how many visitors interpret it.” See Jordan Grabul, qtd. in Slavko Marinković, “Храм на Слободага,” *Вечер*, July 27, 1974. Translation by the author.

⁷⁵ Keith Brown has offered a thorough and compelling analysis not only of the names of people and places in the crypt, but also of the ways this list developed during the commission of the monument. Since the crypt was the portion of the monument that received the least input from the artists of the monumental complex — with the exception of its overall design, it was more fully the purview of the team of historians on the committee tasked with organizing and approving the monument’s configuration — I do not dwell on the specifics of the names and places given. However, it should be noted that the crypt (like Jordan Grabul’s reliefs in the Makedonium) was originally meant to span an ancient history all the way through the National Liberation War. Later, the period was curtailed to include primarily names from the mid-19th century to the end of the First World War. For a reading of these names, see Brown, *The Past in Question*, pp. 165–178.

⁷⁶ Its presence also recurs in the form of the Makedonium itself, discussed below.

emblem as inherently Greek.⁷⁷ The 16-pointed star is also referred to as the Star of Vergina, after its discovery in archaeological excavations in the town of Vergina in northern Greece in the 1970s. It is also associated with Phillip II, the father of Alexander the Great, and his kingdom, a heritage claimed by some as Greek. In the crypt, the appearance of the star not only serves to link the space with a kind of primordial ethno-cultural lineage, but also to establish a relation between an earthly space and a celestial one, to suggest that history within the crypt also possesses a cosmic character.

The aesthetic of the crypt is clearly meant to recall many of the actual ossuaries constructed in socialist Yugoslavia, which housed at least the partial remains of many of those commemorated by the memorial complex. For example, the Titov Veles memorial, discussed briefly below, was constructed as an ossuary.⁷⁸ The crypt of the Ilinden memorial, with its series of bronze plaques, mirrors this type of architecture, and in doing so it suggests an embodied proximity to the history presented. That is, despite the extreme spans of geography and time covered by the various names, locations, and dates present, there is the suggestion that some material connection to their traces is housed within the space of the crypt (as is the case when actual remains are buried at the site), and this helps mediate the sensory gap between the textual and chronological abstraction of history and the embodied experience of the visitor passing through the crypt.

Out of the lowered level of the crypt, visitors ascend via a cobbled pathway and stairs to the next platform of the monument, an open-air theater [**Figures 3.7–3.8**]. While

⁷⁷ Previously, when the country was part of Yugoslavia, the Macedonian flag comprised a red field with the outline of a yellow five-pointed star. See K.S. Brown, “In the Realm of the Double-Headed Eagle: Parapolitics in Macedonia, 1994–9,” in *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference*, ed. Jane K. Cowan (London: Pluto, 2000), pp. 123–124.

⁷⁸ The same was true of many (though not all) of the Partisan cemeteries in socialist Albania, discussed above in Chapter 2.

the pathway that leads from the first platform through the crypt and to the theater is oriented obliquely to the Makedonium, the theater itself is situated several yards directly before it. The open-air theater is circular; it contains 70 cylindrical white drums to be used for seating, and two curved segments of wall frame the side of the theater facing the Makedonium, creating a setting for performances, with the centerpiece of the memorial complex serving as a backdrop. The two walls are a key aspect of the visual framing of the main building, and their aesthetic is decidedly different from that of the crypt; while the crypt is relatively visually austere, echoing the protruding windows of the Makedonium, the walls of the theater are vibrant and colorful. Each of the two sections of wall contains four geometric reliefs. These ceramic reliefs stand out from a background of vertical strips of color—chiefly red and white, but also blue, green, orange, and purple—of varying widths, which cover the tiled surfaces of the walls. The reliefs, some of which are composed against circular and rectilinear monochromatic shapes, are composed of permutations of square and triangular forms, recalling the folk motifs that appear in many Southeastern European textiles.

The theater portion of the memorial complex was designed by the Macedonian painter Petar Mazev.⁷⁹ Mazev is perhaps best known for his expressionist paintings, which aggressively utilized unmixed primary colors and bold contour lines in a figurative style sometimes reminiscent of the work of Willem de Kooning.⁸⁰ Mazev, in addition to his work as a painter, also worked on other monuments in socialist Yugoslavia, including the design of the interior mosaics in the memorial at Titov Veles (now Veles, Macedonia,

⁷⁹ Mazev was born in 1927 in Kavadarci, Macedonia, and completed his studies at the Academy of Art in Belgrade in 1953. In addition to his easel paintings, he created several wall paintings and mosaic murals in Skopje and elsewhere. See Boris Petkovski, *Modern Macedonian Painting* (Skopje: Macedonian Review, 1984), p. 77.

⁸⁰ Petkovski, *Modern Macedonian Painting*, p. 47.

designed by Ljubomir Denkovik and Savo Sugotin, completed in 1979).⁸¹ Mazev's contribution to the Ilinden memorial complex was unlike his later work at the Titov Veles ossuary.⁸² At Titov Veles, Mazev created a series of horizontally flowing mosaics that follow the curves of the innermost portion of the building [Figure 3.33], culminating in a large composition filling one roughly square portion of the wall [Figure 3.34]. The mosaics are figurative, however, done in a style of distorted, Cubist-influenced figuration that recalls both Picasso's *Guernica*⁸³ and Fernand Léger's numerous paintings of workers. Various scenes from Macedonian history play out in a sea of human faces and limbs, horses, foliage, bursts of flame, and other less-defined shapes. In the culmination of the composition, a pair of figures raise their arms high in ecstatic victory. This figurative (and linear) description of history is absent from the theater at Kruševo, no doubt in part due to the practical intended use of the space as a stage for performances.

⁸¹ Mazev also designed a bronze sculpture of a blossoming tree located near the mosaics inside the Veles monument. Srdjan Jovanović Weiss names Mazev as co-designer of the memorial complex in Kavadarci (where the painter was born) (see Weiss and Linke, *Socialist Architecture*, pp. 26–27). However, I have been unable to find another source mentioning Mazev's role in the Kavadarci complex. Gjorg Trajkovski's 1986 catalog of Macedonian monuments and memorials mentions only the architect Petar Muličkoski as the designer of the Kavadarci monument. See Gjorg Trajkovski, *Преглед на Спомениците и Спомен-Објележјата во СР Македонија* (Skopje: Републички завод за заштита на спомениците на културата, 1986), p. 109.

⁸² Mazev himself commented on the differences between his working methods in the case of the Ilinden Memorial and the Titov Veles ossuary. In an interview from 1989–90, he explains, "Since artists have always worked for competitions, at the beginning I try to adapt myself to the competition conditions—I make a conscious compromise. Having won the competition, I change everything from the start in order to adjust it to my temperament. The most important thing is that I am satisfied. In contrast to the ceramic sculpture in the Monument to Ilinden and the National Liberation War in Kruševo, when I worked on the huge mosaic in the Titov Veles Mausoleum I had a different kind of freedom and responsibility. Everything went easily and quickly. I understood the mosaic as a painting—I simply painted with pieces of stone." See Sonja Abadžieva-Dimitrova, *Петар Мазев/ Petar Mazev* (Skopje: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1990), p. 61. In the interview, Mazev goes on to note, "The value of monumental works is permanent. The artist remains with them more deeply and more permanently on the ground."

⁸³ The connection between *Guernica* as a paradigm for politically engaged painting and artistic production in Yugoslav Macedonia (especially murals and mosaics) was explicitly made in a 1984 publication devoted to monumental painting on the topic of the National Liberation Struggle and the socialist revolution. See Boris Petkovski, *Македонското Монументално Сликарство на Темы од НОБ и Револуцијата* (Skopje: Makedonski Knigi, 1984), pp. 8–10.

Furthermore, a kind of linear and figurative version of history does later appear inside the Makedonium itself. As such, the colorful patterns of Mazev's theater serve as a transition between the textual abundance of history found in the vault and Jordan Grabul's much more abstract reliefs found within the dome of the Makedonium.

From the theater, a cobbled pathway leads up to meet a long ramp that descends from the doors of the Makedonium. From outside, the Makedonium visually dominates the high point of the hill upon which it is situated, a nearly spherical white building that appears anchored to the earth only by the ramp leading to its entrance.⁸⁴ Three offset sets of four windows protrude from its sides, situated in a series of concentric circles around the circumference of the dome itself [**Figures 3.9–3.10**]. The first, lowest set of windows extends more or less directly horizontally from just below the middle of the sphere, while the two remaining sets angle upwards. The middle of the three sets of windows is comprised of four stained glass windows, designed by Borko Lazeski, while the final set (which resembles four antennae jutting from the top of the building) are covered in frosted glass, permitting a limited amount of white light to enter through the top of the dome. In the spaces between the windows, there are situated a further series of square protrusions that correspond (on the inside of the dome) to the placement of speakers, allowing music to be broadcast within the space, on all sides of the visitor. The outer

⁸⁴ The overall form of the Makedonium bears a resemblance to a radiating sun, but it is also reminiscent of the head of a mace, an association that links it to King Marko, a legendary figure in South Slavic epic poetry, who ruled over a portion of Macedonia during the 14th century. The seat of Marko's power was in the town of Prilep—Jordan Grabul's hometown—and he is often depicted wielding a round-headed mace. I thank Suzana Milevska for pointing out to me this association between the Makedonium's form and King Marko's weapon. An undated tourist pamphlet (produced after Macedonia emergence from Yugoslavia), found in Jordan Grabul's file in the Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje, proclaims the monument as "the Kruševo Mace."

form of the Makedonium recalls both the utopian preference for spherical architecture, while at the same time its protruding windows echo the Star of Vergina.⁸⁵

The Makedonium itself was designed by architect Iskra Grabul,⁸⁶ in collaboration with her husband Jordan Grabul, who created a series of interior sculptures for the building. Jordan created eight reliefs for the inside of the Makedonium, situated in pairs, with one on each side of the windows comprising the lower level. Before discussing these reliefs at length, we should consider the other contents of the building's interior space, which has been altered since the memorial's original inauguration in 1974. Located at the center of the interior of the Makedonium is a small circle of raised geometric forms, split apart along radiating lines to form another sun motif evocative of the Vergina Star

⁸⁵ The Makedonium bears a strong visual relationship to other works created during the same period in Yugoslavia, but at the same time some of its closest visual and conceptual affinities are with the speculative architectural designs of 18th-century French architects Étienne-Louis Boullée, Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, and Jean-Jacques Lequeu, whose proto-surrealist influence can of course also be seen in the works of socialist-era architects such as Bogdan Bogdanović. (For example, Bogdanović devoted a chapter of his fictional-theoretical-architectural text *Zaludna Mistrija* to Ledoux. See Bogdanović, *Zaludna Mistrija: Doktrina i Praktika Bratstva Zlatnih (Crnih) Brojeva* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1963), pp. 92–110.) For an overview of these three French architects, see Emil Kaufmann, "Three Revolutionary Architects: Boullée, Ledoux, and Lequeu," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 42:3 (1952), pp. 431–564. All of these architects exhibited a recurring interest in the sphere as a form that represented metaphysical perfection, and that bridged the gap between the earth and the cosmos.

Probably the strongest visual relationship is to certain works by Lequeu: the Makedonium's spiked dome seems a direct reference to Lequeu's *Lieu des oraisons Persanes*. That imagined structure, with its dome of radiating rays and the progression of the zodiac emblazoned within its arc, is quite close to the spirit of the Makedonium. Likewise, Lequeu's design for a *Temple de la terre* links the earthly sphere to its surrounding, cosmic space through the iteration of stars across its dome—a strategy that the Makedonium achieves thanks to Borko Lazeski's stained glass windows, discussed below. (See Emil Kaufmann, "Three Revolutionary Architects," pp. 542, and Emil Kaufmann, "Étienne-Louis Boullée," *Art Bulletin* 21:3 (September, 1939), p. 213.) Such utopian architectural references fit quite logically with the Grabul's attempts to construct a universalizing spatial experience (although there is some irony to the fact that the Makedonium—a monument commemorating a national struggle against 'eastern' forces, the Ottomans—would bear such an obvious resemblance to Lequeu's *Lieu des oraisons Persanes*.)

⁸⁶ It is lamentable to note that Iskra Grabul is only sometimes credited for her work on the Makedonium. In socialist-era publications such as Zdunić, *Revolucionarno Kiparstvo*, Jordan Grabul alone is credited with the creation of the monument, despite the fact that the plaque on the Makedonium lists Iskra as the architect and Jordan as the sculptor. This is also true of some contemporary sources in Macedonian and English alike. (For example, the official explanatory text recently installed at the entrance to the memorial complex mentions only Jordan Grabul and Petar Mazev. Fortunately, Keith Brown's careful treatment of Iskra's role in the design of the monument seems to have alleviated this oversight in many popular references to the site.

[**Figure 3.20**]. This central motif also serves as an eternal flame; it is lit from below with a pulsating ruddy electric light. Directly beyond this radial form, opposite the entrance, is a low sarcophagus with a tilted white cube raised up from it. The cube bears the inscription “Nikola Karev 1877–1905.” This marker commemorating Karev stands flanked by two flags and painted portraits of Karev and Pitu Guli (a Vlach revolutionary who played an important role in the Ilinden Uprising). These sarcophagus and portraits, together with a series of moveable vertical informational displays related to the history of the region and the uprising, were added to the space more than a decade after its initial creation. The sculptural form bearing Karev’s name marks the new location of his remains, which were moved from the basement of the town museum to the interior of the Ilinden memorial in April, 1990 [see **Figure 3.20**].⁸⁷ The sarcophagus and accompanying marker were also designed (later than the Makedonium, of course) by Iskra Grabul. According to Keith Brown, who interviewed the architect before her death, Iskra continued to consider Karev “an international figure, whose goal was to have all nationalities live together peacefully.”⁸⁸ However, the inclusion of the sarcophagus within the Makedonium produced a consolidation of the monument’s meaning in terms of Karev’s life—and specifically in terms of Karev as a Macedonian nationalist figure, rather than an internationally-oriented socialist. There is no small amount of irony in this

⁸⁷ Brown devotes an entire chapter to discussing the complexities of the re-evaluations of both Nikola Karev and Pitu Guli that took place during the 1980s and early 1990s, including the relocation of Karev’s remains and the reframing of his contribution in nationalist—rather than socialist—terms. (See Brown, *The Past in Question*, esp. pp. 192–195.) The fact that Karev’s remains were accompanied by Orthodox burial rites when they were relocated solidified a new, much more culturally specific narrative around Karev’s role in the establishment of the Ilinden Republic.

⁸⁸ Brown, *The Past in Question*, p. 193. Brown notes that, according to Iskra Grabul, Karev’s family wished the sarcophagus to be placed in the center of the interior space, but Iskra insisted that it be placed to one side, in order to avoid the impression that it was the most important element in the Makedonium (and to avoid disrupting the original layout of the interior, which featured the eternal flame at its center).

shift in interpretation, since it was precisely Karev's socialist leanings that made him an appealing figure for historians in Yugoslavia.

It is not only the more overtly nationalist interpretation of Karev's life that produces a different mode of historical consciousness within the Ilinden memorial, however. Even the relocation of Karev's remains to the cupola of the memorial complex changes the dynamic of the space significantly because it shifts the kind of experience of embodiment that the visitor has in the complex as a whole. As noted above, the crypt already gives the impression of being an ossuary, and thus of producing a real, material proximity between the (numerous, and dispersed) protagonists of history enumerated therein and the visitor to the site. The actual presence of Karev's remains in the Makedonium, and the relatively prominent visual role of the sarcophagus in the space, give the impression that it is Karev's body that functions as the culminating materialization of history. In a sense, this both continues and contradicts the role of the crypt: there (as also in the case of Jordan Grabul's reliefs), visitors experience their own bodies as a kind of supplement to the materialization of history. With Karev's mortal remains emphasized, both the multiplicity of names, places, and dates in the crypt and the significance of the visitor's presence are partially negated. Furthermore, what was once a progression from the past (the remembered oppression and release of *Broken Fetters*, and the version of history presented in the crypt) to the present (and future) represented in the Makedonium and Jordan's reliefs becomes instead a final return to the past. As much as the new configuration of the space attempts to emphasize Karev's enduring legacy, it also ties the meaning of the monument primarily to a single human life, and in the process

leaves behind the artists' attempts to link the Ilinden Uprising to subsequent Partisan struggles against fascist occupation.

Having considered the alteration of the interior of the Makedonium in and after 1990, I now turn to the space as it was first conceived, and in particular to Jordan Grabul's series of reliefs in the windows of the building. The first row of windows in the Makedonium begin, relative to the interior floor level, just slightly above the height of the floor, and are tall enough to permit a person to step into the space where the window protrudes from the spherical form of the monument [Figures 3.10, 3.19]. Thus, each of the four windows creates an intimate, cavern-like gallery space in which a viewer can approach the oval of the glass and gaze outward from a specific viewpoint. The intimacy of these spaces is heightened by Jordan's cast concrete sculptures, which are—like the interior walls of the building—painted entirely white. Their monochromaticity helps them appear to emerge organically from the concave arc of the gallery walls adjacent to the windows, giving the visitor the impression that the very material of the walls of the structure is in the process of transformation.

This organic character is one of the aspects that separates Jordan Grabul's reliefs in the Makedonium from many other monuments in Yugoslavia, including the sculptor's own other works in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. As discussed above, monuments (to the Partisan resistance, to the victims of the Second World War, and otherwise) from Yugoslavia's socialist period are both stylistically and architecturally diverse. They sometimes included figural representation, and sometimes relied entirely on formal relationships of material, light, and space to convey their meanings and create a mnemonically fecund environment. Jordan's other monumental works spanned both ends

of this continuum. In 1961, Jordan created a bronze relief for a monument⁸⁹ to the National Liberation War in Butel, a district on the northern edge of Skopje [Figure 3.35]. In 1963, he created another relief for the ossuary in Kičevo, and in 1965, he created a figural ensemble in concrete entitled *Power, Glory, and Victory* (*Сила, Слава и Победа*) placed within the castle in Skopje, depicting a Partisan soldier crouched beside a young woman raising a laurel branch in her hands [Figure 3.36]. While all of these works are overtly figurative, they share stylistic elements with his work in Kruševo: his figures are often composed of short arcs, and limbs (as well as weapons) are interwoven with each other and with amorphous backgrounds in ways that foreshadow the Makedonium reliefs.⁹⁰

In 1969, Jordan also created a monument in Gevgelija, constructed from aluminum plates installed on a steel frame. The sculpture resembles a tall, abstracted flower (reminiscent of Bogdan Bogdanović's monument at Jasenovac), blooming at the top from the convergence of four stems that give the sculpture an overall diamond shape [Figure 3.37]. The monument is known as the "Flower of Freedom," and, like the Kruševo memorial, is dedicated to struggles around Gevgelija both during the Ilinden Uprising and subsequently during the Second World War.⁹¹ It was inaugurated November 7, 1969, the 25th anniversary of the victory of Yugoslavia's Partisan forces over the

⁸⁹ The architect of the monument was Dušan Pecovski. See Zdunić, *Revolucionarno Kiparstvo*, p. 151.

⁹⁰ In his relief at the Butel cemetery and in *Power, Glory, and Victory*, Jordan interwove branches with the limbs of the figures, creating a parallelism between the human body and nonhuman organic forms. This interrelation of the human and the nonhuman at the formal level likewise seems to form a bridge that culminates in the Makedonium: between easily legible figuration and the abstract yet lyrical forms Jordan was exhibiting in galleries in the same period.

⁹¹ For an overview of the monument, see Donald Niebyl, "Gevgelija," *Spomenik Database*, 2016, <http://www.spomenikdatabase.org/gevgelija> (accessed July 21, 2018). See also Trajkovski, *Преглед на Споменниците*, plate 23 (n.p.).

fascists in the town. In its original site, on Vardar Hill,⁹² the monument was accompanied by three concrete stele bearing mosaics designed by Jordan, depicting (respectively) the unity of the Macedonian nation, the Ilinden Uprising, and the victorious Partisan forces. The second of these reliefs, in particular, bears a strong compositional similarity to Jordan's subsequent reliefs for the Ilinden memorial [**Figure 3.38**]. A group of figures explodes outward from the center of the composition, creating a star-shaped motif. Beyond this particular resemblance to the later composition of the reliefs, however, the Gevgelija memorial complex's combination of figurative narration with a highly abstracted organic form seems to have served as a predecessor to the concept for the Ilinden monument.⁹³

In the same year that the Kruševo memorial complex was originally slated for completion (1973), Jordan created a monument to the Council of Prespa in Oteševo [**Figure 3.39**].⁹⁴ This work relies entirely on an abstract vocabulary to convey its message, presenting a series of white concrete arcs that both encompass the visitor's entrance into the inner space of the monument and—from outside—resemble flames rising skyward.⁹⁵ The motif of rising, writhing, flame-like forms seems to be present in some of the earlier studies for the reliefs at Kruševo, visible in the background of a

⁹² It was subsequently moved to another location near the town, after construction of a new road uncovered an archaeological site on Vardar Hill. See Niebyl, "Gevgelija."

⁹³ A series of sketches apparently pertaining to the designs for the Ilinden memorial, in Jordan Grabul's personal papers, make this connection between the Gevgelija monument and the Ilinden one even more explicit. The sketches include one of the Makedonium in which the form is more reminiscent of a giant seedpod (rather than a sphere), as well as several sketches that the reproductive apparatuses of flowers to the composition of individual cells. There is a kind of clear transition between the flower forms that Jordan sketched for the Gevgelija monument and the initial designs for the Makedonium reliefs. This fusion of plant and human biology not only adds another potential level of meaning to the monument, but also reflects the intertwining of human forms and vegetation in his earlier relief sculpture. See the sketches in DARM, fond 1066, box 6, folder 25, 207/929–936.

⁹⁴ See Trajkovski, *Преглед на Спомениците*, plate 21 (n.p.).

⁹⁵ The monument at Oteševo also bears a strong resemblance to Jordan's sculptures exhibited in his 1970 solo exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje. See above for my discussion of these works, and their stylistic significance.

photograph of Iskra Grabul with a model of the Makedonium [Figure 3.40]. In the final versions, it seems, Jordan settled on more concentrated compositions, subsuming his twisting forms to a more symmetrical and rigorous geometry (which in turn subsumed their depiction of history even more completely to their architectural surroundings): each of Jordan's sculptures in the Ilinden memorial is roughly circular in composition.⁹⁶ In each case, the central circular form or group of forms stands out in high relief against a backdrop of fragmented platelets that extends across the entire surface of the wall encapsulating each window. As such, the central forms appear to rise up, as if emerging from a dried lakebed, at the same time that the fractured surface complements the spray of colored light produced by Borko Lazeski's four stained glass windows above [Figure 3.21].

The first of Jordan's reliefs⁹⁷ depicts a grouping of forms that recalls an embryo: a multilayered sphere is shorn away to reveal a collection of spheres and gourd-shaped forms, while a single channel allows teardrop shapes to enter and leave the enclosed circle. Outside this primary form, several other smaller forms hover. [See Figure 3.11] Some are similarly globular, while others are characterized by sheer, geometric surface planes. The biomorphic character of the forms in this first relief set a distinctive tone for

⁹⁶ Jordan's reliefs bear a strong visual affinity with Italian sculptor Arnaldo Pomodoro's works, especially those from the *Sfera* series, which the artist began in 1963. (See Sam Hunter, "Within/Without: Arnaldo Pomodoro," *Sculpture* 27:3 (April, 2008), p. 30.) Pomodoro's sculptures, like Jordan's reliefs, experiment with the sphere as a basic form from which and into which a multiplicity of architectural and organic forms emerge and dissolve. For both artists, the sphere represents, it seems, perfection: "a promise for the future" (in Pomodoro's words) (qtd. in Laura Tansini, "Movement in Progress: A conversation with Arnaldo Pomodoro," *Sculpture* 24:4 (May, 2005), p. 29.) However, Pomodoro's works are far more definitively about structural decay and erosion, and about the built environment, while Jordan's reliefs appear as accumulative as they are erosive, and appear more firmly anchored to the sculptural language of biomorphic abstraction.

⁹⁷ My sequential analysis of the reliefs within the Makedonium proceeds clockwise, beginning with the window located immediately to the left of the entrance—that is, with the window that faces roughly southwest. The subsequent windows containing reliefs face, respectively, northwest, northeast, and southeast.

the experience of the space as a whole. Indeed, while other of the sculptures contain forms recognizable as human figures, it is perhaps most directly the suggestion of embryonic development in the first relief that links the otherwise cosmic vocabulary of the monument with the body of the viewer. The series of reliefs as a whole is meant to represent the a history of struggle from the National Awakening to the Ilinden Uprising, carried forward through the Partisan resistance and culminating in the socialist present. By beginning at a microscopic organic level, the sculptures assert the intertwinement of history (or perhaps better, History) with the maturation of the human body.⁹⁸ This is reinforced by the redoubling of the spherical form: the Makedonium as a whole appears to the viewer as a possible reflection of the scenes illustrated in each of the circular reliefs, and from the first relief takes on a womblike character.

Directly across from the first sculpture, the second relief displays a decidedly more constrained composition: rather than being bisected to reveal its interior, the central sphere encases a mass of smaller forms that burst out through several small holes in its surface [Figure 3.12]. The tableau gives the impression at once of birth and escape from imprisonment, heightened by the recurrence of broken chain links at the lower right (reflecting the *Broken Fetters* at the entrance to the complex). The forms issuing forth from the sphere resemble heads, arms, and legs, but as they disperse in the space around it, they become atomized, floating and merging with the fractured surface of the walls.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ This is why the inclusion of Karev's remains, while ultimately only a minor alteration, potentially changes the meaning of the monument so tremendously. Before the placement of the sarcophagus in the building, viewers themselves could stand in as the 'body' in which history materialized, could see themselves as a reflection of the processes unfolding throughout the reliefs. With Karev's remains present, the implication is that the 'body' of history is not universal, but is in fact specifically Karev's.

⁹⁹ Grabul described the four galleries (each containing two reliefs) as having four distinct (chronologically consecutive) themes: "Revival" (*Преродба*), "Ilinden" (*Илинден*), "the National

The set of reliefs in the second window gallery depicts the emergence of conflict, correlating with the Ilinden Uprising itself [**Figures 3.13–3.14**]. The first of the pair of reliefs shows the central sphere ruptured by a cluster of cylindrical forms that clearly represent rifles, aimed outwards in the direction of the window. Within the heart of the sphere, a multitude of abstracted figures appear gathered, while outside the sphere, other rifles and sinuous threads wind their way across the cracked background surface. Across from this image of war is one that seems to symbolize the unity brought about by the uprising: the circular central motif is fragmented, but its edges are woven together by a series of different smaller geometric and organic forms. These participants in the consolidation of the sphere—some winding and linear, others globulous, others possessing hard edges and sheer surfaces—enter from all sides, converging towards a smaller circle at the center of the relief, where the amorphous forms submerge and surround the more geometric ones. The implication is of different groups coming together in a kind of harmony, securing the structural integrity of the form as a whole. (Again, the particular sculpture seems to serve as a visual synecdoche for the entire Makedonium, which likewise seems to draw together not only different directions, but also the earth and the sky as elemental paradigms.)

The third window's gallery contains a pair of reliefs that seem to correspond to the formation and unification of the Partisan forces against the fascist occupiers [**Figures 3.15–3.16**]. The first of the pair continues the compositional structure of the second relief from the preceding window. The large central circle is broken into three pieces, and various forms (some recognizable as human figures) irrupt into its interior. At its very

Liberation Struggle" (*НОБ*), and "Freedom" (*Слобода*). See DARM, fond 1066, box 2, folder 25, 4/161–185.

center, a new sphere is born, resembling the one that appears at the center of the second relief in the first window, suggesting the culmination of the synthesis shown previously. The second relief in this gallery is the most overtly representational of all the sculptures present in the Makedonium: here, the circle is made up primarily of a group of shapes that resemble heads and torsos with raised arms. A central figure raises both arms in an ecstatic gesture, while others seem to push out at the edges of the sphere (or perhaps they are wielding weapons, whose thin cylinders burst outwards from the edge. A series of smaller slightly conical cylinders emerging perpendicular to the plane of the wall recall the forms of the cylinders in the crypt. These same forms also appear further down the arc of the wall, insinuating their gradual migration (and thus heightening the idea that they bear some relation to the crypt encountered earlier). The two reliefs in this window reflect a period of chaos and unification, the coming-together of bodies as well as abstract forces, constituting a vibrant power that seems to resolve in the final two reliefs.

The fourth window's reliefs are, in contrast to those in the third window's gallery, perhaps the most abstract [Figures 3.17–3.18]. Where many of the previous reliefs contained forms that suggested either human bodies, or (in the case of the first relief) the interior of those bodies, the final two reliefs barely contain any suggestion of particular bodies, and instead conjure, respectively, the chaos of organic matter, and the structural exactness of utopian architecture. In the first relief, the sphere that appeared at the center of some of the previous reliefs is reduced in size, and a series of twisting, snakelike lines travel outwards from the sphere, suggesting both rays of light and flows of vital force. The reading of these lines as rays of light is reinforced by their resemblance to a sun motif originally projected for the cobblestones directly beneath the ramp leading up to the

Makedonium's entrance [Figure 3.40].¹⁰⁰ Across from this surging composition, the final relief in Jordan's cycle presents a vision of rigorous order. The central spherical object recalls a suit of armor or some other exoskeletal framework, divided down the center into two identical halves, with oval depressions in each corner. At the top of the sphere, a cavity opens up to allow a series of discs to issue forth, and a similar cavity appears at the bottom. As in the other reliefs, the shapes present in the sphere are repeated in the fragmented background, implying their spread across space and time. The overwhelming regularity of this final relief contrasts sharply with the chaos of many of the earlier works in the cycle; it produces a sense of balance between containment and the eruption of force, between the individuation and particularization of types of forms and their aesthetic regularization and consolidation.

The overall effect of Jordan Grabul's reliefs strikes a delicate balance between a linear method of storytelling (and thus a linear conception of historical development) and a decidedly less linear—and more disruptive—vision of historical events that creates great leaps between microscopic and cosmic phenomena. This latter, telescopic mode of historical experience is produced by several factors. Foremost among these is the potentially atomistic reading of the reliefs (or the relief pairs): since each pair is set within the narrow gallery space, in relation to a single window, they juxtapose an intimately scaled space with a comparatively panoramic depth of vision. In other words, the viewing of a particular pair of reliefs always occurs in the context of the 'tunnel' of vision created by the windows, which (because of the monument's elevated position)

¹⁰⁰ It seems this aspect of the plan was altered at a later point in the process of creating the monument. While the cobblestones beneath the ramp are arranged in a pattern similar to that visible in the photograph, the stones used are so similar in color that the pattern can barely be detected.

would originally have provided a line of sight out over quite distant areas.¹⁰¹ At the same time, many of the individual reliefs can be read as depicting various scales: it is not always clear whether they depict processes interior to the human body, between human bodies, between architectural forms, or even between celestial bodies.

The celestial associations of the history narrated by the Ilinden memorial are reinforced both by the star-like shape of the Makedonium, as well as by the set of stained glass windows installed within the second set of windows. These windows, designed by the famous Macedonian painter Borko Lazeski,¹⁰² allow colored light to filter down into the otherwise starkly white interior of the sphere. Each of the four windows, respectively, is composed primarily using shades of a single color: green, blue, yellow, and purple, although each window also contains pieces of glass spanning the full spectrum.¹⁰³ Lazeski's compositions are abstract, but their angular character echoes both Mazev's theater outside the Makedonium, and the fragmented background surfaces Jordan created in the window galleries. Furthermore, the thicker muntins in each of the stained glass windows form radiating lines and consecutive ovals around a circle centered on a cross, corresponding to both the overall symmetry of the monument and the individual reliefs.¹⁰⁴ Points of color created by light passing through the stained glass windows falls across the

¹⁰¹ Currently, the growth of trees on the hill surrounding the monument frequently blocks the longer line of sight that the windows would previously have offered.

¹⁰² Lazeski was, like Jordan Grabul, born in Prilep. He was known primarily for his monumental fresco paintings, but also created several mosaics and works in stained glass. See Višinski, *Modern Macedonian Painting*, p. 76. Lazeski was—like Jordan Grabul—a member of the Денеч group, which focused on the fusion of architecture with painting, sculpture, and the decorative arts.

¹⁰³ According to the website of the Kruševo museum, these four windows represent the four seasons. See Kruševo Historical Museum, https://imk.mk/?page_id=81# (accessed July 16, 2018).

¹⁰⁴ When compared to the photograph of Iskra Grabul with the earlier design for the monument, the final layout of the came in the windows emphasizes even more definitively the multiplicity of circles and oblong shapes present in the space. The earlier design for the window muntins was structured around a vertical, lens-shaped form radiating outward. This seems to have matched Jordan's earlier, less overtly circular plan for the reliefs, but was not otherwise echoed in the overall design of the building.

walls and floor of the Makedonium, changing over the course of the day [Figure 3.21]. The points of light cast across the interior of the monument resemble constellations, as if they reflect the most distant reaches of the sky transposed back into the sphere.

V. Temporality¹⁰⁵ and the Ilinden Memorial Complex

I have been discussing the Kruševo monument's meaning primarily in terms of progression and formal harmony: the linear development of elements from one element to the next, and the internal reflection of its most basic forms, which tend to reinforce each other, both within the Makedonium and within the complex as a whole. However, I wish to argue that the model of time produced by the memorial complex as a whole (excluding the subsequent inclusion of Nikola Karev's remains) also presents a model of 'revolutionary temporality,' of the kind discussed briefly in Chapter 1, and expanded somewhat in the discussion of the Vlora *Independence Monument* in Chapter 2. The co-existence of a more traditional model of historical time with this revolutionary temporality¹⁰⁶ might be termed *avant-garde*,¹⁰⁷ in a very specific sense of the term,

¹⁰⁵ Here, I occasionally use the terms "time" and "temporality" interchangeably, but I generally distinguish time as an extant, objective structuring of events, while temporality describes the understanding and perception of time by individuals and groups.

¹⁰⁶ Historian Gal Kirn also uses the notion of "revolutionary temporality" in the context of his discussion of Partisan poetry from the Yugoslavian National Liberation Struggle. See Gal Kirn, "Multiple Temporalities of the Partisan Struggle: From Post-Yugoslav Nationalist Reconciliation Back to Partisan Poetry," in *Multistable Figures: On the Critical Potential of Ir/Reversible Aspect-Seeing*, ed. Christoph F. E. Holzhey (Vienna: Turia & Kant, 2014), pp. 163–191, and Gal Kirn, "Towards the Partisan Counter-Archive: Poetry, Sculpture, and Film on/of the People's Liberation Struggle," *Slavica Tergestina* 17 (2016), p. 106. For Kirn, the 'revolutionary' quality of temporality in the case of cultural objects related to the Partisan resistance derives primarily from their orientation towards the future. While I find Kirn's analysis to be, in general, compelling and original, I do not believe that he reckons sufficiently with the differences between cultural production contemporaneous with the Partisan struggle (such as poems) and works constructed later, looking back at this period retrospectively. Nor do I think he explores the full nuances of monuments simultaneously devoted to other (previous or subsequent) historical events *and* to the Partisan resistance, as is the case with the Ilinden memorial.

For my discussion here, the 'revolutionary' or disruptive quality of the temporality presented by certain examples of socialist monumentality derives not only from their orientation towards the future, and their depiction of the Partisan struggle as a "rupture" (Kirn, "Multiple Temporalities," p. 178), but also from the uneasy coexistence of heterogenous temporalities alongside a linear, accretive model of historical progress. The multiplicity of temporalities that Kirn identifies and frames as rupture derives, in my view,

because it is produced out of the productive (and agonistic) interaction between premodern and modern conceptions of time.¹⁰⁸ Here, I adapt philosopher Peter Osborne's description of avant-garde temporality: "the avant-garde is not that which is most historically advanced in the sense that [...] it has the most history behind it [...]. The avant-garde is that which, in the flash of the dialectical image, disrupts the linear consciousness of progress in such a way as to enable us [...] to 'discover the new anew,' and with it, the possibility of a better future."¹⁰⁹ What is most significant about this kind of temporality is not that it comes at the end of history (as Vladimir Paperny characterized Stalinist culture),¹¹⁰ but that it encourages the irruption of the past into the present and opens up new futures only out of the unsteady conditions of this disturbance.

This irruption is, according to Osborne, akin to what Walter Benjamin described as "Messianic time," in which history is condensed in "an enormous abridgment."¹¹¹ The standpoint of the Messianic exists to a degree outside of historical time, and it serves to assert the *difference* of times that historicism (concerned with a linear and causal unfolding of discrete events) ignores. In the course of the experiential (phenomenological) encounter with the Kruševo memorial complex, the visitor is placed

not solely from the conditions of the Partisan struggle, but from its subsequent *overlay* with the 'revolutionary' (projected) qualities of socialist time and society. These times also derive from the attempt to reconcile the Partisan resistance with earlier historical struggles, as in the case of the Kruševo monument's treatment of the Ilinden Uprising.

¹⁰⁷ See Roberts, *Revolutionary Time*, p. 49.

¹⁰⁸ See Steven S. Lee, *The Ethnic Avant-Garde*, pp. 25–27.

¹⁰⁹ Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p. 150. Steven S. Lee also adapts this definition for his discussion of the international, multiethnic avant-garde. Like Lee, I find the definition useful because it releases us from the emphasis on the relations between artists and art institutions that has characterized many models of the avant-garde, and opens up a more theoretically general field of inquiry.

¹¹⁰ Paperny, *Architecture in the Age of Stalin*, p. 18.

¹¹¹ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 2007), p. 263.

at the crux of these two modes of time.¹¹² The structural directionality of the site—which has a quite clearly defined beginning and end—as well as the emphasis on chronology within the crypt (and in some ways in Jordan’s reliefs) present a historicist reading of time, one in which causal progressions are direct, producing a clearly legible chain of events that culminates in a specific historical configuration. Simultaneously, however, the very repetition of elements throughout the memorial complex suggests not a smooth flow of time but a punctuated history, in which sudden eruptions produce moments fraught with new possibilities. The constant shift of specific repeated shapes within Jordan’s reliefs—growing in size then shrinking, fragmenting then reassembling—engender an experience of temporal differentiation within the duration of the visitor’s encounter. The placement of the pairs of reliefs across from each other, and perpendicular to the plane of the window, heightens the potential agonism of the encounter, for it would be just as possible to read each pair of reliefs as an episode unfolding between two intertwined forces, rather than as a transition from one condition to another.

Spatially, the distribution of the reliefs within the Makedonium emphasizes the multidirectionality of historical movement: the general form of the structure, with its numerous windows, presents a material trajectory that can be traversed in numerous ways, and which draws the viewer in several directions at once. Additionally, each individual relief seems permeable to flows that both enter and depart from the central

¹¹² It is in fact possible to theorize a third mode of temporality at play in the monument, one that is cyclical in nature. This reading is encouraged by the circular layout of the Makedonium’s interior, as well as by the potentially ambiguous qualities of Jordan Grabul’s relief cycle. One could understand the monument as presenting a narrative of continual birth and development, although there seems to be no clear image of destruction, fall, or collapse, from which a new beginning might spring. This cyclical reading can only partially coincide with the mode of ‘revolutionary’ time presented by the repetition of the Ilinden Uprising in the Partisan resistance. The very idea that the former is recapitulated or renewed in the latter is also closely intertwined with the new meaning of the latter, with the possibility that the beginning of socialism marks a fundamentally *different* time.

spherical motif, and these flows suggest a perpetual porosity that is sometimes precarious and at other times ebullient.

Also key to the distribution of the reliefs, their sculptural relation to the structure as a whole, and their subject matter is the notion of repetition. The nationalist overtones of the monument's symbolism—and the nationalist interpretation of the Ilinden Uprising—suggest that this repetition constitutes a return to a primordial form of identity, underlying ongoing struggles dispersed throughout history.¹¹³ Simultaneously, the repetition figured by the memorial complex, and its final structure in particular, is one of difference,¹¹⁴ in which the second struggle (that of the Partisans in the 1940s) also represents a qualitatively different historical event from the Ilinden Uprising, one that opens up new possible futures for society and new possible identities. This repetition multiplies itself chronologically, from one event to the next, but also simultaneously between the physical and the metaphysical (from the genesis of the body in the embryo to the repeated form of the sun, which also appears to emerge out of reliefs perceived as a progression). These two forms of repetition are, I argue, inseparable in the memorial complex: neither one fully dominates the historical narrative presented. It is this ambiguity—perhaps intentional, perhaps unavoidable—that makes the Ilinden complex such a productive example of commemorative sculpture in the context of postwar Yugoslavia, since it lays bear the productive schism at the heart of the socialist monument. The monument is at once an assurance of continuity, of the underlying

¹¹³ For comparison, see the brief discussion of the conflicting models of 'primordial' and 'synthetic' Yugoslav identity in Chapter 1 above.

¹¹⁴ On the theory of the role of difference in relation to repetition, see Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). For Deleuze, differentiation—not identity—is key to the process of repetition. Repetition occurs precisely because the new iteration is different from its predecessor, not the same.

identity of history's subject (and the subject perceiving history), and at the same time an assertion of rupture, of the beginning of something new that could never fully have been prefigured by prior events.

We might also perceive these modes of repetition in the case of monumental sculpture in Yugoslavia in relation to the preceding history of modernism. The meaning of socialist monuments as “modernist” structures was of course different depending upon the different historical contexts that prevailed in the different constituent republics, some of which had richer traditions of modernist art upon which to draw than others. We must also keep in mind the inconsistent and variable forms of modernism present even within a single monument: the entire Ilinden complex, for example, freely incorporates styles indebted to the biomorphic forms of Surrealism, the angularity of Cubo-Futurism and Minimalism, and the modularity of Metabolist architecture. This willful eclecticism is in keeping with the longer history of the development of aesthetic modernism in Eastern Europe, a historical development that has rarely followed teleologies of stylistic purity. The turn away from Socialist Realism towards various forms of aesthetic modernism in Yugoslavia played a role that was particular to Yugoslavia's political stance in relation to the USSR, the capitalist West, and other non-aligned nations. We are thus presented with several ways to interpret the modernism of socialist monuments such as the Ilinden memorial (I give these interpretations in no particular order): 1) as evidence of modernism's apolitical association, and thus of its utility to the socialist state as a neutral visual paradigm;¹¹⁵ 2) as evidence of the socialist state's intentional cooptation of

¹¹⁵ On this interpretation of socialist modernism more generally in Yugoslavia, see Ješa Denegri, “Inside or Outside ‘Socialist Modernism’?”, pp. 175–177. Denegri refers to the politically neutral turn to modernist, abstract styles beginning in the 1950s (and their alignment with official projects) as “socialist aestheticism.” This term is also used by art historian Sveta Lukic in her discussion of apolitical modernist

modernist styles to produce effective propaganda;¹¹⁶ 3) as evidence of Yugoslavia's newfound global position (especially by the 1960s) as a viable socialist alternative to the USSR, avoiding the latter's centralizing tendencies—as an aesthetic 'between' those of the Cold War East and of the West;¹¹⁷ 4) as the internal rejection of rigid doctrines of Socialist Realism and the embrace of a much more diverse array of visual languages,¹¹⁸ driven in part by Yugoslavia's openness to capitalist culture and patterns of consumptions; 5) as the discovery of a necessary and authentic language to reflect the unique character of the Partisan struggle.¹¹⁹

Thus, the 'repetition' of modernism in the context of socialist monuments ranges from a position of complicity to an avant-garde effort to revolutionize the encounter with history. The institutionalization of aesthetic modernism in the Cold War years in Yugoslavia would seem to belie the possibility of a return of the disruptive possibilities present, for example, in the interwar avant-gardes in the same region, although at the same time this institutionalization (potentially) represented the victory of movements such as constructivist utopianism from before the Second World War. It is impossible to

art from Yugoslavia. See Lukic, "Socijalistički estetizam," in *Umetnost na mostu* (Beograd: Ideje, 1975), qtd. in Videkanić, p. 120.

¹¹⁶ Unlike the previous interpretation, this one assumes that modernism was not simply a neutral distraction from critical stances in art, but actually aesthetically served as a productive field for socialist propaganda. On this interpretation, see Bojana Videkanić, *Non-Aligned Modernism*, pp. 92–165.

¹¹⁷ Vladimir Kulić and Maroje Mrdulaš discuss aspects of this mediatory global role in Kulić, Mrduljaš, and Thaler, *Modernism In-Between*. Bojana Videkanić also examines the transnational implications of Yugoslavia's socialist modernism in *Non-Aligned Modernism*, pp. 95–123.

¹¹⁸ Many of the artists active as creators of monuments in the 1960s through the 1980s still possess a dual legacy, as both innovators in abstraction, and as complicit "state artists." As the WHW (What, How, and For Whom) curatorial collective points out, this has been particularly true of the historical interpretation of Vojin Bakić, discussed above. See WHW, "Mission Impossible V: Revisiting Modernism," *Galerija Nova Newspapers* 17 (2009), p. 3.

¹¹⁹ This last interpretation is the position taken by Gal Kirn's analysis of socialist monumental sculpture. Kirn sees the monuments created between the 1960s and the 1980s in Yugoslavia as "proper sculptural formalization" of the "Partisan rupture." Kirn views this as an "immanent process" that came primarily from 'below' rather than from the Yugoslav central governing bodies. See Kirn, "Towards the Partisan Counter-Archive," p. 118.

ignore the significance of the *content* associated with monuments in particular produced during this time.¹²⁰ Through the visibility of monuments, aesthetic modernism was tied to the social culmination of the antifascist struggle in the socialist state, and in turn the socialist state was viewed as a medium for the transnational development of a viable socialist (global) unity. The apparent universality or ‘timelessness’ of aesthetic modernism during the Cold War allowed—and even encouraged—the association of a new, radical content with ideologically charged forms that could be traced back to earlier periods of experimentation with various modernist styles.

This brings us to another question raised by the ‘time’ of socialist monumentality, and its relation to history, a question that will be particularly significant for the discussion to unfold in subsequent chapters: how can we best conceptualize socialist monumentality in the context of postwar art history broadly construed? Of course, this question is too general; this and the previous chapter have dealt, respectively, with radically different visual paradigms operative in monumental production. However, even beginning within the relatively narrow framework of the Ilinden memorial, I think we can already offer an answer to this question that is quite far-reaching in its implications. To do so, I want to consider a particular interpretation of a parallel case: the transition from the historical avant-garde to the neo-avant-garde in the ‘West’ (in this case, in America). In 1996, art historian Hal Foster offered one of the most original analyses of this transition in his book *The Return of the Real*,¹²¹ and the account that he presented there serves as a useful juxtaposition to the one I lay out here.

¹²⁰ Kirn, “Anti-fascist Memorial Sites,” pp. 123–124.

¹²¹ Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (New York: MIT Press, 1996).

In this dissertation, I am concerned with complicating the relationship of the neo-avant-gardes and post-avant-gardes of contemporary art to their pasts, to understand the ways that they repeat or recapitulate earlier positions. This project finds a parallel in Foster's attempt to chart the changes in postwar art from the 1960s to the close of the century. One of the most compelling aspects of Foster's history of the development of the neo-avant-garde as an artistically and ideologically unified phenomenon is the crucial role he assigns to Minimalism. For Foster, Minimalism is the "crux" that moves artistic production away from high modernism and towards a new understanding of art based on a self-conscious engagement with the process of perception: the viewer is "prompted to explore the perceptual consequences of a particular intervention at a given site."¹²² This description already suggests an association with monumentality, especially with monuments, although of course also Minimalism sought to remove the symbolic and lyrical associations that were typically characteristic of earlier modernist sculpture.¹²³ In this exploration of 'perceptual consequences,' Foster argues that Minimalism "seeks to overcome ... metaphysical dualisms of subject and object," and it does so by focusing on the body's spatiotemporal encounter with objects that appear as present to and with that body.¹²⁴

¹²² Foster, *The Return of the Real*, p. 38.

¹²³ Minimalism also arose not simply out of a critique or development of the tradition of sculpture but perhaps even more so out of the critique of modernist painting.

¹²⁴ Foster, *The Return of the Real*, pp. 40, 43. Foster engages in a lengthy analysis of art critic Michael Fried's analysis of Minimalism, ultimately asserting that Fried understood Minimalism's threat to late modernism quite well. While an engagement with Fried's ideas cannot add a great deal to the present discussion—which pertains to a historical context quite different than Fried's critique of Minimalism—it is worth noting (with Foster) that Fried identified and criticized Minimalism as "largely ideological." See Fried, qtd. in Foster, *The Return of the Real*, p. 56. This recognition of the ideological content of Minimalism allows us to make a crucial connection in the present discussion, to link a response to formalist high modernism to the broader aesthetic politics of the Cold War, which of course also included

Here I want to argue that socialist monumental sculpture functions as a similar ‘crux’ for the development of subsequent artistic practices, in the late socialist and especially in the postsocialist period. There are numerous aspects to this function, as indicated by the divergent interpretations of socialist monumental modernism elaborated above. Nonetheless, we can identify some of them specifically in the present context. According to Foster, it is in Minimalism and subsequently in Pop Art that “serial production made consistently integral to the technical production” of art, and this introduction of seriality as a fundamental element of artistic creation provided a basis for the neo-avant-garde’s praxis.¹²⁵ In the case of socialist monumentality, it is simultaneously socialist monumentality’s collective (historical) praxis and its emphasis on the experience of (historical) time as a radical political experience that has presented subsequent artistic engagements (neo-avant-garde and otherwise) with a new paradigm for artistic production.¹²⁶ In other words, monumental construction—always to some degree a collaborative process, often one explicitly involving non-artists—helped establish the artistic engagement with history as a collective engagement. At the same time, it figured this engagement with history in terms of contemporaneity: the togetherness-in-time of socialist citizens around the globe (and also the togetherness-in-

¹²⁵ Foster, *The Return of the Real*, p. 63.

¹²⁶ It is necessary to reiterate that the apparently vast aesthetic gap between (neo-)avant-garde artistic practice and monumental construction (in response to state commissions) is bridged in this case by the involvement of artists in both arenas (Vojin Bakić being one example, Jordan Grabul being another). Often, the divide between monumental, official art and avant-garde or radically modernist practice is framed as an ideological one. This is true even of authors who endeavor to do justice to the nuances of the political situation in the former Eastern Europe, such as Piotr Piotrowski. For Piotrowski, for example, the embrace of abstraction was always already politically weighted because it turned against official socialist culture; this is certainly true in many cases. However, Piotrowski fails to fully consider situations in which the embrace of radical, utopian aesthetics from the historical avant-garde did not simply “function...as a fig leaf for the totalitarian system of power,” but in fact united artists around an authentic vision for the future of the postwar world. (See Piotr Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta*, pp. 141–142.) Thus, there was not always ideological opposition between postwar artists working in aesthetically modernist or avant-garde paradigms and socialist governments—in many cases, far from it.

time of the socialist East creating modernist public art on par with that produced in the West). Finally, however, this encounter with history took place—at least in countries such as Yugoslavia and Albania—always under the aegis of the temporal rupture represented by the antifascist struggle and the rise of socialist states out of that struggle. This rupture created a situation in which history could never be definitively monumentalized because of the radical character of the socialist present (and the condition of contemporaneity).

Socialist monuments occupied this contradictory position, and in many cases they remained open to the productive potential of this schism; the Ilinden memorial in Kruševo is just one example. However, it is one that, in its rich complexity, lays bare not only the specific historical navigations that took place in Yugoslavian monumental art during late socialism, but also more broadly the political and temporal stakes of socialist monumentality as a corpus. The end of socialism—not only its definitive end between 1989 and 1991, but also its gradual decline, especially over the course of the 80s decade—brought about numerous shifts in historical perception, including the perception of monumentality. Monumental heritage became problematized, and the relationship between contemporary artistic practice and history (or History) changed.

VI. Conclusion: New Futures or New Pasts?

It is impossible to undertake any discussion of the relationship between socialist and postsocialist monumentality in Macedonia (and indeed in the former Yugoslavia more broadly¹²⁷) without considering the recent Skopje 2014 urban renovation project,

¹²⁷ It is curious to note that—perhaps because of Macedonia’s perceived peripheral relationship to Yugoslavia—Skopje 2014 has not been closely linked to new projects linking public space and sculpture to nationalism in the other nations that emerged after Yugoslavia’s break-up. Perhaps because Skopje 2014 contests primarily an ancient heritage—associated in the European cultural imaginary with Greece—the

carried out in the Macedonian capital (primarily in the central areas of the city) beginning in 2010 [Figures 3.41–3.42]. Skopje 2014 has restructured the spatial and symbolic structure of Macedonian national identity, in ways that are quite different from the socialist-era attempt to transform historical consciousness through monumentality.¹²⁸ Specifically, Skopje 2014 attempts to create a new form of historical consciousness primarily through the monumental representation of actual historical and allegorical figures, ranging in chronology from the ancient and medieval past to the 20th century.¹²⁹ The project has proven popular with some segments of the Macedonian population, while fiercely controversial for others;¹³⁰ reasons for popular dissatisfaction range from the amount of money spent on the project, to the clear focus on ethnically Macedonian (Christian) historical figures,¹³¹ to the supposedly tasteless kitsch of the neoclassical style

parallels between the right-wing Macedonian government's rewriting of history through monumental sculptural and architectural commissions and other national memorial projects in Kosovo, Serbia, and Croatia, for example, has still seen relatively little in-depth consideration. Skopje 2014's engagement with antiquity is illustrative precisely because it returns the scale of debates about memory to Europe at large, and even to the fragile idea of 'Western civilization.' In this sense, it sets the stage for a consideration of socialist monumentality's resonance in postsocialist Southeastern Europe at a much broader level—even a global one.

¹²⁸ The literature on Skopje 2014 is growing, and will no doubt continue to do so as the statues erected under the project's aegis continue to serve as symbolic touchstones for political debates about the ethnic, geographic, and historical essence of Macedonia. The following sources have most informed my own interpretation of the project: Suzana Milevska, "Ágalma;" Maja Muhić and Aleksander Takovski, "Redefining National Identity;" Jasna Koteska, "Troubles with History: Skopje 2014," *ARTMargins Online*, December 29, 2011, <http://www.artmargins.com/index.php/2-articles/655-troubles-with-history-skopje-2014> (accessed August 11, 2018); Andrew Graan, "Counterfeiting the Nation? Skopje 2014 and the Politics of Nation Branding in Macedonia," *Cultural Anthropology* 28:1 (2013), pp. 161–179; Fabio Mattioli, "Regimes of Aesthetics: Competing Performances Surrounding the Skopje 2014 Plan," in Tanja Petrović, ed., *Mirroring Europe: Ideas of Europe and Europeanization in Balkan Societies* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 64–88; Linnea West, *Memento Park and Skopje 2014: Transition, Monuments, and Memory* (MA Thesis, The University of Georgia, 2015); and Andrew Graan, "The Nation Brand Regime: Nation Branding and the Semiotic Regimentation of Public Communication in Contemporary Macedonia," *Signs and Society*, 4:S1 (Supplement, 2016), pp. 70–105.

¹²⁹ The overwhelming majority of these figures are male, and where women appear, they are generally allegories.

¹³⁰ Guy de Launey, "The Makeover That's Divided a Nation," *BBC News Magazine*, August 30, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-28951171> (accessed August 11, 2018).

¹³¹ Sinisa Jakov Marusic, "Skopje: Controversy over Albanian Monuments Continues," *Balkan Insight*, October 6, 2010, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/albanian-monuments-to-complement-skopje-2-aa4-project> (accessed August 11, 2018).

adopted for nearly all the monuments and buildings,¹³² to the destruction of socialist-era architectural heritage that has accompanied the renovation.¹³³ In fact, one of the principal effects of the project is to eclipse Skopje's socialist-era modernist architecture, overlaying Japanese architect Kenzō Tange's urban plan for the city, carried out in the wake of the destruction caused by the 1963 earthquake.¹³⁴

Skopje 2014 can be understood as a restructuring of space that inculcates the imagined space of the Macedonian nation with new imperatives for both national and tourist publics.¹³⁵ It is also, however, a restructuring of historical consciousness and thus of temporality, and in this sense it merits comparison with the Ilinden memorial complex, despite the difference in scale between the two projects. In a sense, Skopje 2014 is also about bringing together disparate times, ensuring the coexistence of antiquity with the recent national past in a single space, that of the capital city's center. However, in the case of Skopje 2014, this coexistence of times unfolds under the dominance of the past, and the past becomes the primary means of the commodification of national experience. In other words, no matter how much the project might have altered Skopje's urban fabric, it is not about asserting the dynamism of the present, or about imagining qualitatively new forms of historical consciousness to understand that present. Skopje 2014 resembles more directly the form of historical understanding that Nietzsche termed "monumental history," the reflection on past greatness as a model for enduring deeds and meaningful

¹³² The capital city has since been compared to Disneyland in both local and tourist accounts. See for example "Граѓаните порачаа 'Скопје не е Дизниленд'!", *META*, August 20, 2015, <http://meta.mk/graganite-porachaa-skopje-ne-e-diznilend/> (accessed August 11, 2018).

¹³³ Some of the most widely distributed photographs associated with the project have been those showing some of the Brutalist buildings in the city center being covered over by neoclassical facades.

¹³⁴ See West, *Memento Park and Skopje 2014*, pp. 27–28.

¹³⁵ See Graan, "The Nation Brand Regime."

action; it sees the present emergent under the aegis of the past.¹³⁶ The history envisioned by monuments such as the Ilinden memorial complex was of a different sort, and not only because it combined national identity with an emphasis on multiethnic collaboration. It saw the present and the recent past in terms of rupture, and out of this rupture it imagined a new way of encountering broader scales of time and space: from the cosmic to the microscopic, from the social to the individual. This approach left open the future and the past, an openness that is foreign to the program of postsocialist projects like Skopje 2014. However, some artists working after the end of socialism have looked back at socialist monumentality as a project still ripe with possibility—and perhaps even especially so after the apparent triumph of neoliberal capitalism. In the following chapters, I trace some of the ways that contemporary artists have engaged with socialist monumentality—not only as an artistic tradition, but also as a mode of historical understanding.

¹³⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,” in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale, trans. R.J. Hollingworth (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 68–72.

Chapter 4:

Adding Eternity to Forever: Towards an Aporetics of Monumental Heritage in the Work of Armando Lulaj and David Maljković

The name [ENVER] was made with rocks from the mountain and others coming from the area. The army pulled these rocks, some of which are enormous, with horses onto the slopes. After they finished, the socialist youth painted the rocks with white paint, and they returned to do so every year as a moral duty to the [communist] party until 1990. Four years later the Democratic Party was in power and at [Prime Minister] Sali Berisha's order the army tried to destroy the sign. They used dynamite in order to pulverize the rocks, but after some falling debris destroyed some houses under the slopes, it became nearly impossible to continue. So they tr[ie]d to use fire. With flame throwers they tried to burn the white surface off the rocks but this turned out to be another total failure. Two soldiers were burned alive and the sign was still visible. They left the sign for nature to cover over the years.—Armando Lulaj¹

Sometimes I like to go back [to the] location [of the Petrova Gora monument], not to say something more, it's more like just to feel, to feel something more, to try to see the capacity of the feelings that you can bring in a certain project or work. It's not about the concept of [the] work, [or] to discuss the problem of the location or the content, it's more like what you can add in the sensitive level.—David Maljković²

I. Introduction

The previous two chapters have focused on the development of socialist monumentality in Southeastern Europe during the period of 'late socialism' (the 1960s through the end of the 1980s). These chapters have charted the ways that official monumental sculpture in this region reflected the shifting political structures, transnational alliances, and ideological projects that characterized the gradual fragmentation of the Soviet Union and the formation of the Non-Aligned Movement.

¹ Armando Lulaj and Department of Eagles, "Interview with Armando Lulaj," *Department of Eagles*, January 7, 2014, <http://departmentofeagles.org/2014/interview-with-armando-lulaj/> (accessed August 28, 2017).

² David Maljković, in an interview given in association with the 2013 exhibition *Sources in the Air*. The exhibition appeared in three locations: the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead; and GAMeC, Bergamo. For the interview, see <https://vimeo.com/61897624> (accessed May 18, 2016).

Various collective imaginaries—regional, national, and global—vied for representation in commemorative sculpture and architecture in Southeastern Europe, manifesting in a myriad of styles and mimetic efforts. I have shown how these monumental ventures were often indelibly tied to establishing a paradigm for collectivism in the present, to establishing history as a collaborative project that was neither fully a recovery of the past nor a projection of the future, but a product of the present.³ This need to monumentalize the present—and to reflect this monumentalization in a traditional way, through public monuments—gave rise to a number of compelling attempts to merge diverse times under the aegis of a global (or at least transnational) socialist revolution. I have charted in detail the products of some of these attempts—including the *Independence Monument* in Vlora, Albania, and the Ilinden memorial complex in Kruševo, Macedonia—in Chapters 2 and 3, respectively. This chapter and the subsequent one turn to the postsocialist years, and to contemporary artists from Southeastern Europe whose works explore socialist monuments as a form of heritage in conditions of neoliberal market transitions and globalization.

The fates of monuments constructed in the nations of the former Eastern Europe during socialism are too various to be explored fully in this dissertation, even with its geographic emphasis on Southeastern Europe. Politicians, organizations focused on heritage preservation, activists, historians, and artists have all engaged with socialist monuments in different ways, depending upon the specific contexts of particular

³ This is not to suggest that both the past and the future were unimportant, but that the projected utopia at which socialist monumentality aimed was to be realized in its own historical present, since that present was regarded as the historical time *par excellence*.

monuments. Socialist monuments have been destroyed,⁴ left to decay on their own, relocated, actively preserved, re-contextualized as tourist attractions, and sometimes re-purposed and transformed. As Reuben Fowkes points out, socialist monuments in postsocialist contexts can often become—on their own, or with minimal intervention—“*de facto* counter-monuments”⁵ in the sense that James E. Young laid out in his well-known essay on the ‘counter-monument’ as a paradigm for postwar Holocaust memorials in Germany.⁶ That is, insofar as they come to clearly represent a past completely at odds with the present, they emphasize “our relationship to them across ‘the gulf of time.’”⁷ When socialist-era monuments become the focus of postsocialist political and artistic discourse, they are most often framed—as Zhivka Valiavicharska argues—as

the unambiguous representations of the repressive state in the political discourse of postsocialist public life. This perspective sees the ‘communist ideology’ as an official state doctrine dictating a certain political content, which is then handed down from above via apparatuses of control to intellectual and cultural workers and to the people to passively replicate, reproduce, and follow. ... And because this ideology is usually failed, transparent, and stale, socialism’s material culture and legacy are discarded as remnants of a fallen, unattainable utopian vision.⁸

I have tried, in Chapters 2 and 3, to suggest some ways that this vision of socialist monuments is both incomplete and misleading, that these monuments were frequently neither as totalitarian and ‘top-down’ nor as ideologically monolithic as such a perspective suggests.

⁴ A succinct history of the destruction of socialist-era monuments can be found in Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art*, pp. 51–90.

⁵ Reuben Fowkes, “You Only Live Twice: The Strange Afterlife of Socialist Sculpture,” in Anca Benera, et al., eds., *Bucharest: Matter & History: The Public Monument and Its Discontents* (Bucharest: 2010), p. 213.

⁶ James E. Young, “The Counter-monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today,” *Critical Inquiry* 18:2 (Winter 1992), pp. 267–296. I discuss Young’s notion of the counter-monument in greater depth below in this chapter, and further in Chapter 5.

⁷ Fowkes, “You Only Live Twice,” p. 214.

⁸ Zhivka Valiavicharska, “History’s Restless Ruins: On Socialist Public Monuments in Postsocialist Bulgaria,” *boundary 2* 41:1 (Spring 2014), p. 174.

I focus, in the final two chapters of this dissertation, on the ways that contemporary artists in particular have explored socialist monuments, and how these explorations reveal the complex meanings that socialist monuments continue to produce. In the most straightforward art historical sense, I posit that some contemporary artists treat socialist monumentality as a salient artistic tradition through which to productively engage present conditions. This historical framework for contemporary art is distinct from prevailing scholarly and curatorial narratives of postsocialist art that frame it primarily as a continuation of modernist and (neo-)avant-garde practices that developed in the region,⁹ and from more universalist models that equate late socialism with postmodernism.¹⁰

The current chapter considers the ways that socialist monumentality finds itself recovered and transformed in postsocialist contemporary art, examining the work of two artists from Southeastern Europe whose practices focuses on the traces of history in socialist commemorative art and culture. Armando Lulaj (b. 1980, in Albania) and David Maljković (b. 1973, in Yugoslavia) have both carried out sustained engagements with the

⁹ I discuss the historical model that narrates the region's art history in terms of a succession of avant-gardes in Chapter 5. This paradigm is epitomized by the seminal survey of 20th-century Yugoslavian art, *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-Gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes, and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991*, ed. Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003).

¹⁰ The collection of essays *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition*, edited by Aleš Erjavec, is emblematic of this latter tendency. While compelling, the association of late socialism and certain key aspects of culture in the postsocialist transition period with postmodernity can only go so far in offering a nuanced picture of socialist monumentality in relation to postsocialist artistic practices. Put simply, the association between late- and postsocialist art with a globally 'postmodern' viewpoint is predicated on analyzing the relationship between art and 'mass' culture, an undeniably global phenomenon. However, this analysis is typically carried out alongside a more or less uncritical distinction between 'official' (presumably totalitarian) art/culture and 'unofficial' or 'nonconformist' art/culture. Such a historical description of postsocialist art may quite effectively show how postsocialist artists deconstruct the legacies of socialist ideology, continuing the legacy of avant-garde oppositions to hegemonic culture. However, for such an art history, remnants of 'official' culture (and monumental sculptures are certainly that) can never be more than subjects of critique or source material for navigations of memory. My attempt here aims to explore these remnants as something approaching (and at times fully constituting) an artistic heritage that can be taken up by postsocialist artists.

socialist past in their respective nations, but in quite different ways. My investigation aims to expand ongoing debates on the ‘counter-monument’ (and the anti-monument), and to deepen our understanding of both late socialist monumentality and its afterlives. What unites the works that constitute the core of this chapter—Lulaj’s landscape intervention and video *NEVER* (2012) and Maljković’s *Scenes for a New Heritage* (2004–2006),¹¹ a series comprised of both video installations and accompanying collages—is the expansion of time and feeling surrounding the socialist monument itself, the prolongation of monumentality through both new forms (the revision of signs) and the return to old forms (the recapitulation of abstract modernist aesthetics). The paradoxical character of this project (the prolongation of time by means of the monument) is of course linked to the fact that socialist monuments already represented a projected future, the assumption that their message about the past and the present would be immediately apprehended by a socialist future. In actuality, socialist monuments have often receded very quickly into oblivion, creating the possibility (and perhaps the need) to project them even further into the future, to extend the time in which they exist and in which we encounter them beyond the present.

Armando Lulaj’s *NEVER* (completed in 2012) [Figures 4.1–4.9] is a work that consists of an intervention in the Albanian landscape, focused on a massive socialist-era geoglyph near the southern Albanian city of Berat. This intervention is documented in a 22-minute video that Lulaj has exhibited in numerous contexts, including in the Albanian Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale [Figure 4.10].¹² I analyze *NEVER* in two contexts:

¹¹ This work leant its name to the re-installation of the Museum of Modern Art, New York’s contemporary galleries in 2015.

¹² The video work has also been exhibited together with large-scale printed stills from the film and archival images that Lulaj found in his research.

in relation to the history of the nearby city of Berat and the political situation surrounding creation of the original geoglyph, and in the broader context of contemporary artworks that engage with the intertwining of history and memory vis-à-vis the socialist past. In order to fully understand the relationship of history, memory, and monumentality at work in *NEVER*, I consider how the work treats the *time* of both socialist monuments and the contemporary moment. Although aspects of Lulaj's project—which recovered the geoglyph only to symbolically negate and transform it—clearly resemble the trope of the anti-monument, I argue that *NEVER* also affirmatively takes up socialist monumental heritage in order to understand current geopolitical conditions.

The focus of Lulaj's intervention is a massive geoglyph located on the side of Mt. Shpirag. In 1968, a group of soldiers from the People's Army of the Socialist Republic of Albania, painted the Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha's name—ENVER—on massive stones set into the mountainside, in letters 100 meters in height. This inscription in the landscape occurred at the height of the Albanian Cultural Revolution (carried out in conjunction with Mao's). As I discuss in Chapter 2 above, during the period roughly from 1966 through 1969, the leaders of Albania's communist regime were engaged in codifying a shared sense of historical, nationalist consciousness. In Albania, this nationalist consciousness was constructed not only through urban modernizations and public statuary created for cities, but also through a combination of rural commemorative sculpture (in the form of localized monuments to the antifascist resistance and socialist leader Hoxha) and an increased attention to archaeological sites and cities that dated to antiquity or the medieval period. One such city was Berat, in central Albania—the

nearest major city to Mt. Shpirag, and the location at which the geoglyph of the dictator's name was most directly aimed.

More than 40 years after the geoglyph's creation, Lulaj began carrying out research on its genesis and the striking story of its fate in the postsocialist years. He found little information about the geoglyph in either national or municipal archives, and so he visited the villages near the site, tracking down some of those who had been among the soldiers that first constructed the ENVER glyph. One of these villagers, a farmer named Sheme Filja (who had participated in the creation of the original geoglyph) worked with the artist and a crew of workers to renovate the geoglyph and transpose its first two letters, transforming the name ENVER into its equally semiotically saturated anagram NEVER. This process—including Lulaj's conversations with the villagers living adjacent to the letters, in order to obtain their permission and support to change them—took six months.¹³ Lulaj's video documenting the work intersperses footage of this project with archival footage—probably filmed in the late 1960s or early 1970s¹⁴—of pilots flying over the mountain, looking down in approval at the dictator's name writ large on the earth. At the conclusion of the video, however, the word that emerges across Shpirag is not the object of the pilots' gaze, but rather the English adverb *NEVER*. Lulaj uses the act of rewriting the geoglyph as an occasion to explore the contradictions of commemoration, erasure, and history, but also proposes new possibilities for collective experience in the postsocialist present. In Lulaj's project, the negation of the

¹³ Lulaj and Department of Eagles, "Interview with Armando Lulaj."

¹⁴ Although the precise dates of the footage Lulaj uses are not specified, it seems likely that the footage dates from soon after the geoglyph's original creation. This is not only because of the prominence of the glyph as the object of the pilots' aerial observation, but also because of the prominence of the Chinese characters on the instrument panels of the airplanes shown, which suggests that the footage dates from the height of the Sino-Albanian alliance (the same years in which the geoglyph was created).

monument—which occurs primarily through linguistic negation, but also through the negation of re-staging the monument’s creation—makes explicit the new horizons of expectation that have emerged in the capitalist context of postsocialist Eastern Europe: the current hegemony of free market ideologies and democratic ideals.

A different, though related, set of concerns guides David Maljković’s engagements with socialist-era Yugoslav monuments, especially those made by Croatian sculptor Vojin Bakić.¹⁵ In Maljković’s work, the monument appears as a site for both erasure (as it does in Lulaj’s *NEVER*) and for the construction of new ‘speculative’ futures. Maljković’s engagements with the sculptural heritage of late socialist Yugoslavia have occurred in a number of collages (such as the *Lost Review* (2008) and *Retired Form* (2010) series [see **Figure 4.39**], which also includes a video work of the same title) as well as the videos, installations, and collages that make up the *Scenes for a New Heritage* (*Scena za novo nasljeđe*) trilogy [**Figures 4.32–4.38**]. The *Scenes for a New Heritage* films (set in and after the year 2045), in particular, make overt reference to the genre of science fiction: Vojin Bakić’s 1981 monument at Petrovac—located on the highest peak of the mountainous area, Petrova Gora—serves as a mysterious site to which various strange visitors make their way: aimless youths arrive in cars wrapped in silver foil, a young man performs with a foil-wrapped soccer ball within the monument’s space, and the deteriorating monument appears like a phantasm through fog and snow. The futuristic aspect of Maljković’s scenes (developed both out of the otherworldliness of Bakić’s monument and the strange, often indecipherable actions of the protagonists in the videos)

¹⁵ In Chapter 3 above, I discuss the significance of Bakić’s monumental sculpture in the Yugoslav context, and the artist’s contribution to shaping the aesthetic frequently associated with Yugoslavian monumentality broadly.

is accompanied by the insinuation of “collective amnesia,”¹⁶ as Maljković describes it. In fact, Maljković’s works could be said to be almost anti-monumental, in the sense that they actively (so the artist says) aim at the generation of this amnesia. More significant, however, is the way that Maljković treats amnesia as something *related* to the monument, treats forgetting as something that the monument can catalyze—and this is precisely the strength of the monument as a heritage, the way it allows for new speculative futures by appearing as something forgotten *and forgetful*. In this sense, Maljković both plays and builds upon the socialist monument’s diverse temporalities in ways that are similar to Lulaj’s intervention in the ENVER geoglyph, but both the history represented by the Petrova Gora memorial and the history of Yugoslavian modernist sculpture to which the monument belongs allow Maljković to emphasize different aspects of the monumentality as aesthetic and ideological heritage.

An important element of Maljković’s engagement with Bakić’s Petrova Gora¹⁷ monument (and with other traces of the socialist past) is the narrative of pilgrimage to the monumental site.¹⁸ Bakić’s monument was originally constructed to commemorate the joint Serbian and Croatian Partisan forces from the nearby villages of Kordun and Banija, who rose up against the Ustaše fascist forces, as well as the main base of the Croatian People’s Liberation Army and Partisan Hospital (both of which were located in the region). Sites such as these—ones that played an important role in the mythology of the

¹⁶ David Maljković and Charles Esche, “Interview with David Maljković,” in David Maljković and David Gamulin, eds., *David Maljković: Place, with Limited Premeditation* (Amsterdam: Artimo, 2005), pp. 121–122.

¹⁷ Maljković also notes the significance of the name of the mountain in another historical framework. “Petrova Gora” means “Peter’s Rock”: the site “is named after the last Croatian king, Petar Svačić, so it’s very contradictory” (see Maljković and Esche, Interview,” p. 122). That is, the sight relates both to an older, monarchical, part, and to the more recent, transnational past of the Yugoslav partisan struggle.

¹⁸ Lulaj’s *NEVER* engages with the notion of pilgrimage as well, but not as explicitly. I discuss this aspect of *NEVER* below.

Partisan liberation—often served as sites of annual visits and celebrations. In the *Scenes for a New Heritage* films and associated collages and sketches, the suggestion of periodic return figures prominently. The artist draws the paradigm of the visit to the monument from his own experiences, during his youth, of being taken on such trips in socialist Yugoslavia. Thus, the pilgrimage to the monument is not merely a retrospective return to a socialist site. It is the *repetition* of a cultural and existential form that was already endemic to socialist monumentality: the creation of the future out of the experience of the visit to the monumental site. In Maljković's works, this pilgrimage and its monumental setting are often explicitly linked to the exhibition context: Maljković combines the representation of returns to the site with the suggestion that the exhibition context itself serves as re-sited or newly sited monument.¹⁹ Part of the temporal situatedness that Maljković discovers in the form of the socialist monument—in combination with the legacy of the Yugoslavian (and especially Croatian) avant-garde—is the emphasis on the present²⁰ as a field for 'monumentalization' of experience: the nostalgic return to Yugoslavian socialist culture heightens not only the connection with the past, but also the emotional attachment to one's own present moment.

This re-affirmation of socialist monumentality by its transformation into a heightened affective responsiveness to the present—both broadly (the 'historical present') and specifically construed (the phenomenological present of particular exhibition contexts)—is also linked to Maljković's recovery of the history of aesthetic

¹⁹ There is also, as I will discuss below, an important connection made in Maljković's works between pilgrimage, tourism, and the modern, high-speed means of travel that contribute to the proliferation of both at a global scale.

²⁰ Maljković and Esche, Interview," p. 122.

modernism.²¹ Maljković seeks to recover both the vibrant utopianism and the enervation²² of the modernist project, and in the process his work plays an important role in drawing attention to the importance of considering the particular narratives of Southeastern European modernism. I argue that it is significant that the recovery of the narrative of aesthetically modernist art as it developed in Southeastern Europe takes place in response to the heritage of socialist-era monumental sculpture, or perhaps more precisely in response to the legacy of monumental sculpture in the region *as heritage*. I situate Maljković's *Scenes for a New Heritage* trilogy in relation to Armando Lulaj's *NEVER*, as a work that draws on socialist monumentality as form and content, emphasizing the ways that both works seek to extend the possibilities and foundations of the experience of monuments (rather than deconstructing the ideology that monuments embody). Additionally, I consider the way that the *Scenes for a New Heritage* trilogy and collages navigate the interrelationships between the temporal ideologies of aesthetic modernism and global contemporary art.

In this chapter, I proceed first with an examination of the geoglyph that Armando Lulaj transforms in his *NEVER* project, followed by an analysis of his film and the project's relation to discourses on archaeology and postmemory in contemporary art. I

²¹ I use the term "aesthetic modernism" here—as above—to denote a tendency towards abstraction of both geometric and anamorphic varieties. My usage is intended to distinguish this tendency from "modernism" more broadly, which I understand to include varieties of figurative realism, such as Socialist Realism, and which I take broadly to encompass works that seek to reflect, propose, expand, or illustrate 'modern' historical conditions.

²² As I discuss above in my Introduction, and in Chapter 1, 'late socialism' is often associated with a waning of both socialist and modernist culture, and the rise of both neo-avant-gardes and an ironic, playful postmodernism. The presumed ideological vacuity of modernism in the postwar years—especially by the 1960s and 70s—has sometimes been termed a kind of exhaustion, and it should be noted that Maljković is interested in precisely this kind of 'tiredness' as a theme to be explored and embraced. He has described his ongoing interest in slowness and tiredness in relation to his work *Dead Race*: "Everything becomes slow, there is no more competition ... and you could relax and enjoy idleness. I think that idleness is important in art. It's nothing new, I know, but it is also something that we've rather forgotten and that should be put back into function again. ... Maybe I can open a tired gallery, you know, where you can just be tired and idle." See Maljković and Esche, Interview," p. 119.

situate *NEVER* in the context of debates on collective memory and the temporality of history in conditions of global transnationality, considering the way that the work reconfigures the horizon of experience in postsocialist Albania's neoliberal capitalist conditions. I then discuss David Maljković's *Scenes for a New Heritage* works, suggesting the ways that they present an exploration of socialist monumentality that parallels Lulaj's, but also how they examine the significance of particular art histories in Southeastern Europe. I conclude with a broad consideration of the aesthetic issues raised by both artists' works, and how they relate to the theoretical frameworks that will be discussed in the following chapter.

II. The Sign and the City: The ENVER Geoglyph Between Landscape and Urbanscape

The proximity of the ENVER geoglyph (and Lulaj's transformed version of it) to the historic city of Berat (one of two UNESCO sites in Albania)²³ introduces an implicit juxtaposition of ancient, medieval, and Ottoman-era built cultural heritage and socialist-era cultural heritage. To understand how Lulaj's intervention takes up debates on the monumental remnants of the socialist past *as heritage*, we must first understand the context of the city of Berat, and the way that socialist Albania approached its present and future in relation to an ancient, archaeologically recovered past. Berat lies along the sides of the River Osum in the southern part of Albania, located between the mountain of

²³ The city is distinguished by its lengthy period of continuous occupation in the region, with the first settlements dating as early as 2600-1800 BCE. It contains a castle first established as a fortification in the 4th century BCE and developed over numerous subsequent periods, and a wealth of examples of well-preserved Ottoman-era architecture in its two main neighborhoods: the Gorica neighborhood and the Mangalem neighborhood. For information on the UNESCO evaluations of the site, see the advisory evaluation of the site, ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), "Historic Centers of Berat and Gjirokastra (Albania): No. 569 bis," 2008, available from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/569>, and UNESCO World Heritage Committee, "Decision: 32 COM 8B.56," 2008, available from: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1517> (accessed October 11, 2017).

Tomorr (a sacred site for both Christian and Bektashi religious followers) to the East and Mount Shpirag to the West. According to an ancient legend, the two mountains began their lives as orphaned twins. The twins met a beautiful fairy, and both fell in love with her. Soon, the brothers went mad with their love for the fairy, and began a war with each other. Tomorr stabbed his brother in the ribs with his sword, while Shpirag pummeled Tomorr with a club. The legend recounts that god, angered by the brothers' war, turned the two of them to stone—leaving Shpirag's ribs apparent in the mountainside, and Tomorr's gaping wounds apparent in that mountain's jagged valleys and peaks. The beautiful fairy was transformed into a hill, upon which townsfolk constructed a castle (the fortification at Berat's heart). In her sorrow she cried forth a river of tears that formed the river Osum.²⁴ Thus, in choosing Shpirag as the site of the ENVER geoglyph, the Albanian socialist leadership explicitly integrated the dictator's name into a landscape that held significant mythical associations.

In antiquity, Berat developed primarily around its central fortification—a castle on the hill behind the Mangalem neighborhood [**Figure 4.15**]²⁵—and this fortification was built and rebuilt several times over the centuries, up through the Ottoman period.²⁵ Over the centuries during the Middle Ages, the fortified area of Berat was controlled by Byzantine, Bulgarian, Norman, Angevin, Serbian, and Turkish forces at various points, and the castle bears the cultural remnants of these various groups, containing both Orthodox churches from the Byzantine era and what is reported to be the oldest mosque

²⁴ A summary of this legend is given in Florena Xhafaj, “Turizmi në Qarkun e Beratit: Problemet dhe Perspektivat,” (Master’s Thesis, Aleksandër Moisiu University, 2013), p. 17.

²⁵ Gazi Strazimiri and Refik Veseli, *Berati: Qytet-Muze / Berat: A Museum City* (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1987), p. 7.

in the Albanian territory [Figure 4.16].²⁶ During the socialist period, the city of Berat was one of only two cities designated as ‘museum-cities’ by the socialist government;²⁷ this designation was given to Berat in June of 1961.²⁸ Another of these cities was Gjirokastra in the south of the country, the birthplace of Enver Hoxha.²⁹

Hoxha, Albania’s dictator from the time of the country’s liberation from German fascist forces in 1944 until the time of his death in 1985, was the most staunchly Stalinist of Eastern Europe’s dictators.³⁰ For some time after Stalin’s death in 1953, Albania remained firmly allied with the Soviet Union, receiving—among other things—economic support for development, which included a vast project to industrialize and electrify the country.³¹ Hoxha’s enthusiastic Stalinism would eventually place him in conflict with the Soviet Union, however. Following Stalin’s death, relations between the countries began to deteriorate and the two states broke with each other after a speech given by Hoxha in Moscow in November of 1961, in which he accused Khrushchev of anti-Marxist revisionism.³² Following the break with the Soviet Union, Albania allied itself with the

²⁶ Robert Elsie, “Berat,” in Robert Elsie, *Historical Dictionary of Albania*, 2nd ed. (Lanham: Scarecrow, 2010), p. 46. For more on the Byzantine-era history of Berat, see Aleksandër Meksi, “Tri Kisha Bizantine të Beratit,” *Monumentet* 4 (1974): pp. 59–104, and Apollon Baçe, Aleksandër Meksi, and Emin Riza, *Berati: Historia dhe Arkitektura* (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, 2011).

²⁷ Derek Hall, *Albanian and the Albanians* (New York: Pinter Reference, 1994), p. 163.

²⁸ Strazimiri and Veseli, *Berati*, p. 15.

²⁹ Armando Lulaj also created a video work documenting a performance staged in Gjirokastra’s castle. The resulting work, *Recapitulation*, involved an American spy plane allegedly forced to land by Albanian socialist forces and subsequently placed on display in the castle in Gjirokastra. The video was one of the three works comprising the ‘Albanian Troilogy’ that Lulaj showed at the Venice Biennale in the Albanian Pavilion in 2015.

³⁰ On Hoxha’s background, and the uniquely harsh and often paranoid nature of his regime, see Bernd J. Fischer, “Enver Hoxha and the Stalinist Dictatorship in Albania,” in Bernd J. Fischer, ed., *Balkan Strongmen*, pp. 239–268.

³¹ Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians*, pp. 173–176. It should be noted that the Soviet Union, especially in the years after Stalin’s death, did not fully support Albania’s industrialization: for the Soviets, Albania was more convenient as a producer of agricultural goods. Hoxha would later emphasize the heroism of his own role in ‘standing up’ to post-Stalin Moscow on the issue of Albania’s industrial development and economic autonomy.

³² James S. O’Donnell, *A Coming of Age: Albania Under Enver Hoxha* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1999), p. 58.

People's Republic of China, which stepped in to provide support for the country's Third Five-Year Plan (1961–65). China did not merely provide financial support, however—it also encouraged Hoxha to move towards developing an economy that did not rely on foreign support. Over the course of the next decade and a half, this would result in Albania achieving virtual self-sufficiency in its economy.³³ During this period, several large-scale industrial projects were named after Mao Ce Dun, to commemorate the Sino-Albanian alliance, and one of these was the massive Mao Ce Dun Textile Factory built on the open land just outside of Berat, facing Mt. Shpirag [Figures 4.17–4.18].³⁴

Berat was one of several Albanian cities that was transformed by the wave of modernizing urbanization³⁵ that accompanied national industrial advances: during the 1960s, the government constructed a cultural center in the city, and went about altering its urban fabric [Figure 4.19].³⁶ The particular architecture of this urbanization was frequently modernist, although it was not discussed as such; the Socialist Realist model that dominated Albania's cultural sphere did not permit for an overt embrace of

³³ This self-sufficiency did not, of course, signal dramatic advancements in technology or quality of living. It did, however, mark a significant transformation for a country that, prior to the 1960s, had received much of its foreign commerce from the Soviet Union. It also produced the social and economic conditions that paved the way for Albania's break with China as well in the late 1970s. At this point, Albania's isolation became virtually total: it remained—'surrounded by the imperial-revisionist blockade,' as the official propaganda described it—the last shining beacon of 'true' Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist ideals until Hoxha's death. See O'Donnell, pp. 65, 84.

³⁴ The textile factory is now defunct, and its entrance has been repurposed as a luxury hotel. (See Brian Ayers and Ilir Parangoni, "Industrial Heritage in Albania: an Assessment," *Industrial Archaeology Review* 37:2 (2015), p. 122.)

Armando Lulaj himself notes that the placement of the geoglyph facing the textile factory (completed in the same year and opened in 1969) seems to be a clear indication that part of the glyph's function was to reinforce the parallelism between Albania and China in the period of their respective Cultural Revolutions. See Lulaj and Department of Eagles, "Interview with Armando Lulaj."

³⁵ Ermir Hoxha, *Arkitektura Shqiptare e Shek. XX: Një Histori e Shkurtër* (Tirana: West Print, 2016), p. 78–79.

³⁶ See the images in Strazimiri and Veseli, *Berati*.

modernist aesthetics.³⁷ In the 1960s, Albanian architects—most of them educated in Central Europe—gradually shifted away from the more constraining socialist style that had reigned during the country’s alliance with the Soviet Union and towards a modular, geometric architecture constructed with non-traditional materials such as concrete.³⁸ Another aspect of the transformation of socialist cities during this period—and perhaps the most salient aspect in relation to the creation of the ENVER geoglyph—was the increased legibility of public space in a quite literal sense: the increased presence of slogans and other writing on buildings and in public space. In the realm of public space, one of the most concrete influences of Mao’s cultural policies on Albania was the adoption of the ‘big character poster,’ or *fletë-rrufe*, as it was called in Albanian. The presence of these posters and areas for posting written material, coupled with the display of slogans on buildings, turned public space in socialist Albania into something to be both read and written.³⁹ This legibility of the urban landscape—visible in images of the city of Berat in the socialist period [Figures 4.20–4.21]—was mirrored further afield in the landscape, although the project of writing the dictator’s name across the sides of Mt. Shpirag was no doubt the most ambitious marking of the landscape to take place in socialist Albania.⁴⁰

³⁷ On the conflicts and synergies between modernist and socialist realist aesthetics in socialist Albanian art and architecture, see Raino Isto, “Dynamisms of Time and Space,” pp. 42–67.

³⁸ The shift towards modernism was seen primarily in housing units and buildings housing government offices or public services. Ermir Hoxha points out that Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Le Corbusier all became key models (even if they were not acknowledged at the time, for ideological reasons) for Albanian architecture. Architect Enver Faja has also noted the significant influence of Polish architects Szymon and Helena Syrkus. See Ermir Hoxha, *Arkitektura Shqiptare*, pp. 78–79.

During this same period, Chinese architects and technicians also played a significant role in designing and building industrial architecture. I owe my knowledge of this topic to conversations with Ylber Marku, who is currently at work—together with the Department of Eagles cultural organization—on a project documenting Sino-Albanian industrial architectural heritage.

³⁹ On this phenomenon, see Ardian Vehbiu, “Me Shkronja të Mëdha,” pp. 216–227.

⁴⁰ Similar projects took place in other socialist countries. For example, the use of forestry to produce aerially legible commemorations of Stalin and the Soviet Union is discussed in Stephen Brain,

Both the ENVER geoglyph and the development of the city of Berat roughly coincident with the geoglyph's creation took place during the late 1960s and 1970s.⁴¹ During these years, Hoxha solidified his own personality cult, linking his regime with the precedents of previous national heroes. (The inauguration of the equestrian monument to Skanderbeg in Tirana's central square in 1968 [**Figure 4.22**]⁴²—the same year that the ENVER geoglyph was created—was emblematic of the monumental aspect of the construction of such associations. The monument displaced the statue of Stalin that formerly stood in the square.) The juxtaposition of Hoxha's name with the Mao Ce Dun Textile Factory in the valley below clearly linked the legacies of the two leaders, presenting a paradigm of shared socialist cooperation and progress and establishing Hoxha as Mao's equal.

Berat also had a certain modest role in the mythology of the genesis of the socialist Albanian state and in Hoxha's own mythology: in 1944, it served as the meeting place for the Antifascist National Liberation Council, a meeting that saw the formation of the first Albanian 'democratic' government,⁴² with Hoxha—who at that time also led the National Liberation Army—as its leader. This event was commemorated—as so many other key moments in the National Liberation struggle were in the years of the cultural revolution—by a monument in Berat's city center [**Figure 4.23**]. Thus, there was a decided logic to the placement of the ENVER geoglyph in proximity to Berat, despite

Song of the Forest: Russian Forestry and Stalinist Environmentalism, 1905-1953 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), p. 115.

⁴¹ See the discussion of Albania's Cultural Revolution in Chapter 2 above.

⁴² Strazimiri and Veseli, *Berati*, p. 15.

that city's remoteness from the capital city of Tirana, the urban center of socialist⁴³ Albania. At the same time, as noted above, the communist regime in Albania was—in certain ways—very cognizant of its own status as a historical layer⁴⁴ atop the much more ancient built environment: its model of time was supposed to partake not only in the newness of the socialist present, but also in the affective and cognitive potential of a much deeper and older history represented by cities like Berat.⁴⁵

Although the ENVER geoglyph seems strangely absent from official archives, Armando Lulaj's interviews with some of those involved in the 1968 project shed some light on how it came to be.⁴⁶ The original geoglyph was constructed with the labor of about 500 soldiers from the People's Army of Albania, using stones quarried in the surrounding area. (Thus, the geoglyph corresponded to the ideological drive to use 'local materials' characteristic of vernacular architecture.) The use of stones to mark the landscape of Albania's mountains related closely to the narrative of the Partisan resistance to fascism during the Second World War. The socialist state framed many of the monuments it constructed as organic evolutions of stone cairns or grave markers erected contemporaneously with the Partisan struggle in order to commemorate battles and fallen comrades. The Albanian state-sponsored film *Lapidari (The Monument)*,

⁴³ Despite the attention to the significance of smaller cities and sites as part of the development of a socialist-era nationalist historical narrative, Tirana remained firmly the cultural capital of Albania during the Hoxha years. On this cultural centralization, see Nicholas Tochka, *Audible States*, pp. 119–121.

⁴⁴ On the processes of historical layering in the socialist period, and their materialization in the built environment, see Matthias Bickert, "Lapidars and Socialist Monuments as Elements of Albania's Historical Cultural Landscapes," and Ardian Vehbiu, "Texts Chiseled on the Calendar: A Semiotic Reading of Inscriptions on the Commemorative Monuments of the Period of the National Liberation War," both in *Lapidari*, ed. Vincent WJ van Gerven Oei, pp. 105–114 and 133–140, respectively.

⁴⁵ This was not least due to the ways that the lengthy period of continuous occupation in cities like Berat seemed to lend credibility of Albanian nationalist claims to autochthony. For an overview of Albanian nationalist genealogies, see Piro Misha, "Invention of a Nationalism: Myth and Amnesia," in *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, ed. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer, pp. 33–48.

⁴⁶ Information on the creation of the geoglyph in this paragraph is taken from Armando Lulaj, "Interview with Armando Lulaj," *Public Delivery*, 2014, <http://publicdelivery.org/armando-lulaj/#arve-load-video> (Accessed September 9, 2017).

created in the 1980s, makes this relationship explicit: it shows how such cairns grew into white obelisks and other architectonic forms, which in turn served as centerpieces for village ritual celebrations. The film presents the gradual development of the monumental form as a process linked with modernization: as agriculture and industry thrive, the monument grows, and is periodically renewed and itself modernized in step with the advancement of the rural zones of Albania.⁴⁷

This process of periodic renewal was also crucial to the ENVER geoglyph. After the long process of the creation of the geoglyph, the local factions of the socialist youth were tasked with painting the letters white, and with maintaining the letters in future years. As Lulaj discovered in his interviews with the villagers, the repeated return to the letters to re-paint them became a kind of ‘pilgrimage’ for the communist youth.⁴⁸ This practice of sending the communist youth to re-paint the letters continued until the 1990s, after the fall of socialism, when the newly elected Democratic Party—ironically—used state military forces to try to destroy the glyph. When this attempt failed (as described in the epigraph to this essay), the letters were left to be gradually covered over by vegetation.

⁴⁷ See Bejko, “About the Film *Lapidari*.”

⁴⁸ This pilgrimage aspect makes the geoglyph’s location on Mt. Shpirag more explicitly related to the mountain’s mythical counterpart, Tomorr. Historically, Tomorr was the site of a five-day Bektashi pilgrimage (occurring August 20–25) in honor of Al Abbas-ibn Ali (known to Albanians as Abaz Aliu), known for his role in the Battle of Karbala. (See Robert Elsie, “Mount Tomorr,” in Elsie, *Historical Dictionary of Albania*, p. 446.) A shrine to Abbas has long existed on Tomorr, although the practice of Muslim pilgrimage to the site for the five-day festival was highly discouraged during the socialist period, especially by the late 1960s. In a sense, then, the necessity of renovating the geoglyph’s letters presented an alternative site and ideology for pilgrimage within the same mythic geography (presenting Shpirag instead of Tomorr as the new terrain of organized pilgrimage). On the role of pilgrimage and monuments in socialist Albania, see Konstantinos Giakoumis and Christopher Lockwood, “Pilgrimage Centered at Text and Memory.”

III. *ENVER* // *NEVER*: Rewritings

A 1987 photobook dedicated to the city of Berat features a panoramic black and white photograph of the city [**Figure 4.11**].⁴⁹ The photo, which spreads across two pages, offers a sweeping view of the Osum River and of the historic city's center and major neighborhoods, including the Gorica neighborhood on the left side of the river, the Gorica bridge (originally constructed in 1780) spanning the river, and the Mangalem neighborhood on the river's right side, nestled below the rocky hill that is home to Berat's castle. Stretching across the left side of the photo is the silhouette of Mt. Shpirag, its rolling slopes looming over all of the city except the hill and its castle, which rise at center to break Shpirag's hard horizon line. Written across Shpirag's slopes—in letters so large that they appear the same size as the buildings in the foreground of the photo—is the name ENVER.

Upon closer examination, however, the letters have been inscribed not on the mountain itself, but on the photograph, presumably by those who compiled the photobook. Little attempt has even been made to make the letters correspond to the visual rules of perspectival recession into space. They appear to hover over the landscape, perhaps unintentionally positing the flatness of the photograph itself as the surface of history, rather than the immensity of the landscape indexed by the image. A comparison of the photo in the 1987 photobook to a much more recent color photograph, taken in 2001 by Esheref Vrioni, from a similar (though not identical) vantage point, reveals the precise distribution of the letters across Shpirag's slopes [**Figure 4.12**].

⁴⁹ Strazimiri and Veseli, *Berati*.

Alterations of photographs—whether to contribute to the rewriting of history or to increase the legibility of the history supposedly depicted by them (or both)—were not uncommon in socialist culture,⁵⁰ and Albania was no exception to this. This particular textual supplement to the panorama of Berat must have been particularly significant in 1987,⁵¹ just two years after Enver Hoxha’s death. Regardless of precisely when the photograph was originally altered, the inscription on Shpirag’s slopes represents an attempt to assert Hoxha’s longevity not only forward into the future (as the permanence of the geoglyph was no doubt meant to) but also *backwards* in time, as if it was somehow part of an eternal view of the city of Berat and the mountain. Of course, the details of this retroactive eternity were loose: close consideration of the photograph in comparison to Vrioni’s later image reveals that the letters do not even appear on the correct slopes, but have been shifted to the left. This inexactness, however, has its own logic—its imprecision is the imprecision of myth, rather than the precision of documentation.

The altered photograph in the 1987 photobook indicates that the ENVER geoglyph already—during the socialist years—demanded processes of re-inscription in order to align the representation of Berat’s landscape with the eternal aspirations of Hoxha’s legacy. More than four decades after the initial creation of the geoglyph, artist

⁵⁰ On this topic, see David King, *The Commissar Vanishes: The Falsification of Photographs and Art in Stalin’s Russia* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1997), and Leah Dickerman, “Camera Obscura: Socialist Realism in the Shadow of Photography,” *October* 93 (Summer 2000), pp. 138–153. Both King and Dickerman emphasize the doctoring of photographs as an attempt to falsify or revise history in socialist regimes, but airbrushes and other means were also often used to clarify photographs that were of low quality, so that they could be made more easily legible to audiences. Furthermore, as Dickerman (p. 142) points out, socialist citizens were accustomed to these revisions, and photographic alterations were often not disguised, but left clearly visible in the finished product, to emphasize the “publicness” of historical revision. For more on the erasure and rewriting of documents in socialist Albania’s official culture, see Elidor Mëhilli, “Written. (Erased.) Rewritten,” in *Armando Lulaj: Albanian Trilogy*, ed. Marco Scotini, pp. 43–61.

⁵¹ Of course it is not certain that the photograph was doctored in the same year as the book’s publication, but this would not have affected the significance of such an image being published soon after Hoxha’s death, during a time in which the nation was still mourning, and attempting to steady itself in the isolationist political climate that Hoxha had created for the country.

Armando Lulaj undertook his own project to both recover and rewrite the letters stretching across Shpirag's slopes. Lulaj lives and works in Tirana, and is active as a playwright and a filmmaker in addition to being an artist.⁵² He studied in Florence and Bologna, eventually receiving his MFA from the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna in 2011.⁵³ Much of Lulaj's work engages with issues of memory, history, the archive, and interaction of politics and culture; he took part in the third (and last) Tirana Biennale in 2006 with *Living in Memory* (2004), a video showing a communist star burning in the night in the hills outside Tirana, an engagement with the semiotic power and ephemeral qualities of the symbols of the communist regime. *NEVER* marked perhaps Lulaj's most ambitious work up to that point. It garnered him significant recognition,⁵⁴ and became the centerpiece of a series of three works (including *It Wears As It Grows* (2011), *NEVER*, and *Recapitulation* (2015)) that focused not only on recovering obscured histories of the Albanian socialist past but also engaged obliquely with aspects of Hoxha's legacy. Lulaj showed these three works together at the Albanian Pavilion of the 2015 Venice Biennale, curated by Italian curator Marco Scotini, under the collective title *Albanian Trilogy*.

In his discussions of *NEVER*, Lulaj explains that it was only because of the help of the villagers that he was able to precisely locate the letters, and that he relied in particular on one villager named Sheme Filja, who—along with younger members of his family—had been among those who helped to create the geoglyph in 1968. The artist

⁵² See the artist's bio in *Armando Lulaj: Albanian Trilogy*, ed. Marco Scotini, p. 298.

⁵³ Lulaj was together at the Academy of Bologna with two other of Albania's most significant contemporary artists: Pleurad Xhafa and Ergin Zaloshnja (the latter known as a street artist by the moniker Diver Santi). While neither Xhafa nor Zaloshnja have enjoyed the same level of success as Lulaj, it is interesting to note the ways that all three of their respective practices are linked by an interest in the artist's participation or documentary observation of social movements and staged performances.

⁵⁴ In 2014, he was awarded the 'Danish Jukniu' prize in the visual arts for *NEVER*. See Ministria e Kulturës, "Armando Lulaj merr çmimin 'Danish Jukniu,'" April 27, 2014, available from: <http://www.kultura.gov.al/al/dokumente/media/armando-lulaj-merr-cmimin-danish-jukniu&page=5> (accessed October 22, 2017).

recounts that he became interested in the ENVER geoglyph after his work on *It Wears As It Grows*, which also dealt with the monumental heritage of Hoxha's regime and Cold War politics in Albania.⁵⁵ As a child, Lulaj had grown up on a military base where his father worked as a pilot, and had seen photographs of the geoglyph in publications from the socialist period [see **Figure 4.11**].⁵⁶ In such photographs, the geoglyph serves to provide a specifically legible ideological horizon for the ongoing development of socialist society in Albania. For example, in a 1975 photograph by Esheref Vrioni the geoglyph figures prominently in the background [**Figure 4.12**]. In the foreground stands a young female *pionere* ('pioneer,' the term for socialist youth) with a pickaxe over her shoulder. This young woman—smiling, her eyes twinkling—is prominently juxtaposed against a background of rolling hills populated by a multitude of tiny figures, presumably young Albanians summoned for *aksion*, voluntary labor carried out by brigades, often composed of socialist youth. The geoglyph serves in Vrioni's 1975 image as both a substitute for the young *pionere*'s voice—the word ENVER appears almost to spring jubilantly from her lips, a summation of her ideological viewpoint and a declaration of her vitality—and as an object of her labor, since the geoglyph itself was maintained by brigades of youth like those that swarm over the hills behind the girl in the photograph.⁵⁷

Vrioni's 1975 photograph links the dictator's name to an effulgent vision of the bright future of Albanian socialism, but just over a decade and half later in February of 1991—six years after Hoxha's death, and only a few years after the fall of the Berlin

⁵⁵ See Hou Hanru and Armando Lulaj, "The War for Truth," in *Armando Lulaj: Albanian Trilogy*, ed. Marco Scotini, p. 124. I discuss *It Wears As It Grows* further below.

⁵⁶ Images of the ENVER geoglyph appeared in several photobooks published during the socialist years, including Strazimiri and Veseli, but also *Ushtria Jonë Popullore* (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1983). The latter publication contains an image reproduced by Lulaj in the context of some of the exhibitions where *NEVER* has been shown: a black and white photo image of fighter jets flying over ENVER.

⁵⁷ Vincent WJ van Gerven Oei and Mihnea Mircan, eds., *Workers Leaving the Studio. Looking Away from Socialist Realism* (New York: Punctum, 2015), p. 179–180.

wall—Hoxha’s image was synonymous with a reviled past. The year 1991 began with intense civil unrest, including strikes, leading up to what would be the country’s first true multi-party elections in March of that year. Student protests developed into hunger strikes at the country’s main university in Tirana, where both students and professors demanded that the dictator’s name be removed from the university.⁵⁸ A week after these protests took place, a mass of Albanians marched on Tirana’s central plaza, Skanderbeg Square, and pulled down the massive bronze statue of Hoxha⁵⁹ that had been erected there after his death [**Figure 4.14**]. Not long after, similar statues of Hoxha in the major Albanian cities of Durrës and Korça were also torn down.⁶⁰ Other public remnants of the communist regime and Hoxha’s leadership, however, remained to decay with time, and the massive geoglyph on the sides of Mt. Shpirag was one of these. However, this was not for want of trying: as the epigraph to this essay shows, there were persistent and tragically doomed efforts⁶¹ to remove or efface the dictator’s name, but eventually the letters were left to disappear with the passage of time. The 2001 photograph by Vrioni, discussed above, shows that the geoglyph was still legible at that time [see **Figure 4.13**], although an aerial image taken during the creation of *NEVER* indicates that by 2011, when Lulaj first began working on the project, the letters were barely legible [see **Figure 4.7**].

⁵⁸ For a more detailed discussion of this period of unrest, see Miranda Vickers and James Pettifer, *Albania: From Anarchy to a Balkan Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 33–74.

⁵⁹ The statue was the work of Shaban Hadëri and Sali Shijaku.

⁶⁰ Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians*, pp. 218–220.

⁶¹ Unlike the popular protests that pulled down Hoxha’s statue in Tirana, these efforts came from the leader of the Democratic Party and—at the time—Prime Minister of the country, Sali Berisha.

The preparation for the creation of *NEVER*⁶² was lengthy, taking over a year; as the artist explains, he needed to contact and negotiate with the national government, the Berat city government, and the governing bodies of the local villages located near the letters of the geoglyph.⁶³ Each of these different governmental levels was controlled by a different political party—the Democratic Party, the Socialist Party, and a centrist party, respectively—and each political division hoped to use Lulaj’s project as a way to generate positive media attention, votes, and financial gain.⁶⁴ Finding that these various government offices were unwilling to give him permission to carry out the project, Lulaj explains that he went directly to the people living in the villages, to explain that the project was not intended to support any particular new political party or system. Since some of the villagers had been involved in the initial maintenance of the ENVER geoglyph, he found them willing to both support the project and participate in the transformation of the letters.

Sheme Filja, the above-mentioned villager who had been among the soldiers who created the glyph, was the person who first helped Lulaj locate the letters on the mountainside, and he subsequently played a central role in the process of creating *NEVER*. Once Lulaj and Filja had located the letters, it took a group of about ten workers, including some locals, close to a month to transform ENVER into NEVER, clearing brush, moving stones, and repainting them. In some ways, Lulaj’s interaction and collaboration with the local villagers resembles aspects of the problematic

⁶² Excerpts of the *NEVER* video can be viewed at the following sites: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xx3-5G-6CUY> and <https://vimeo.com/86842518> (accessed October 23, 2017).

⁶³ See the artist’s accounts of the process in Lulaj, “Interview with Armando Lulaj;” Lulaj and Department of Eagles, “Interview with Armando Lulaj;” and Hanru and Lulaj, “The War for Truth,” pp. 115–134.

⁶⁴ Lulaj notes that he constructed a diagram showing the dates of his numerous meetings with these bureaucratic units, creating a parallel document that also forms part of the *NEVER* project.

‘anthropological’ practices of contemporary art projects critiqued by Hal Foster in his well-known discussion of ‘the artist as ethnographer.’⁶⁵ Lulaj’s approach is somewhat different than the practices critiqued by Foster however (practices that use the authority of the art establishment and interaction with the anthropological ‘other’ in order to appropriate that other’s perceived authenticity in ways that conceal the ideologies of both the artist and the institution that serves as patron). The difference first of all resides in Lulaj’s repetition of the already ‘vernacular’ creation of the ENVER geoglyph. The initial creation of the letters already relied strongly on the curious inversion of monumentality implied in the process: the suggestion that the ‘people’ were responsible for its creation.⁶⁶ Thus, while the participation of the local population (represented in the film portion of *NEVER* primarily through its framing of Filja as protagonist of the unfolding events) does create an increased sense of ‘authenticity,’ the ideological saturation of both the original geoglyph and the transformed *NEVER* sign draw attention to the orchestrated aspects of their construction.

Precisely in its sensationalist qualities—the sweeping negation suggested by the term ‘never,’ the colossal scale of the work—Lulaj’s work undermines the ‘everydayness’ of the project’s realization. It sharply juxtaposes vernacular building methods with the institutional viewpoint—literally, the viewpoint from above, presented in the video portion of the project by the military pilots flying over the landscape. The narrative unfolding of this juxtaposition imbues the actions of Filja and the team of workers with a sense of mystery: when we first see the group moving about in the tall grass on the mountain slopes, surveying with a tachymeter, the precise nature of their

⁶⁵ Hal Foster, “The Artist as Ethnographer,” in *The Return of the Real*, pp. 171–204.

⁶⁶ It was created, after all, by soldiers in the *People’s Army*, according to the socialist assertion that the army arose as an institution directly from popular participation in national defense.

project is unknown. Their labor amidst the rocks, calling back and forth to each other in their efforts to discover or measure the obscure object of their search, is only subsequently clarified when we see the pilots flying over the landscape of Shpirag, looking down at the ENVER geoglyph. As Marco Scotini writes, “once [the geoglyph is] identified as the subject of the inquiry and the investigation on the slopes of Mount Shpirag, it is presumed that the rest of the video will be concerned with the discovery of the material hidden in the soil, ... with the consequent repositioning of the original inscription in stone...”⁶⁷ However, what appears as the result of the ongoing labor of surveying, brush-clearing, and painting is, instead, the anagram NEVER. Thus, what first appears to be a process of archaeological recovery—or perhaps of restoration—becomes instead an act of rewriting that obliterates the meaning of the original geoglyph, giving it a new form. In this way, the entire project becomes simultaneously about destruction as much as about recovery, and this further weakens the possibility of reading *NEVER* as a naïve attempt to harness unmediated local memory. (I discuss the relationship between memory and other discourses—namely, ‘history’—at greater length below.)

The second way that Lulaj’s project avoids the kind of naïve fetishization of local authenticity is by emphasizing *distance* alongside participation. This distance is both the artist’s own distance from the actions, and the separation that occurs between the transformed geoglyph itself and the video documentation of the project. Put simply, the presentation of the work by means of a video shot in an overtly cinematic paradigm—Lulaj’s 22-minute film is full of wide panoramas and long, steady shots of Filja and the team of workers—emphasizes forms of indirectness and mediation, rather than direct

⁶⁷ Marco Scotini, “The Science of Whales: Narratives of Power and the Invention of the Enemy,” in *Armando Lulaj: Albanian Trilogy*, ed. Marco Scotini, p. 18.

experience or vernacular authenticity. The video format (which is of course both reproducible and mobile, allowing the project to ‘manifest’ in numerous specific exhibition contexts) creates a forceful juxtaposition of closeness and distance, both literally and metaphorically, with the second term ultimately emerging as the more predominant.

This duality of closeness and distance is one of several dichotomies that Lulaj’s video sets up, all of which are important to understanding *NEVER*’s full range of meanings. There is first of all the most obvious juxtaposition between the present and the past, between the interspersed archival footage of the pilots and flying over the terrain and the time of the surveying crew working on the mountain’s slopes. There is a dichotomy of space and scale as well: when the surveying crew first appears, they are dwarfed by the massiveness of the mountain, almost too small to be noticed against the expanse of stone and brush that they slowly climb. By contrast, the pilots and their aircraft appear as protagonists: no matter how small they might appear against the backdrop of mountainous wilderness, the footage clearly frames them at the center of the narrative, and it is only the eventually revealing of the ENVER geoglyph that displaces the pilot as the protagonist (although we first see a portrait photograph of Hoxha in the plane’s cockpit, a face that foreshadows the name to come).

Alongside this dichotomy there is a dichotomy (and a kind of hierarchy) of vision: while the pilots ultimately occupy an Archimedean point from which the entirety of the geoglyph is legible, the survey crew is grounded. Their position never allows for a full visual grasp of the work they are carrying out, although at the same time they are the ones that possess the instrument of scientifically objective vision and measurement—the

tachymeter.⁶⁸ Although the surveying crew is unable to ‘see’ the geoglyph, the centrality of the tachymeter to so much of the footage of their crew—especially once it is revealed that they are uncovering something hidden—lends a corresponding ‘depth’ or abstract objectivity to their perception. Finally, there is a dichotomy between different kinds of absence related to the respective roles of the dictator and the artist. Although Hoxha’s image appears in the film (in the plane’s cockpit), and his name serves as the centerpiece of the project, the dictator himself ultimately serves as a kind of emptiness in the video. This fact is reinforced by Lulaj’s own absence: he retreats from a strong authorial role in the film, and thus the project itself appears to emerge spontaneously, without a guiding hand.

At the end of the *NEVER* video, we see, across a panoramic distance, the results of the recovery project: the efforts of the survey crew become visible as the word *NEVER* inscribed across the slopes of Shpirag, seen from a vantage point comparable to that taken by Vrioni in his 2001 photograph discussed above. In these final images, the relationship between the geoglyph and the urban context of the city of Berat (and the surrounding villages) becomes clearer.⁶⁹ The geoglyph is at once remote and visually proximal to the city: it serves as a backdrop to Berat that declares its eternity even as its own history (the necessity of uncovering the letters) evidences that it will not survive without attentive preservation. The scale of time suggested by *NEVER* necessarily enters a dialogue with the ancient history of Berat itself, which was already part of the history of the original ENVER geoglyph.

⁶⁸ On the dynamics of vision in *NEVER*, and the role of the tachymeter, see Scotini, “The Science of Whales,” pp. 17–18.

⁶⁹ Although Berat has been visible in the distant background of some of the earlier scenes of SHEME FILJA and his crew, the viewpoint from the city itself is never quite so directly thematized as in the final part of the video.

When Lulaj carried out his alteration of the geoglyph, Albania's more ancient sites (such as Berat and Gjirokastra) had gained UNESCO status (Gjirokastra in 2005 and Berat in 2008), and had become locations in a gradually developing tourist network of ancient sites. At the same time, however, the status of socialist-era architectural spaces and monuments had become increasingly contentious,⁷⁰ and this contentiousness would continue to develop parallel to Lulaj's creation of *NEVER* and the work's subsequent exhibition at the Venice Biennale. Although a lengthier discussion of the political context of postsocialist Albania in the 2010s is beyond the scope of the present discussion, it is important to trace some of the discursive changes that took place around the time that Lulaj created *NEVER*, as they tie the work more directly to the unfolding politics of socialist cultural heritage in the country. Lulaj completed the *NEVER* project the year before Tirana mayor Edi Rama⁷¹ took power as Prime Minister of Albania, and Lulaj's presentation of the "Albanian Trilogy" of *It Wears as It Grows*, *NEVER*, and

⁷⁰ For example, one of the most controversial works of (late) socialist architecture in Albania is the Pyramid (*Piramida*, in Albanian), located on the central axial boulevard of the capital city, Tirana. The Pyramid, completed in 1988, was originally created to serve as a museum to Hoxha's life, after his death in 1985. In the postsocialist period, it has served several functions, including as a community arts and culture center, a NATO base of operations, a temporary exhibition space, and (partially) as space for the antenna equipment of one of Albania's major television stations. In the early 2000s, a debate began about potential plans to destroy the Pyramid, and has carried on into the present day. Efforts to either demolish or refurbish the structure are met by protests from different elements of the public (and the structure itself has been used as a site for opposition-party protests). This atmosphere of heated debate over the heritage of monuments that commemorate the leaders of communist or socialist dictatorships is of course not unique to Albania, but the Pyramid is no doubt the most iconic example of this debate in the period leading up to the creation of Lulaj's *NEVER*. The fact that Lulaj created part of one of the other works shown with *NEVER* at the 2015 Venice Biennale, *It Wears As It Grows*, in the Pyramid, evidences its relationship to the geoglyph project.

On the debates surrounding the Pyramid in particular, see the essays and documents included in POLIS University's *Forumi A+P: Arkitektura si mjetë ndëtimi dhe shkatërrimi* 8 (2006), available from: https://issuu.com/polisuniversity/docs/forum_a_p_vol_08 (accessed October 12, 2017). On the fate of socialist monuments after the fall of socialism, see especially Fowkes, "You Only Live Twice," pp. 213–233, and Valiavicharska, "History's Restless Ruins," pp. 171–201.

⁷¹ Edi Rama's father was Kristaq Rama, one of the socialist regime's most popular monumental sculptors, but Edi Rama's reputation has been built primarily upon the criticism and erasure of aspects of Albania's socialist past. For more on Kristaq Rama and his relationship to Enver Hoxha, see Raino Isto, "The Dictator Visits the Studio" (forthcoming 2018).

Recapitulation in Venice placed the project firmly in dialogue with Rama's policies on socialist heritage and his emphasis on state and cultural centralization. Rama—himself an artist—initially constructed his political career on a fusion of art and politics in the urban setting of Tirana, during his years as the mayor of that city, and his fusion of art and politics was primarily aimed at visually transforming the gray, concrete socialist architecture of that city into a vibrant and colorful modern setting.⁷² However, Rama's negation of socialist built heritage became more selective after his election as Prime Minister of Albania in 2013.

If the previous Prime Minister, Sali Berisha, had effectively either ignored or halfheartedly attempted to destroy certain elements of the country's built socialist legacy, Rama was more pragmatic. The event that evidenced the inception of Rama's attitudes towards socialist-era heritage (and the memory of the socialist era more broadly) was the inauguration of the Bunk' Art Museum—a multipurpose museum and exhibition space housed in a vast socialist-era underground military complex on the outskirts of Tirana, devoted to Albania's pre-socialist and socialist past [Figure 4.24]. The inauguration took place in November of 2015 (around the time that the 2015 Venice Biennale closed). At the inauguration of the space, Rama stated, "Today, we witness the opening of the door to

⁷² The complex interrelationship of Rama's political and artistic roles exceeds the current discussion. For an overview of Rama's use of the rhetoric of contemporary art and urbanism to justify his policies of political centralization and a shift towards authoritarian control, see Vincent WJ van Gerven Oei, "Give Me the Colors...and the Country: Albanian Propaganda in the 21st Century," *Art Papers* (March/April 2016), http://www.artpapers.org/feature_articles/2016_0304-Albania.html (accessed October 26, 2017). See also Raino Isto, "'It's Very Exciting to Talk About Artist-Run Countries': Edi Rama, the COD, and the Problematics of Celebrating the Artist-Politician," *ARTMargins Online Blog*, December 22, 2016, <http://blog.artmargins.com/index.php/74-it-s-very-exciting-to-talk-about-artist-run-countries-edi-rama-the-cod-and-the-problematics-of-celebrating-the-artist-politician.html> (accessed October 26, 2017).

a treasure of our collective memory.”⁷³ He went on to say that his government had “a project to create a historical and touristic itinerary of the communist underground and at the same time to turn that itinerary into an itinerary of the creative imagination, with the goal of both liberating and harnessing the fecundity of our collective memory.”⁷⁴ That is, Rama conceptualized Albania’s socialist history as linked indelibly to both creative agency *and* to the neoliberal model of touristic development, the monetization of heritage for the sake of economic development. In other words, the socialist past was not valued primarily for its own historical effects on the country’s present, but primarily for its ability to generate both revenue and new creative output.

At least as significant, for the purposes of the present discussion, is the fact that Rama’s discussion of Bunk’ Art (and the form of the museum itself, as an underground bunker), established excavation and *depth*⁷⁵ as key elements of a discourse about the socialist past.⁷⁶ The dialectic of depth and surface has already become apparent in the case of the ENVER geoglyph itself. The inscription of the dictator’s name on a massive natural formation adjacent to (and in visual juxtaposition with) the oldest continuously occupied urban context in the country suggested the eternity of Hoxha’s legacy, but at the same time the retroactive inscription of this legacy was a matter of writing on the *surface*

⁷³ “Edi Rama: ‘Bunk’ Art’ një thesar i kujtesës kolektive,” *Koha Jonë*, November 24, 2014, <http://www.kohajone.com/index.php/forum/edi-rama-bunk-art-nje-thesar-i-kujteses-kolektive> (accessed June 13, 2015).

⁷⁴ “Edi Rama: ‘Bunk’ Art’ një thesar i kujtesës kolektive.” On the significance of Bunk’ Art, see Raino Isto, “‘An Itinerary of the Creative Imagination’: Bunk’ Art and the Politics of Art and Tourism in Remembering Albania’s Socialist Past,” *Cultures of History Forum*, May 2017, <http://www.cultures-of-history.uni-jena.de/politics/albania/an-itinerary-of-the-creative-imagination-bunkart-and-the-politics-of-art-and-tourism-in-remembering-albanias-socialist-past/> (accessed October 26, 2017).

⁷⁵ Here I mean the use of depth to resonate with Fredric Jameson’s characterization of modernity and its culture of depth: a hermeneutical model that searches below the surface of phenomena for their truth. See Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 8–9.

⁷⁶ Even during the socialist era, the term ‘deepening’ was used to describe the spatial corollary of the Cultural Revolution in Albania.

of the photograph as the material manifestations of history: the panoramic view of Berat published in the 1987 photobook discussed above. The immediately preceding discussion has situated Lulaj's artistic intervention in relation to the history of the ENVER geoglyph, the historical context of the city of Berat, Albanian socialist-era monumental practices, and—to a limited degree—the postsocialist political context of attitudes towards socialist monumental heritage. It is now necessary to outline the artistic trajectory to which Lulaj's work belongs, to trace the developments in contemporary postsocialist art relating to archaeology and memory.

IV. History, Archaeology, Postmemory

As Charity Scribner has described, following the end of the Cold War, a great number of writers and artists have returned to the memories and dreams of the global socialist movement, “mourn[ing] its collapse” and “survey[ing its] wreckage.”⁷⁷ These artistic engagements are often importantly intertwined with the broader politics of memory prevailing at the intersection of nostalgia for collective labor, and the rise of neoliberal policies currently driving politics in much of the former Socialist Bloc. Indeed, as Scribner writes, these cultural projects and products link the socialist aspirations of 20th-century Europe as a whole⁷⁸ (and, I would add, an entire global milieu that also includes Asia, Africa, and Latin America) by reifying a collectivist imaginary.⁷⁹ Scribner suggests that postsocialist artists looking back at the communist past are searching for a particular relationship to history: “[U]topian thought [once] offered an alternate route

⁷⁷ Charity Scribner, *Requiem for Communism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), p. 3.

⁷⁸ Scribner, *Requiem*, p. 5.

⁷⁹ It is for this reason that I use the term ‘postsocialism,’ rather than ‘postcommunism’ (which Scribner uses). As Anthony Gardner has argued, the term ‘postsocialism’ has a broader implied meaning, since it “takes a much more expansive view of the possible ramifications of socialism’s apparent collapse.” That is, it describes a potentially *global* situation that includes nations that never had ‘communist’ governments but are nonetheless affected by socialism’s end. See Gardner, *Politically Unbecoming*, p. 9.

away from implacable historical reality. Now, at the purported ‘end of history’⁸⁰ when time itself seems to pause in the eternal present, utopia veers into the longing for History itself.’⁸¹

Artists turning to history and the problem of historical representation⁸² is a tendency in no way limited to artists of the former East, although many of the cultural producers working in this paradigm are responding explicitly to the postwar rise of socialism and its subsequent waning and fall. Art historian Mark Godfrey considers the increasing interest in the role of “the artist as historian” in his well-known article of the same title.⁸³ Godfrey analyzes the turn in artistic practice towards the past, and the proliferation of projects (whether in performance, photography, sculpture, or other media) that explicitly incorporate “historical research” as a crucial component of their method. This trend, Godfrey argues, has emerged parallel with what Hal Foster defined as the “archival impulse” in contemporary art,⁸⁴ but the ‘artist as historian’ is distinct from the ‘artist as archivist’ insofar as the former is specifically concerned with *the past* whereas the latter need not necessarily be interested in history at all.⁸⁵ One of Godfrey’s key examples in his article is in fact Albanian artist Anri Sala. Godfrey reads Sala’s 1998 film *Intervista* [Figure 4.25] (wherein the artist finds a silent film from the socialist era in

⁸⁰ There is a decided irony to the degree to which the postsocialist has come to resemble ‘the end of history,’ since this suspension of history was also what appeared—for some authors at least—to define late socialism. For example, Alexei Yurchak’s now-famous assessment of late socialism characterized it as an “eternal state”—the “permanence and immutability” of which were accepted with conviction by its citizens. See Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 1–4.

⁸¹ Scribner, *Requiem*, p. 9.

⁸² I am leaving aside for the moment the complicated overlaps and distinctions between artists engaged with ‘memory’ as opposed to or in addition to ‘history.’ I return to this topic and the usefulness of a distinction between the two concepts, below.

⁸³ Mark Godfrey, “The Artist as Historian.”

⁸⁴ Hal Foster, “An Archival Impulse,” *October* 110 (Fall 2004), pp. 3–22.

⁸⁵ Godfrey, “The Artist as Historian,” p. 143, n. 5.

which his mother is speaking at a Party gathering, reconstructs the words she is speaking with the help of a lip-reader, and then discusses the subtitled footage with his mother) as paradigmatic of the ‘historical’ impulse in contemporary art. According to Godfrey, the footage of socialist citizens in *Intervista* “all ... shows people talking about the future. In this Communist era, historical representation itself had been banished: one of the crucial aspects of the work was that Sala not only looked back but retrieved the very possibility of retrospection.”⁸⁶ For Godfrey, then, the artist as historian has the potential to confront the “eclipse of a historical sensibility” he believes characterized the socialist era (at least in Albania, though he suggests that this is true more broadly of communism).⁸⁷

There are two things that should be noted about Godfrey’s influential analysis of the artist as historian. First, this paradigm describes many of the artists working in postsocialist countries, including without a doubt Armando Lulaj (and *NEVER* is certainly a kind of historical project in precisely the vein Godfrey describes). Second, Godfrey views the postsocialist artist (in his analysis, Sala) returning to history and historical representation as both content and method as an *antidote* to a *lack* of historical consciousness that prevailed under socialism. (Thus, Godfrey is advancing something like the opposite of Scribner’s thesis, at least in the case of postsocialist artists: for Scribner these artists turn to socialism because it was a time when History prevailed; for Godfrey the present offers a historical consciousness that socialism never encouraged.) This is problematic for at least three reasons (and fails to sufficiently characterize Lulaj’s work for the same reasons). First, it suggests that the postsocialist artist primarily critiques the socialist or communist past (now more than 25 years past), rather than the

⁸⁶ Godfrey, “The Artist as Historian,” p. 144.

⁸⁷ Godfrey, “The Artist as Historian,” p. 144.

present. Second, it exclusively equates history with the past (at most with the present), rather than acknowledging the futural dimension of history. Finally, as Dieter Roelstraete has pointed out, Godfrey's analysis fails to make adequate distinction between the artist as historian and the artist as *historiographer*,⁸⁸ a paradigm that Roelstraete argues far more accurately characterizes artists working today in the regions of Central and Eastern Europe.⁸⁹

In conjunction with what Roelstraete identifies as the 'historiographic' (alongside but also distinct from the 'historical') turn in contemporary art, there is also a turn towards the very material practice of archaeology. Roelstraete sees art's engagement with archaeology as both method and subject as part of an important re-materialization (and slowing-down) of contemporary art. He writes that "The archeological imaginary in art produces not so much an *optics* as it does a *haptics*—it invites us, forces us to intently scratch the surface (of the earth, of time, of the world) rather than merely marvel at it in dandified detachment." This material entanglement corrects a certain problematic trend in historical and historiographic research carried out by artists: "its inability to grasp or even look at the present, much less to *excavate the future*."⁹⁰ Roelstraete's analysis is particularly applicable to works like *NEVER* for reasons I will discuss below, primarily because it more completely grasps the intertwinement of future and past in the process of contemporary art, but also because it encompasses not only archival research or representation, but the physical uncovering of the past as well.

⁸⁸ Of course, since Godfrey sees the socialist past as lacking a 'historical sensibility,' it becomes difficult to imagine the postsocialist artist as a historiographer.

⁸⁹ Dieter Roelstraete, "The Way of the Shovel: On the Archaeological Imaginary in Contemporary Art," *e-flux Journal* 4 (March, 2009), available from: <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/04/68582/the-way-of-the-shovel-on-the-archeological-imaginary-in-art/> (accessed August 31, 2017). Roelstraete mentions David Maljković, discussed later in this chapter, in his list of artists who often work in an archaeological paradigm.

⁹⁰ Roelstraete, "The Way of the Shovel."

Before delving deeper into the futural aspects of projects like Lulaj's I must also address the precise relationship between the present and the past that characterizes many postsocialist contemporary artworks (Lulaj's included). As anthropologist Sofia Kalo has compellingly demonstrated, many of the contemporary artists working in Albania today were born during late socialism, and thus have few memories of the socialist period. Kalo productively utilizes Marianne Hirsch's notion of 'postmemory,' the memories of those who are children of those who have lived through a traumatic period, forming a later generation "whose life is dominated by memories of what preceded [their] birth."⁹¹ Artists and other cultural producers belonging to this second generation—remote from the events that dominate the cultural memory of their present—are called upon to preserve that which they never directly experienced or understood in their lifetimes: they "counteract [the] loss [of the past] not by direct recall, but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation, in the form of novels, artworks, films, performances, or memoirs."⁹² These imaginative creations can also occur, of course, in direct relation to real sites and real histories. One of Kalo's examples of this phenomenon in Albanian visual art is Lulaj's *NEVER*, which she uses to introduce the issue not only of contemporary attitudes towards the socialist past, but also of the ways that contemporary artists critique their present.⁹³ Kalo's reading of Lulaj's project is crucial to my own for precisely this reason: it loosens the degree to which the *past* is the predominant framework of meaning for contemporary artworks of this variety, and shifts the temporal context to the present.

⁹¹ Marianne Hirsch, "Family Pictures: *Maus*, Mourning, and Post-memory," *Discourse* 15:2 (Winter 1992-93), p. 8.

⁹² Sofia Kalo, "'The Red Kiss of the Past that Does Not Pass': State Socialism in Albanian Visual Art Today," *Visual Anthropology Review* 33:1 (Spring 2017), p. 54.

⁹³ Kalo, "The Red Kiss," pp. 51–52, 55.

What Kalo does not consider, however, is the particular role that the monument (and socialist monumentality) plays in Lulaj's engagement with the past. To understand the precise character of Lulaj's navigation of the past, present, and future, we need to understand the way he engages with the ENVER geoglyph *as a monument*.

Contemporary artists who deal with monuments of the past are often framed as doing so in order to question the validity of the kinds of memory or history that these monuments promote, and much has been written about the notion of the counter-monument and the anti-monument in contemporary art. James E. Young, in his now-famous analysis, uses the term "counter-monument" in his discussion of postwar monumental practices in Germany devoted to the commemoration of the Holocaust. He uses the notion to describe those "brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being."⁹⁴ In the German context, these counter-monuments draw their self-critical aesthetic and epistemological skepticism not only from a general suspicion about the ways monuments can obscure history as much as reveal it, but also from a concern about the specific ways Nazi culture embraced the monumental. Thus, the artists that Young analyzes seek to undermine or deconstruct the monumental, in some cases in the name of recovering (or recovering a different version of) historical consciousness.

Authors such as Quentin Stevens, Karen Franck, and Ruth Fazakerley have charted the distinction between the counter-monument (or the anti-monument) and what they term the dialogic monument.⁹⁵ As they point out, the English-language literature on the counter-monument—following Young's analysis—has largely used the conceptual of

⁹⁴ That is, Young equates the postwar counter-monument with a kind of neo-avant-garde critique of the past and its modes of official art, a self-conscious attempt to find the grounds of a particular mode of representation and deconstruct them. See Young, "The Counter-monument," p. 271.

⁹⁵ Quentin Stevens, Karen A. Franck, and Ruth Fazakerley, "Counter-monuments: The Anti-monument and the Dialogic," *The Journal of Architecture* 17:6 (2012), pp. 951–972.

‘counter-monumentality’ to describe “anti-monumental features,” which are aimed critically at the forms, strategies, and meanings of traditional monumentality.⁹⁶ Alongside this tendency, they identify the notion of the dialogic monument, a form of counter-monument that creates its meanings specifically through dialogue with a *particular* monument already existing at a site.⁹⁷ In certain ways, Lulaj’s *NEVER* fits quite clearly into both of these proposed trajectories of artistic investigation: it is both a questioning of the legacy of a past, authoritarian monumentality, and a specific deconstruction (or more accurately, reconstruction) of an existing monument. However, my goal in this analysis of Lulaj’s work is primarily to understand the ways that Lulaj’s practice is emblematic of an artist renewing and transforming a socialist-era monument and the meanings it can have in the present. The paradoxical character of the *NEVER* project (the prolongation of time by means of the monument) is of course linked to the fact that socialist monuments already represented—in many ways—a projected future, the assumption that their message about the past or the present would be immediately apprehended by a socialist future.

V. *NEVER*’s Time and Scale: Horizon and History

There are two arguments that I wish to make about Lulaj’s *NEVER*. The first is that—despite sharing a set of interests and features with ‘counter-monumental’ works of recent art—the project is not fundamentally a negation of socialist mentality, but rather an attempt to return to and continue aspects of socialist monumentality as part of a critique of present conditions. The second point is that *NEVER* does this explicitly by engaging with the kinds of time (or models of temporal experience) that socialist

⁹⁶ Stevens, Franck, and Fazakerley, p. 962.

⁹⁷ Stevens, Franck, and Fazakerley, pp. 962–967.

monumentality in Albania offered and continues to offer from the standpoint of the historical past. Despite the frequent relegation of monuments to obsolescence (hence the prevalence of counter-monuments and anti-monuments alike), the rootedness of monumentality in the experience of time links it indelibly to contemporary art.

The entanglement of contemporary art with notions of history (and memory) is one facet of contemporary art's fundamentally *temporal* character: like 'modern' art before it, 'contemporary' art is named for a temporal relation. This is not to deny that there is a spatial corollary to the contemporaneity of art: theorists of contemporary art generally agree that the time of the contemporary evolves in the conditions of globalization.⁹⁸ A Peter Osborne puts it, "the contemporary appears ... as *the time of the globally transnational*."⁹⁹ I will return to this temporal structure below—because it is part of how *NEVER* takes up the legacy of socialist monumentality—but first I would like to consider some works that, although in different media and on a very different scale, help clarify the ways that Lulaj's work both is and is not a critical negation of Albania's dictatorial past and its culture.

Let us examine *NEVER* alongside two other works whose concepts—if not their media—parallel Lulaj's approach to the questions of time and horizon: Romanian artist Ciprian Mureșan's *Communism Never Happened* (2006)¹⁰⁰ and Romanian artists Mona Vătămanu and Florin Tudor's *Long Live and Thrive Capitalism!* (2009) [Figures 4.26–4.27]. Both works play with the presumed obsolescence of historical communism's

⁹⁸ See, for example, Terry Smith, *What is Contemporary Art?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), esp. pp. 1–10, and Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, pp. 15–35.

⁹⁹ Osborne, *Anything or Not at All*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁰ Lulaj's *NEVER* was shown alongside Mureșan's *Communism Never Happened* in the 2015 exhibition *Workers Leaving the Studio. Looking Away from Socialist Realism*, curated by Vincent WJ van Gerven Oei and Mihnea Mircan, at the National Gallery of Art in Tirana.

eternal forward projection—the dream that communism would last forever. Mureșan’s work consists of the eponymous phrase spelled out in letters cut from vinyl records of propaganda speeches from socialist-era Romania, usually exhibited together with a growing archive related to the work itself: further curatorial texts, emails related to showing the work, and so forth. Vătămanu and Tudor’s banner, which likewise bears its eponymous phrase,¹⁰¹ mimics the slogan that defined the presumed eternity of communism: “Long Live and Thrive Communism!” Both of these works are significant in relation to *NEVER* because they investigate the relationship between negation (typically associated with both the historical and the neo-avant-garde)¹⁰² and the notion of the “horizon of expectation”¹⁰³ (a notion put forward by Reinhart Koselleck and critiqued by Peter Osborne in his discussion of contemporary art and its relation to history).¹⁰⁴ Mureșan’s work is perhaps the more retrospectively-aimed of the two: its statement presents itself primarily as a statement about the past, a negation of memory and history. At the same time, the work still suggests a certain futural possibility: it posits that the non-existence of historical communism (which of course is not equivalent to the non-existence of historical *socialism*) means that the hope of the communist future is still

¹⁰¹ It is worth noting in passing that all these works share in their rejection of poetic titles in favor of apparently neutral titles that simply name them according to the text they present as their most salient content.

¹⁰² On negation and the (neo-)avant-garde, see John Roberts, *Revolutionary Time and the Avant-Garde* (New York: Verso, 2015), pp. 51–91.

¹⁰³ See Reinhart Koselleck, “‘Space of Experience’ and ‘Horizon of Expectation’: Two Historical Categories,” in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), pp. 255–275. Koselleck explains that expectation is “is the future made present; it directs itself to the not-yet, to the nonexperienced, to that which is to be revealed,” and he identifies the spatial corollary of this as “the horizon [:] that line behind which a new space of experience will open, but which cannot yet be seen.” (Koselleck, pp. 259–261).

¹⁰⁴ Peter Osborne, “Expecting the Unexpected: Beyond the ‘Horizon of Expectation,’” in *On Horizons: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, ed. Maria Hlavajova, Simon Sheikh, and Jill Wonder (Utrecht: BAK, 2011), pp. 114–124.

somehow open, and was not completely foreclosed upon.¹⁰⁵ Vătămanu and Tudor’s *Long Live and Thrive Capitalism!*, as Osborne writes, “reduce[s] the two opposed political imperatives—Communism! and Capitalism!—to a common political-historical form,” but in doing so it also emphasizes a kind of repetition and “stasis” that resides at the heart of the present (capitalist) moment. In other words, the present emerges as simply a formal and substantive attempt to preserve the revolutionary horizon of the past in perpetuity, with the addition of “endless accumulation” as capitalism’s new motivating factor.¹⁰⁶

These works are significant in juxtaposition with Lulaj’s because the three of them (*Communism Never Happened*, *Long Live and Thrive Capitalism!*, and *NEVER*) all function as negations that are not really negations. (Put differently, they are negations that at the same time repeat or extend, rather than cutting off.) Lulaj himself explains that *NEVER*—despite the most obvious reading of the work—is not really a negation of Hoxha or his legacy. He explains, “it’s not a kind of negation of Enver, the dictator’s name.” Rather, he says, *NEVER* is related more broadly to what Lulaj calls the “condition of absolutism.” Today, this absolutism wears the “guise of democracy,” espousing the notion that democracy “includes all possibilities” and occludes any other alternatives.¹⁰⁷ Lulaj’s work comments not only on Albania’s socialist past, but also on the postsocialist present, in an era when the institution of democracy—interpreted primarily through the

¹⁰⁵ I owe my thinking on this topic to an exchange with curator and critic Romeo Kodra, and to his post, “Communism Never Happened...edhe në Shqipëria,” *AKS Revista*, March 2, 2015, available from: <https://aksrevista.wordpress.com/2015/03/02/communism-never-happened-edhe-në-shqipëri-romeo-kodra/> (accessed October 25, 2017).

¹⁰⁶ Osborne, “Expecting the Unexpected,” pp. 125–127.

¹⁰⁷ Lulaj, “Interview with Armando Lulaj.”

lens of promoting capitalist free markets—has become the single fundamental horizon of experience for the period of postsocialist transition.¹⁰⁸

Even more interesting, however, is the way that the simple semiotic shift enacted in Lulaj's video extends the geoglyph—negatively—into eternity. Lulaj's work cuts off one kind of historical trajectory, but it also preserves it precisely by suggesting the undying character of the meaning imbued on Mt. Shpirag. Indeed, the sheer amount of historical research and archival evidence that accompanies Lulaj's works belies the simplicity of the negation suggested by the term 'NEVER.' Lulaj's work is not only a removed critique of the monumentalization of the leader's name, but also an ambiguous supplement to it, a recuperation of its apparent timelessness.

It is useful, in elaborating the ambiguity of Lulaj's treatment of the temporal scale of the geoglyph, to situate Lulaj's work in relation to discourses of both memory and history, and to consider the ways the work relates to notions of collective memory and historical narrative.¹⁰⁹ This is particularly necessary in the cases of contemporary art since in recent years, as philosopher Peter Osborne argues, artistic "[c]laims to contemporaneity are frequently being made via, or even *as*, claims to cultural [collective]

¹⁰⁸ For a description of the ways that democracy has emerged as an imperialist absolute, see Gardner, *Politically Unbecoming*, pp. 40–48.

¹⁰⁹ The opposition between memory and history has been understood as a given for some time, especially on the basis of Pierre Nora's important writings on 'sites of memory' in the French context. Nora argues that "Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past. ... History is perpetually suspicious of memory, and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it." See Nora, "Between Memory and History," pp. 8–9.

It is also worth noting the way that the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs—who developed the notion of collective memory in the form that it is generally still used today—distinguished collective memory from history (or, 'historical memory'). Halbwachs argued that the most important differentiating feature is that "[h]istory is a record of changes [that is] naturally persuaded that societies change constantly, because it focuses on the whole," which is always in flux. By contrast, "[t]he collective memory is a record of resemblances" that is convinced that a particular "group remains the same." See Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr., and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper Colophon, 1980), p. 86.

memory, in a way that overwhelms other possibilities for interpreting such work.”¹¹⁰ In contemporary debates on artworks dealing with monuments in particular, memory is often the privileged lens of analysis, primarily because it is presumed to present “a critique of power.”¹¹¹ As architectural historian Daniel Abramson writes,

Against the apparent biases of history, memory stirs. Memory privileges the private and the emotional, the subjective and the bodily. Against history’s rationality, the reveries of memory rebel. Against history’s officialism, memory recalls hidden pasts, the lived and the local, the ordinary and the everyday. Against history’s totality, memory’s pluralism blooms.¹¹²

Abramson continues by citing historian Michael S. Roth’s assertion that, “In modernity memory is the key to personal and collective identity.”¹¹³ In postsocialist Eastern Europe, this model is certainly the one privileged by scholars, curators, and many artists themselves: as Piotr Piotrowski writes, artists invoking memory are generally understood as invoking its “critical function towards the official historic discourse.”¹¹⁴

However, as Peter Osborne points out, this dichotomy—and contemporary art’s frequent association with the ‘memory’ side of the dichotomy—mischaracterizes ‘history’ in problematic ways. Osborne argues that the association of (specifically collective) memory with history in the context of contemporary art is flawed in multiple senses, primarily because the notion of history (in the sense of ‘world history’) has emerged as a category concurrently with the *severance* of individual from collective memory, creating the “need for artificial *constructions* of the collective meaning of the

¹¹⁰ Peter Osborne, “The Truth Will Be Known,” p. 202.

¹¹¹ Piotr Piotrowski, *Art and Democracy*, p. 155.

¹¹² Daniel Abramson, “Make History.”

¹¹³ Michael S. Roth, *The Ironist’s Cage: Memory, Trauma, and the Construction of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 9, qtd. in Abramson, “Make History.”

¹¹⁴ Piotrowski, *Art and Democracy*, p. 157.

past through the assembly and interpretation of exterior, documentary sources.”¹¹⁵ These constructions are “pieced together out of elements” that have been ruptured from the individual subjects (or actors) of history, and their re-assemblage occurs outside any real collective because advanced capitalist society (now a global phenomenon) has dissolved the genuinely existing collectives that once generated collective memories. The piecing together of disparate experiences, furthermore, is not primarily aimed at connecting the present to the past, according to Osborne, but rather in connection to projected futures. “[H]istory is about the future” because only a “speculative futural moment” can establish a relation between disparate historical experiences.¹¹⁶

In a sense, Lulaj’s *NEVER* reflects quite directly Osborne’s description of the ways critically historical contemporary art is about the future as much as it is about the past. Its historical ‘object’ —the geoglyph—presents itself as a projected future (the presumed eternity of Hoxha’s legacy, and of communism more broadly). In choosing a site (Berat) with a history that extends deep into the past, Lulaj effectively used *NEVER* to tie the past to new sets of futures by means of negation. As already noted, the work’s futural quality is paradoxical. The word *NEVER* implies a perpetual negation, one that extends potentially in both directions: never in the past, never in the future. The artist’s assertion that this absolute quality relates to the hegemony of discourses on democracy in the postsocialist period raises the possibility of another kind of negation, the assertion that democracy will never arrive, that the period of ‘transition’ will never end.¹¹⁷ The

¹¹⁵ Osborne, “The Truth Will Be Known,” p. 203.

¹¹⁶ Osborne, “The Truth Will Be Known,” pp. 205.

¹¹⁷ As Aleš Erjavec points out, the ‘transition’ has already lengthened itself by splitting into two transitions: one away from socialism, and the other towards democracy. This split has made the latter all the more ambiguous, and severed the clear duality that once *seemed* to adhere between socialism and

work's simultaneous directedness towards the future and relationship to the archaeological past (both through its association with Berat and through the method of recovery used) make *NEVER* a kind of “excavation of the future,” in the sense Dieter Roelstraete describes.¹¹⁸

This excavation is fragmentary—both in the case of *NEVER* and in Lulaj's practice more broadly: as curator Vincent WJ van Gerven Oei writes, “the artifacts that populate [Lulaj's] work have a vague and sketchy quality, overgrown with weeds, forgotten in museums, lost in time and space with hardly a single photograph or archival document to prove their existence. In fact, Lulaj himself often has to ‘produce’ the documentation necessary for these artifacts to exist” in an official sense.¹¹⁹ That is what ties Lulaj's practice more clearly to what Osborne terms ‘history,’ as opposed to memory. The objects of Lulaj's artistic investigations are ruptured not only from the memory of particular individuals, but even from the sorts of bureaucratic ‘remembering’ represented by national or local archives.

It is also important that this recovery of historical artifacts occurs collectively, or at least collaboratively: in *NEVER*, but also in the other two projects that Lulaj exhibited at the Albanian Pavilion at the 2015 Venice Biennale, the recovery of history takes place at least in part through a collaborative effort of reassembly and renewal. In *NEVER*, it is the group of workers led by Sheme Filja. In *It Wears As It Grows* [Figures 4.28–4.29], it is the group of people who carry a colossal whale skeleton through the streets of Tirana, transporting it to the massive structure built as a museum dedicated to Enver Hoxha after

democratic governance. See Erjavec, “Introduction,” in *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition*, ed. Erjavec, p. 1–3.

¹¹⁸ Roelstraete, “The Way of the Shovel.”

¹¹⁹ Vincent WJ van Gerven Oei, “The Production of Hronir: Albanian Socialist Realism and After,” in *Workers Leaving the Studio*, ed. van Gerven Oei and Mircan, p. 203.

his death. In *Recapitulation* [Figures 4.30–4.31], it is the group of five Uyghurs formerly imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay and subsequently released and allowed to live in the Albanian territory, who serve as the collective corollary to the American spy plane that is the center of that project.¹²⁰ In each work (as noted above in the case of *NEVER*), the artist is absent as a central protagonist in the events. As van Gerven Oei writes, Lulaj’s strategy of authorial distance corresponds to an important aspect of the legacy of Socialist Realism: the notion that the artist would somehow serve as a transparent conduit for the representation of history’s transformation, lending minimal visible subjectivity to the representation produced.¹²¹ The distance between the artist and the content of the works finds a parallel—in *NEVER*—in the distance between the recreation or reassembly of the historical artifact and its original state. The involvement of Sheme Filja, for example, does not produce a recovery of the initial geoglyph from obscurity, even though his involvement in both the original project and Lulaj’s work raises this as a logical possibility. Ultimately, however, despite the involvement of one of the key *original* historical actors (Filja),¹²² the project results not in the recovery of the past, but in its renovation and transformation (which is to say: also its destruction).

¹²⁰ Lulaj notes that although he imagined the Uyghurs as an important conceptual aspect of the project, and wrote parts of the film with them in mind, they ultimately chose not to participate because of the possible political consequences. He nonetheless chose to dedicate the film to them. See Hanru and Lulaj, “The War for Truth,” p. 127.

¹²¹ Van Gerven Oei notes that this aspect of Socialist Realism corresponds importantly to the notion of the ‘death of the author’ that has—since Foucault—become nearly a given in conversations about artistic production. See van Gerven Oei, “The Production of Hrönir,” pp. 204–205.

¹²² This is significant in relation to Osborne’s distinction between history and memory, since it evidences again the severance of particular experiences from particular actors, even in cases in which that same individual is again involved in historical events or the recovery of the past. This reinforces the crucial futural dimension of *NEVER*.

VI. *Scenes for a New Heritage: Forever, Forgetting*

Armando Lulaj's intervention in the ENVER geoglyph demonstrates the ways that contemporary art engages with both the socialist past and the commemorative material remnants of that past, through processes that both negate and renew. In *NEVER*, the socialist past serves as a kind of raw material for contemporary art's investigations into the present, but the creation of the original geoglyph also becomes an artistic and temporal paradigm, the rediscovery and transformation of which serve to critique postsocialist present. In the concluding sections of this chapter, I wish to expand this discussion with a consideration of the works of David Maljković (born in 1973, in Rijeka, and currently working primarily in Zagreb, Croatia). Maljković, who studied at the Academy of Fine Arts at the University of Zagreb, and subsequently at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam,¹²³ frequently explores the heritage of aesthetic modernism (including Futurism, geometric abstraction, and the institution of painting) and its relationship to the exhibition context. These investigations are tied to an exploration of modernism's history and historicity, and the ways that meaning can be rediscovered in a tradition apparently emptied out by postmodernist experimentations. In the remainder of this chapter, I focus in particular on Maljković's trilogy of short films *Scenes for a New Heritage* [Figures 4.32–4.35] and the set of collages (mostly titled "Scenes for a New Heritage III") associated with the videos. I want to make two principle arguments in this discussion of Maljković's work: first, regarding the ways that Maljković's engagement with socialist monumentality, like Lulaj's, exceeds the paradigm of the 'counter-monument' (to which it might first be assumed to belong); and second, regarding the

¹²³ David Maljković, Nick Aikens, et al., *Sources in the Air: David Maljković* (Zurich: JRP/Ringier, 2012), p. 193.

ways that the *Scenes for a New Heritage* works to establish not only a new connection to socialism's history, but also a new relation to the 20th-century development of aesthetic modernism more broadly.

A 2006 collage in the “Scenes for a New Heritage III” series includes a black and white photograph of the model for Vojin Bakić’s imposing Petrova Gora memorial complex [**Figure 4.36**]. The photograph of the model shows a long, straight ascending path, peopled by tiny figures, leading upwards to Bakić’s monument at the apex. The sleek, curvilinear aesthetic of the pathway and its attendant structures, borders, and landscaping are mirrored in the rippling, shining surfaces of the central monument, with its wide base, narrow neck-like middle, and upper section. The model of the monument seems to be in flux both vertically and horizontally, its various curving segments matching the layers of material used to create the impression of landscape gradient in the model itself: the entire promontory upon which the model is constructed seems to be radiating outward from the form of the central monument’s form. Across the top of the collage, in blocky letters cut from aluminum foil—a style of lettering that at once matches the suggested material qualities of the model and clashes with its linear aesthetic—is written the phrase “NEW VISITORS.” Just below it, in a more flowing graphic style, but also in foil, is the word “forever.”

A second collage [**Figure 37**] from the same series presents a quite different view of the monument: rather than rising above the surrounding landscape, the composition places the Petrova Gora memorial low in a landscape minimally suggested by pencil lines. Two loosely penciled figures advance towards the looming form of the memorial and a car parked at its base, while other figures congregate near a second car to the left.

The monument itself is simply a flat silhouette of foil, an expanse of slightly crinkled surface that—in its spatial illegibility—seems to increase the imposing qualities of Bakić’s structure. The materiality of the monument’s blank expanse is heightened by the irregularities of the foil surface, and by a sharp acute semi-transparent yellow triangle of light that cuts from a circle at upper left across one of the upper edges of the memorial’s silhouette. This triangle—like similar planes in the constructivist collages of El Lissitzky, for example—at once flattens the surface of the image and suggests sharp recession into space. Across part of this geometric beam of color is written—in cursive, in pencil—“new visitors, visitors forever.” A similar note at the lower right indicates that the year (presumably, the year of the scene depicted occurs) is 2071.

These two collages (among numerous such works that Maljković has produced), with their suggestion of eternity, seem to present a kind of logical counterpart and simultaneous inversion of Armando Lulaj’s *NEVER*: they present the socialist monument as a site of perpetual renewal and affirmation, and the negation that occurs in *Scenes for a New Heritage* is marked in a different way than the textual rewriting of *NEVER*. If Lulaj’s transformation of the ENVER geoglyph, however, aimed at a certain kind of remembering,¹²⁴ Maljković associates the Petrova Gora memorial with forgetting as much as with memory: another of the collages [Figure 4.38] features the words “collective amnesia” cut out and pasted to the paper surface, alongside both an interior view and a pale exterior outline of the monument. Accompanying these images is a cluster of long curving lines drawn in charcoal, suggesting at once the curves of the sculpture itself and—in conjunction with the words—a meandering trajectory into oblivion. As theorists

¹²⁴ Or perhaps more exactly, as I have tried to show, with the emergence of a new historical consciousness.

of memory such as Paul Ricoeur have noted, the process of forgetting is a necessary counterpart to processes of both memory and history.¹²⁵ This forgetting is not just a negative phenomenon of forced erasure or suppression, but also a necessary element of both amnesty and forgiving, both of which allow new relationships to the future to emerge.¹²⁶

We might consider the significance of Maljković's treatment of the Petrova Gora monument in terms of the distinction that Paul Connerton makes between the "memorial" and the "locus" as paradigms of places of memory. Connerton associates the memorial—a specific mnemonic space that uses a particular spatial configuration of language or symbols associated with past events to create a connection to the past—with the form of the pilgrimage, and in particular with the condition of mobility. The memorial, as Connerton defines it, either requires a journey or transposes the past into a new space,¹²⁷ bringing it with the subject who remembers. In the case of a journey, a pilgrimage, Connerton emphasizes the importance of the creation of a liminal or transitional space. In the case of the locus, by contrast, the emphasis is on stability: the locus is a largely unchanging spatial environment that materializes the memories of a particular cultural milieu. More specifically, the locus is the space that allows that milieu to transform its

¹²⁵ See the concluding section of Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 412–456. The necessary role of forgetting is also expounded by Nietzsche in his well-known essay, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," pp. 57–124.

¹²⁶ See Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, esp. pp. 452–459. On the broader role of forgetting in modern society, see Paul Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Connerton presents a summary of the productive role of forgetting in his article Connerton, "Seven Types of Forgetting," *Memory Studies* 1:1 (2008), pp. 59–71, identifying seven distinct varieties of forgetting. Connerton notes that what he terms "repressive erasure" is the variety of forgetting most commonly associated with totalitarian regimes in the 20th century; however, for the purposes of the present discussion, forgetting "that is constitutive in the formation of a new identity" (pp. 62–63) is perhaps the most significant form of oblivion.

¹²⁷ Connerton's example of this kind of movement and distribution of the memorial is the street name. See Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets*, pp. 10–12.

social structures and experiences *into* memories (collective or individual).¹²⁸ The locus—even if it appears to be a space empowered or shaped by associations with the past—is ultimately a space that enables a *futurally oriented* agency, and this distinguishes it, in Connerton’s formulation, from the memorial.¹²⁹ I introduce Connerton’s framing of these two types of place memory not in order to show how Maljković’s work can be situated within them, but rather to show how it complicates them, and further complicates the relationship Connerton constructs between these types of memory and the forgetting that he identifies¹³⁰ as endemic to modernity.

First, Maljković’s framing of Bakić’s monument bridges an emphasis on connecting to with the past and a futural orientation: the monument is at once a trace or index of the past and a conceptual ground upon which agency is constructed in relation to the future. (This is emphasized both by the assertion of ‘forever’ in the collages associated with the project, and more generally by the science-fictional aesthetics of the project, which I discuss below.) Thus, the monument, as the centerpiece of *Scenes for a New Heritage*, is paradoxically both memorial and locus, in Connerton’s terms. Even more significant, however, is the way that Maljković seeks to frame the monument as a source, not of memory, but of oblivion. That is, the films and collages that make up *Scenes*, despite their overt connections to the visual and discursive frameworks of memory, aim at forgetting. What is more curious is that way that they gesture towards this forgetting as a productive process associated with long and slow periods of time, treating forgetting as a process that extends ‘forever.’

¹²⁸ Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets*, pp. 18–22.

¹²⁹ Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets*, p. 22. Connerton constructs this notion drawing on Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

¹³⁰ Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets*, pp. 40, 99.

Connerton, like many authors, associates modernity's forgetfulness, broadly speaking, with speed: the proliferation of "[m]achines of mobility" produced a "panoramic perception [in which] the perceiver, instead of belonging to the same space as the perceived objects, sees those objects through the mechanical apparatus which moves the perceiver through the world."¹³¹ Maljković's emphasis on such machines is marked: the artist's video, collage, and installation works (including *Scenes for a New Heritage*, *Again for Tomorrow*,¹³² and others) have often featured racecars, motorbikes, and visually transformed automobiles to create a futuristic feeling that is also linked to travel.¹³³ The mediatedness of embodied perception in contemporary contexts is emphasized by the exhibition apparatus; in the case of *Scenes*, this occurs through the apparatus that Maljković constructs, out of overlapping drywall panels, a spatial mechanism that at once zooms in on the video and suggests the fragmented distancing of the perceiver from the perceived object.¹³⁴ Furthermore, Maljković constructs monuments themselves as mobile forms in the collages that are part of the *Retired Form* project [see **Figure 4.39**], which transport other sculptural forms created by Vojin Bakić to remote locations such as the desert and distant islands. However, while references to speed and mobility reinforce the 'modern' aesthetics of Bakić's sculptures as they appear in Maljković's oeuvre, the move towards forgetting seems to emerge not out of acceleration, but out of the monument's

¹³¹ Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets*, pp. 108–109.

¹³² On *Again for Tomorrow*, see David Maljković: *Place, with Limited Premeditation*, ed. Maljković and Gamulin, pp. 54–81.

¹³³ Maljković's 2009 video work *Out of Projection*, for example, was filmed at the Peugeot headquarters, with retired employees of the car manufacturer examining prototypes for new vehicles. See Annie Fletcher, "Sources in the Air," in *Sources in the Air*, Maljković, Aikens, et al., p. 31.

¹³⁴ See Alessandro Vincentelli, "A Newly Emergent Situation, or, How To Read a Work Again," in Maljković, Aikens, et al., *Sources in the Air*, p. 185. This apparatus is also used in other of Maljković's displays, such as that for *Images with Their Own Shadows* (2008).

eternal endurance. In other words, the monument allows for forgetting in a way that is at once decidedly modern (and aesthetically Modernist) and suggestively pre-modern.

Intertwined with the futurity that emerges from the Petrova Gora memorial complex in *Scenes for a New Heritage* is the paradigm of science fiction. This emerges both from the material appearance of objects—the cars, the soccer ball, wrapped in silver foil—in the video trilogy, as well as from its electronic soundtrack, as Alessandro Vincentelli notes.¹³⁵ The visual juxtaposition of the reflective tin foil against the sheen of the monuments surfaces indexes a material imaginary that is related to projections of future societies. At the same time, the decay of the Petrova Gora monument—for example, the notable encroachment of vegetation breaking apart the bricks that cover the ground before the monument, where the youths gather, talk, and play—creates a kind of post-apocalyptic ambience in Maljković's films. This latter mood is further enhanced by the scenes of the monument in the second film in the trilogy, in which it appears hazily obscured by snow and fog.

Science fiction is important as a trope in contemporary art because, as Peio Aguirre writes, it is one of the most important ways in which a modernist revival takes place in the waning of postmodernist paradigms. Quoting T.J. Clark's well-known assertion that "Modernism is our antiquity," Aguirre notes that—through science fiction—the narratives and visual paradigms of modernism often return in a spectral mode, displacing postmodernity's disdain for history with a new historicism.¹³⁶ This new historicism, however, is opposed to the historicity that defined some modernist

¹³⁵ Vincentelli, "Newly Emergent," p. 184.

¹³⁶ Peio Aguirre, "Semiotic Ghosts: Science Fiction and Historicism," *Afterall* 28 (Autumn/Winter 2011), pp. 126–127. In a footnote, Aguirre cites Maljković as an important example of contemporary artists engaged in what he describes as "retro-futurism" (p. 130, n. 15). The quotation from T.J. Clark is from T.J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 2.

approaches to the past, and the science-fictional quality of many contemporary artworks is specifically to explore the contradictions between these two forms (historicism and historicity).¹³⁷ I have discussed the ways that the imaginary projections of science fictional futures have shaped current perceptions of Yugoslav-era monuments. Here I am most concerned with the ways that science fiction relates to the past specifically in the context of the recovery of aesthetic modernism as a viable ground for collective aesthetic and political experience. It is the speculative character of science fiction and socialist (modernist, in this case) monumentality alike that allow for new experiences to open up, and this opening up is related closely to the process of forgetting that Maljković discovers in the Petrova Gora memorial complex.

VII. “Your Moment is Your Heritage”: Modernism, Counter-heritage, and Feeling

In a discussion of *Scenes for a New Heritage*, Maljković explains that the “work is therefore about the future, about collective amnesia, about what is going to happen and whether people are going to create a new heritage for themselves. My drawings express a clear statement: your moment is your heritage. I’d like to create a complete collective amnesia”¹³⁸ Since the creation or discovery of a new heritage and the process of forgetting are clearly closely intertwined with the Petrova Gora monument in Maljković’s videos and collages, I want to consider the ways that the *Scenes for a New Heritage* works might relate to discourses on heritage. This involves, first of all, returning to the discussion above, and considering how Maljković’s works relate to the notion of the

¹³⁷ Aguirre, p. 131. As Aguirre explains, historicism seeks to explain the present based on the study of the past, while historicity “investigates the persistence of the past in the present and also includes futurity.” This inclusion of futurity is what allows science fiction to enter the field as a critical mode, and science-fictional futurity in turn participates in the historicist reconstruction of the past, looking back to the present.

¹³⁸ Maljković and Esche, p. 122.

counter-monument. In contrast to James E. Young's framing of the counter-monument, which sees such works as engaged in the recovery of memory and active mnemonic processes,¹³⁹ the works that comprise the *Scenes* are intended to work *against* memory. As already noted, they use the socialist monument to accomplish this move towards amnesia, drawing on the apparent remoteness of the past to which the monument belongs, but also projecting that past into the future. Are the *Scenes for a New Heritage* simply 'monumental' (as opposed to counter-monumental), then? This description seems not to do justice to the degree to which the degree to which Maljković's videos seem to begin from a starting point that recognizes the faded legitimacy of the traditional monument:¹⁴⁰ the clear meaning and sense of community that the monument is supposed to establish is enervated in Maljković's representation of Bakić's memorial, but the even this apparently "exhausted object"¹⁴¹ (as Maljković has called it) still posits the monument as the source *something* usable in the context of the present.

It is useful at this juncture to consider the ways that the notion of 'heritage' interacts with the ideas of both monumentality and modernity, broadly speaking. The

¹³⁹ Andrew Herscher, "Toward a Political Subjectivization of Memory," *Future Anterior* 8:2 (Winter 2011), p. 58. See also Young, "The Counter-monument."

¹⁴⁰ It is possible to argue that Yugoslav monuments such as Bakić's already functioned in ways that undermined the most ontologically stable definitions of the 'traditional' monument. I have tried to suggest these functions in Chapters 2 and 3 above. Gal Kirn goes so far as to suggest that Yugoslav monuments already *were* counter-monuments, in some sense. He writes,

[T]here is a certain ambiguity at work in these memorial sites, [and] one might say that they assume a specific paradox: their colossal dimension and style betrays their direct adherence to [aesthetic] modernism, while on the other hand their ignorance of direct political slogans suggests an inclination to the tradition of the 'counter-monument.' The latter is famous for conceiving memory as something dynamic and unfixed, thus not playing a role in the typical nation-building process.

See Gal Kirn, "Anti-fascist Memorial Sites" p. 129. I would not go so far as Kirn does, but I do think that part of the paradox at work in *Scenes for a New Heritage* is that Maljković's 'recovery' of the Petrova Gora monument *as monument* and *as heritage* is *not* simply the recovery of a traditional, stable nexus of unambiguous identity, as monuments are sometimes problematically framed as being.

¹⁴¹ On Maljković's use of the term "exhausted object" to describe the focus of his artworks, see Fletcher, "Sources in the Air," p. 31.

notion of modernity has been established, in large part, in contra-distinction to the pre-modern or non-modern category of ‘heritage.’¹⁴² This is not to suggest that cultural aspects of modernity—such as aesthetic modernism—dispensed with all that appeared as ‘heritage’ or ‘tradition’; rather, new uses of heritage in the context of different modernisms needed to be marked as something other than continuations of past, and instead as transformations of them.¹⁴³ The idea of heritage is in turn inextricably linked with the development of the idea of ‘historic monument,’ as Françoise Choay has shown. Choay notes that the particular notion of the historic monument—in distinction from the intentionally commemorative monument¹⁴⁴ that the term ‘monument’ once specified—is of a creation that emerges as a monument only after its initial creation, as it is “constituted as an object of knowledge and integrated into a linear conception of time[,] ... relegate[d] ... to history in general.”¹⁴⁵ In *Scenes for a New Heritage*, Bakić’s monument appears, to a degree, as emptied of both functions: its explicit commemorative purpose appears lost (evidenced by its gradual decay and geographic remoteness of the site¹⁴⁶ from everyday interactions), and it appears more generally as undesired (or even undesirable) heritage. It develops the latter connotations not only because of its reference to a transnational vision of Yugoslavia in the present context of a nationally divided region, and because it indexes a socialist past in a neoliberal capitalist present, but also because the legacy of socialist aesthetic modernism in Yugoslavia is—historiographically speaking—often dismissed as an ideological capitulation, a stylistic movement that

¹⁴² Andrew Herscher, “Counter-Heritage and Violence,” *Future Anterior* 3:2 (Winter 2006), p. 25.

¹⁴³ A concise theoretical explication of the relationship between modernity and tradition (and the apparently timeless category of the classical) is laid out in Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (New York: Verso, 1995), pp. 127–138.

¹⁴⁴ On this topic broadly, see the famous essay by Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments.”

¹⁴⁵ Françoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, p. 13.

¹⁴⁶ The fact that the *Scenes* emphasize travel makes this all the more clear.

ultimately aligned itself with the authoritarian interests of Tito's regime and failed to produce the viable leftist alternative that performance and conceptual art supposedly did.¹⁴⁷

Thus, it might be appropriate to speak of the Petrova Gora monument as a variety of what Andrew Herscher calls "counter-heritage." Counter-heritage, as Herscher describes it, is the second dialectical 'other' of heritage (the first being 'modernity').¹⁴⁸ Counter-heritage is that heritage that—discursively and materially—comes into being in the process of being destroyed or left behind, in the course of being left out of or removed from the construction of 'heritage' proper. The Petrova Gora monument fits this description, both as gradually decaying remnant of the socialist past and as a relic of socialist aesthetic modernism. It is also *as* counter-heritage that the monument emerges, in Maljković's video trilogy and collages, as a ground for both amnesia and for the eponymous, speculative 'new heritage' that the *Scenes* suggest but do not seek to fully represent. It is also significant that Maljković sees the historical re-orientation that is supposed to occur through the encounter with the Petrova Gora monument as including not only the future but—even more primordially—the present: "your moment is your heritage." In this sense, the socialist orientation towards the socialist present as the grounds for the emergence of a historical consciousness through monumentality¹⁴⁹ is re-inscribed in *Scenes for a New Heritage*.

I wish to make a final observation about Maljković's *Scenes*, one that sets the ground for a fuller discussion of socialist monumentality in contemporary art and theories

¹⁴⁷ For a concise version of the predominant view of 'socialist modernism' in Yugoslavia as—ultimately—a style that was co-opted by the regime and that perpetuated itself because it was ideologically non-threatening, see Ješa Denegri, "Inside or Outside 'Socialist Modernism'?", pp. 170–209.

¹⁴⁸ Herscher, "Counter-Heritage and Violence," pp. 25–26.

¹⁴⁹ I have discussed this phenomenon above, especially in Chapter 2.

of affect. As the quote from Maljković that serves as epigraph to this chapter shows, the artist envisions his engagement with the Petrova Gora monument in terms of emotion and feeling: he returns to the “location [of the Petrova Gora monument], not to say something more, ... just to feel, to feel something more, to try to see the capacity of the feelings that you can bring in a certain project or work.” This emotional quality is endemic to the commemorative monument, as Françoise Choay writes: “The affective nature of [the monument’s] purpose is essential: it is not simply a matter of informing, ... but rather of stirring up, through the emotions, a living memory.”¹⁵⁰ Of course, in the case of *Scenes for a New Heritage*, the emotional interaction is meant ultimately to stir up forgetting, and through that process of forgetting, to recuperate the counter-heritage of socialist monumentality (the “failed, transparent, and stale ... remnants of a fallen, unattainable utopian vision,” as Zhivka Valiavicharska describes them¹⁵¹) as something new.

VIII. Conclusion

Among the most significant legacies of socialism in Eastern Europe are its monumental constructions. Both sculptural, commemorative monuments and architectural monuments continue to mark and shape urban and rural spaces alike, and their presence demands the engagement of politicians, architects, artists, and heritage specialists alike. In many states across the former socialist bloc, the transition away from socialism and towards free market capitalism and liberal democratic institutions has occurred symbolically through interaction with monuments, and with the histories and ideologies they represent. In some cases this has meant their conspicuous destruction (as occurred in many countries soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall); in other cases it has

¹⁵⁰ Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, p. 6.

¹⁵¹ Valiavicharska, p. 174.

meant a much more winding and complex process of abandonment, re-appropriation, historicization, and replacement. Contemporary artists have taken part in these processes in various ways, often as part of a broader trend in postsocialist art that attempts to understand the recent socialist past and its resonance in the present. When contemporary artists engage with socialist monuments, they are often framed as deconstructing the totalitarian ideologies of the past in order to uncover new narratives, seeking to mobilize the flexibility of memory against the monuments as emblems of official, rigid historical discourse.

However, as I have shown in this chapter, contemporary artists can also utilize the remains of socialist monumentality as a form of heritage that—in both its futurity and its sophisticated understanding of contemporary history as a process of construction—can be productively enlivened again in the postsocialist present. Armando Lulaj's *NEVER* and David Maljković's *Scenes for a New Heritage* both present key examples of this strategy. Rather than merely working to deconstruct the legacy of socialist monumentality in Albania, in *NEVER*, Armando Lulaj first works to recover this past, and then to transform it in ways that renew its possibility as a horizon for historical experience. Treating the commemorative objects of Albania's communist regime in relation to the archaeological significance of histories that far predate communism, Lulaj approaches socialist monumentality as an aporia, a contradictory juxtaposition of memory and history that can be overcome only through destruction and reinscription. Lulaj's *NEVER* reveals that coming to terms with the socialist past—and the seemingly eternal transition that has come in its wake—is a matter of stretching out the negation of the past, in order to propose speculative new futures. Lulaj shows that the production of these futures

involves simultaneously rediscovering and destroying the past, of situating particular memories within new horizons of political ideology. A similar process of rediscovery is at work in David Maljković's works created under the title *Scenes for a New Heritage*, which take the Croatian sculptor Vojin Bakić's 1981 Petrova Gora memorial complex as their central object. Maljković frames contemporary engagement with the monument as a process of (potentially) perpetual amnesia: the production of a viable future out of the monumental past as a source of oblivion. In Maljković's works, the socialist monument is not the object of deconstructive criticism; rather, the monument itself deconstructs discourses of both memory and heritage, opening up new futures.

In the following chapter, I continue my investigation of postsocialist contemporary artists who engage with socialist monumental legacies in Southeastern Europe, considering the way that socialist-era monuments offer spaces for framing new aesthetic discourses about both class and gender. Further, I attempt to theorize the attitudes that contemporary artists have taken towards socialist monuments under the notion of 'weak monumentality,' which I define by drawing upon the theoretical writings of Gianni Vattimo and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.

Chapter 5: Weak Monumentality, Counter-monumentality, and Postsocialist Art

My placing the worker on a pedestal had nothing to do with the role played by statues in the time of the dictatorship. Rather, it emphasizes the fact that this class [the working class] still exists—not just that they exist, but that they must insist on the rights that, at minimum, should belong to them. It’s an attempt to say, ‘people, listen, we exist, and we deserve better.’—Enisa Cenaliaj¹

I. Introduction: *Nepoznata partizanka*: Beyond the Counter-monument

On March 8, 2016, Sarajevo-based artist Adela Jušić placed a stone slab in a park located in the center of the city [Figures 5.1–5.3]. The stone marker took its place within an established landscape of historic sites, including the location of Archduke Franz Ferdinand’s assassination, and the *Vijećnica*, the Sarajevo City Hall. Carved on the simple stone slab was the phrase *Nepoznata partizanka*, “Unknown Partisan Woman.” This phrase (or its masculine corollary, *Nepoznati partizan*) marked the graves of numerous anonymous Partisans of the Yugoslav army buried throughout the territories of the former Yugoslavia. Jušić’s placement of the stone marker was not only meant to situate it in relation to sites such as the city hall and Ferdinand’s death: the park where the slab was placed is also located across the Miljacka River from the building that once housed the Beledija prison,² where—as the artist notes—numerous members of the women’s antifascist movement were imprisoned and detained during the Second World War.³ According to Jušić, after nearly a year, the stone slab still remained in place, ignored by both the Sarajevo municipality and local media sources.

¹ Qtd. in “Në një ‘Statujë’ të Gjallë Postkomuniste,” *Metropol*, March 5, 2005, <http://www.arkivalajmeve.com/Ne-nje-statuje-te-gjalle-postkomuniste.147724/> (accessed 10 July 2016). Translation by the author.

² The building is now home to Brodac Gallery, a contemporary art gallery.

³ For the artist’s description of the piece and its context, see the entry on her website, “Unknown Partisan Woman,” <https://adelajusic.wordpress.com/works/2014-2/unknown-partisan-woman/> (accessed September 5, 2017).

Jušić's intervention and its persistence in obscurity constitutes a curious instance of what writer Robert Musil described in 1927, when he famously wrote of the way that monuments are "impregnated against attention." Musil asserted, "there is nothing in this world as invisible as monuments."⁴ Curiously, this play with public *inattention* to the monument's presence places Jušić's work in line with a particular notion of what it is that makes 'contemporary' art contemporary. As Peter Osborne argues, the "conditions of contemporary art [are] best described as a historical dialectic of boredom and distraction, rather than the strictly transcendental timelessness of the model of 'contemplative immersion' associated with the exhibition-value of modern art."⁵ In other words, Jušić's work achieves its intended effect in large part because of its inability to create conditions of focused contemplation—which, in this case, would constitute focused remembrance of the numerous women who gave their lives as part of Yugoslavia's antifascist struggle. In obscurity, the monument placed in the park achieves what Osborne describes as the "timelessness" that in turn establishes the "potential for retemporalization."⁶ This retemporalization takes the form of what Charity Scribner calls the utopian "longing for History itself"⁷ in the era of apparently ubiquitous 'posthistorical' tendencies.⁸

At the same time, Jušić's intervention in public space owes a clear debt to the avant-garde tradition of disruption,⁹ and the images of the artist creating the work make this clear: Jušić and a colleague hunch in darkness, working on inking the lettering on the

⁴ Robert Musil, "Monuments," in *Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. Burton Pike (New York: Continuum, 1986), p. 320.

⁵ Peter Osborne, *Anywhere Or Not At All*, p. 176. Emphasis in the original has been removed.

⁶ Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, p. 176.

⁷ Charity Scribner, *Requiem*, p. 9.

⁸ On 'posthistory,' see Lutz Niethammer, *Posthistoire: Has History Come to an End?*, trans. Patrick Camiller (New York: Verso, 1994).

⁹ On the avant-garde and disruption, especially disruptive temporality, see Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time*, p. 150, and Steven S. Lee, *The Ethnic Avant-Garde*, pp. 26–27.

stone slab in an apparently cramped space, as if secrecy were somehow of utmost importance.¹⁰ This sense of disruption (together with the explicitly transnational object of its call to memory, namely, the women of the Partisan resistance) separates the monument from a certain tradition of nationalist monument-making. This tradition, as described by Benedict Anderson, uses the anonymity of the ‘Unknown Soldier’ as a conduit for the national(ist) imaginary,¹¹ while Jušić’s monument—principally in its juxtaposition to the former Beladija prison—serves explicitly as a call to remember and to establish a historical consciousness on the basis of particular women’s suffering and sacrifices for an ideal that transcends the nation.¹² In this sense, it also participates in the kind of spatial disruption associated with the avant-garde’s move towards an international understanding of cultural and political relations. Finally, Jušić’s work participates quite clearly in a tradition of postsocialist artistic practice that—likewise in the tradition of the (neo-)avant-garde—returns to socialism in the struggle to find an explicitly feminist consciousness.¹³

Jušić’s *Unknown Partisan Woman* aims in several ways to deconstruct and critique a particular condition of amnesia in contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina—and in Southeastern Europe more broadly. However, what interests me most is the way that Jušić’s intervention avoids one kind of avant-garde engagement with monumentality: it

¹⁰ It is worth noting the degree to which these photographs of the work’s creation contrast with typical images of studios in which monuments are created, where the emphasis is often on the massiveness of the space and the monument.

¹¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), p. 9.

¹² And in particular that transcends the nationalist consciousness that now pervades the individual nations of the former Yugoslavia.

¹³ This tendency has been examined in numerous writings and exhibitions; perhaps the most succinct treatment is the recent exhibition *Hero Mother*, curated by Bojana Pejić and Rachel Rits-Volloch. See Pejić and Rits-Volloch, eds., *Hero Mother: Contemporary Art by Post-Communist Women Rethinking Heroism* (Berlin: MOMENTUM Berlin, 2016), as well as certain essays in Bojana Pejić, ed., *Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe* (Vienna: MOMUK, 2009).

resists the status of a counter-monument,¹⁴ and instead turns to a monumental tradition (and to that tradition's oblivion) as a source of new historical understanding and meaning. This strategy is a part of a practice—and a historical hermeneutics—that I term 'weak monumentality.'¹⁵ In the previous chapter, I began to chart some of the ways that contemporary artists in Southeastern Europe have turned to the socialist monument as a source for imagining new possible futures. This chapter intends to deepen that discussion, and to offer a fuller theoretical framework through which we might understand these practices that neither critically dismantle the ideals of socialist monumentality nor uncritically embrace traditional monumental production. In contrast to the previous chapter, which dealt primarily with video works, this chapter treats more performative endeavors.

I put forward the notion of 'weak monumentality' as both an interpretive theoretical framework, and as an art historical term for a growing number of artistic practices that look back at monumental pasts and objects in order to recover their affirmations and their constitutive ambiguities. These practices often engage with modern monumental projects created by artists working in states that are generally considered totalitarian or authoritarian (the nations of the former Eastern Bloc are generally

¹⁴ See my discussion of counter-monumentality in Chapter 4 above, and James E. Young, "The Counter-monument," pp. 267–296.

¹⁵ The use of the term 'weak monumentality' has an extant but limited history in contemporary cultural discourses. *Weak Monuments* was the title of a 2009 exhibition organized by architect Aristide Antonas and the Built Event group in Thessaloniki, seeking to link the urban context to the history of sites of murders in the city. See <http://antonas.pbworks.com/w/page/13336891/weak%20monuments> and <https://arkinetblog.wordpress.com/2009/10/21/weak-monuments-the-city-of-thessaloniki-described-through-its-murders/> (accessed September 10, 2017). More recently, the notion of the 'weak monument' serves as the central concept for the winning proposal for the Estonian Pavilion of the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale. The proposal, created by Laura Linsi, Roland Reemaa, and Tadeáš Říha, builds upon the ideas of Estonian artist and architect Leonhard Lapin, who—in the 1970s—put forward a project for an "Anti-International Monument." See the catalog for the exhibition, Tadeáš Říha, Laura Linsi, and Roland Reemaa, *Weak Monument: Architectures Beyond the Plinth* (Zürich: Park Books, 2018).

considered as such), but they are by no means confined to these histories.¹⁶ As an interpretive framework for cultural objects and practices, ‘weak monumentality’¹⁷ seeks to transcend the kinds of readings that Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick terms “paranoid readings.” Paranoid readings want to avoid, at all costs, being drawn in or deceived by sinister ideologies, and therefore seek to expose the underpinnings of those ideologies.¹⁸ Weak monumentality as something akin to hermeneutics aligns itself more closely to what Sedgwick calls “reparative readings”: readings that are “aesthetic” and “ameliorative,” that are affirmative but also often limited in their ontological claims and scope.¹⁹ Put simply, as long as we regard certain contemporary art practices as deconstructions of past, authoritarian monumentalities, we continue to adopt a paranoid reading of socialist culture that fears being ‘taken in’ by its ideology. Such a standpoint leaves largely un-investigated the ways citizens in post-totalitarian and postsocialist nations continue to affirm aspects of that past,²⁰ and it also tacitly accepts a triumphalist

¹⁶ Although it is well beyond the parameters of my discussion here, the framework of ‘weak monumentality’ also lends itself to an assessment of the ways contemporary art has engaged many ancient, archaeologically-recovered pasts, precisely because of the ways ‘monumentality’ looms large as an amorphous but omnipresent paradigm for understanding the remains of ancient civilizations. The work of artists such as Christodoulos Panayiotou, whose work was featured in the Cyprus Pavilion of the 2015 Venice Biennale, provides a fruitful example for thinking about archaeologically influenced contemporary art as both counter-monumental and weak-monumental practice. See “‘Two Days After Forever’ at the Cyprus Pavilion, Venice Biennale,” *Mousse Magazine*, 2015, available from: <http://moussemagazine.it/panayiotou-cyprus-pavilion/> (accessed November 5, 2017).

¹⁷ As a theoretical model, ‘weak monumentality’ aims to be a form of ‘weak theory,’ a notion that is still (perhaps appropriately) amorphous. Anthropologist Kathleen Stewart, for example, defines weak theory as a form of theory that does not “judge the value of [its] objects [nor] strive to get their representation ‘right’ but [rather] wonder[s] where they might go and what potential modes of knowing, relating, and attending to things are already present in them” (Stewart, “Weak Theory in an Unfinished World,” *Journal of Folklore Research* 45:1 (2008), p. 71). While I am concerned with accurately representing the phenomena in question (a particular set of postsocialist artistic practices), I am not concerned with judging the value of these phenomena, not in judging the ‘strong’ criticality of their engagement with previous artistic traditions.

¹⁸ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 122–130.

¹⁹ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, pp. 143–145.

²⁰ There is one particular area of literary and cultural studies that has veered away from overtly ‘paranoid’ readings of contemporary artists and writers exploring the socialist past, and that is the still-

reading of neoliberal economic policies and democratic government in regions like postsocialist Eastern Europe.

As an art historical term, weak monumentality is intended to expand upon ongoing interest—in the past few decades—in ideas of the counter-monument and the anti-monument (among other terms).²¹ Contemporary artworks relating to these practices belong more broadly to trends in the turn towards history and historical representation as an object of artistic research,²² and furthermore towards the methods of archaeology.²³ The temporal transformations that occur in works of weak monumentality are also part of an increasingly central dialogue on the ‘contemporary’ quality of contemporary art itself; in their new configurations of our relationships to monumental pasts, they exceed the models of dialectical overcoming that often characterize understandings of the avant-garde and modernism through the 20th century. Specifically, postsocialist works that are weakly monumental take up the legacy of socialist monumentality’s distributive unity,²⁴

growing field of studies focusing on ‘nostalgia’ (and *Ostalgie* in the particular case of former East Germany). In particular since Svetlana Boym’s foundational text *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), there have been numerous conferences, monographs, edited volumes, and journal issues dedicated to the subject. However, I wish to distinguish weak monumentality from a nostalgic interaction with monuments. This is in part because the duality set up by Boym—between reflective and restorative nostalgia—does not fit well with at least some of the practices I treat under the notion of weak monumentality. I discuss this further below.

²¹ The term ‘anti-monument’ also derives from the German term *Gegendenkmal*, but the idea of the anti-monument has also been associated with the practices of artists such as Rafael Lorenzo-Hemmer. (See, for example, Alex Adriaansens and Joke Brouwer, “Alien Relationships from Public Space: A Winding Dialog with Rafael Lozano-Hemmer,” *Transurbanism* (2002), available from: http://www.lozano-hemmer.com/texts/bibliography/articles_interviews_essays/Transurbanism_2002_aa-jb.pdf (accessed November 5, 2017).) The term ‘nonuments’ exists primarily in relation to the work of Gordon Matta-Clark (see Judith Russi Kirshner, “Non-Uments,” *Artforum* 24:2 (October 1985), pp. 102–108).

²² See Mark Godfrey, “The Artist as Historian,” pp. 140–172, and the discussion of Godfrey above in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

²³ Dieter Roelstraete’s article on this topic, “The Way of the Shovel,” is likewise discussed above in Chapter 4.

²⁴ Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, p. 25. I discuss Osborne’s notion of distributive univty in the Introduction.

and use socialism's projected globality to comment on the present conditions of postsocialist transition and neoliberalism.²⁵

II. Avant-Garde, Counter-monument, and Dialogic Monument

The art historical aspect of my investigation owes a particular debt to recent studies that have sought to expand understandings of the contemporary monument and to nuance the ways we discuss postwar artists who respond to monumentality. Mechtild Widrich, for example, has produced a compelling survey of what she refers to as “performative monuments”—a trend in neo-avant-garde and contemporary art performances that takes up the way monuments merge history and appeal to public audiences.²⁶ Widrich finds deep significance in the fact that many artists of the neo-avant-garde—such as VALIE EXPORT, Rachel Whiteread, Joseph Beuys, and Jochen Gerz—have not only made works that transform traditional artistic models of public space and viewership, but have also proposed and designed public monuments.²⁷ Others, such as Marina Abramović, have made works that engage with monumentality as an element of public space in ways that adapt the strategies of the neo-avant-garde but respond to a world beyond the walls of the gallery.²⁸ Widrich argues that the most general aim of her project is to document “the shift from seeing the monument as authoritarian colossus to

²⁵ Precise definitions of neoliberalism vary depending on how precisely its cultural, economic, and/or political aspects are emphasized, and how its various geographically specific manifestations are taken into account. Here I follow David Harvey's basic definition of neoliberalism as “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can be best advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.” See Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 2.

²⁶ Mechtild Widrich, *Performative Monuments: The Rematerialization of Public Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014).

²⁷ Widrich, *Performative Monuments*, pp. 81–89, 149–156.

²⁸ Widrich, *Performative Monuments*, pp. 107–123.

harnessing its concrete social force,”²⁹ and in this sense, her project presents a clear blueprint for my own. I likewise seek to turn away from the critique of monuments as somehow necessarily unified, hierarchical makers of meaning, and instead to acknowledge the ambiguity of the monument as a social object.

However, Widrich’s analysis ultimately still has surprisingly little to say about monuments themselves, about those works of public art and architecture that Alois Riegl defined as “intentional monuments,” created to facilitate the memory of people and events in future ages.³⁰ While Widrich is nuanced in her analysis of works of contemporary art, it seems that ‘the shift from seeing the monument as authoritarian colossus to harnessing its concrete social force’ seems to materialize only in works of postwar contemporary art—and as such it is unclear if Widrich actually expands her view of the monument as such. In other words, Widrich still seems to essentially take for granted that the monuments of socialism and fascism really are ‘authoritarian colossuses,’ and that postwar artists transcend them through a process of criticizing the foundations of the monument.

This is a narrative that—while certainly compelling in some cases—I would like to show is far from a universal one. Other authors—in contexts quite different from that of postwar Europe—have re-evaluated the monument itself and attempted to explain it as a complex phenomenon that produces new meanings, rather than simply serving as a passive object awaiting critique. For example, in her analysis of Mughal monuments in India, Santhi Kavuri-Bauer begins from the premise that “monuments are not stable and unchanging[,] but dynamic spaces that can help us understand how political movements

²⁹ Widrich, *Performative Monuments*, p. 10.

³⁰ Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments,” p. 23.

and social identities ... have been forged through the imperatives of power, subjectivity, and the spatial practices they influence.”³¹ Kavuri-Bauer thus begins from a standpoint that acknowledges the complexity (and the anti-authoritarian potential) of monuments themselves, rather than assuming that the anti-authoritarian aspect of monuments emerges only in works of contemporary art that critique them.³² My own project falls somewhere between the two theoretical approaches presented by Widrich and Kavuri-Bauer. I do not assume that all monuments represent anti-authoritarian objects and discourses, but I emphasize the ways that a particular set of contemporary artworks are engaged in revealing—at a particular historical moment—the possibilities that continue to unfold in the legacy of a geographically and historically specific instance of monumentality (the wave of monumental construction that swept Southeastern Europe between the 1960s and 80s, commemorating a certain constellation of historical occurrences).

If Widrich’s analysis lacks a sustained engagement with the monuments against which contemporary artworks respond, then an important theoretical step in overcoming that tendency is to conceptualize the interaction of ‘traditional’ monuments with more recent artistic projects (frequently performances, installations, and multi-media documentary projects and archival interventions). Part of this project is the disentanglement of contemporary art from the legacy of the neo-avant-garde (and particularly the neo-avant-garde in socialist Eastern Europe). The framework of the neo-avant-garde as the immediate predecessor and primary ideological influence on

³¹ Santhi Kavuri-Bauer, *Monumental Matters: The Power, Subjectivity, and Space of India’s Mughal Architecture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 2.

³² It should be noted that Kavuri-Bauer is discussing primarily architectural monuments such as mosques and tombs, rather than commemorative sculpture, but her argument possesses wider validity.

contemporary artists in regions like Southeastern Europe has produced a narrative that—generally speaking—reads contemporary artworks as critiques of the socialist past, and only secondarily (if at all) as critiques of the capitalist present. This is because the primary category that is used to interpret such strategies is that of the counter-monument or the anti-monument,³³ which is fundamentally a (neo- or post-)avant-garde strategy. As James E. Young defines the counter-monuments, they are those “brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being.”³⁴ In other words, counter-monuments are (as their name suggests) deconstructions of the possibilities of traditional commemorative practices, in precisely the same ways that the neo-avant-garde sought to deconstruct the utopian dreams of the historical avant-garde.³⁵ The canonical reading of 20th and 21st century art in Yugoslavia, for example, frames the period as one of the proliferation of various historical avant-gardes, neo-avant-gardes, and post-avant-gardes.³⁶ (To a certain degree, this framework is reproduced across the region,³⁷ and mirrors similar frameworks used to understand Western European and

³³ See, for example, Corina Apostol, “Anti-Monuments: Afterlives of Monumentality and Specters of Memory,” in *Close-Up: Post-Transition Writings* (Prague: Artyčok.TV and The Academy of Fine Arts, 2014), pp. 122–133, and Marta Jecu, ed., *Open Monument: Research into Ephemeral, Commemorative Architecture and Modernist Patrimony* (Berlin: Kunstraum Kreuzberg, 2013).

³⁴ James E. Young, “The Counter-monument,” p. 271.

³⁵ For more on the interpretive framework of the historical avant-garde and the neo-avant-garde—especially in the context of Southeastern Europe—see Chapter 1 of this dissertation. A brief recapitulation of that analysis is presented here.

³⁶ The key survey text is Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, eds., *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-Gardes*.

³⁷ The case of Albania itself, however, complicates this paradigm, since Albania never really produced an ‘avant-garde’ in the visual arts, in either a political or a stylistic sense, unless that avant-garde was Socialist Realism itself during the socialist period. Boris Groys’ foundational (though historically problematic) reading of Stalinist Socialist Realism as an inheritor of the project of the Russian historical avant-garde certainly leaves room for such a reading of the long history of Albanian modernism. (See Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism*.) However, if this is the case, then the neo- and post-avant-gardes of Albania would need to be interpreted as variations of the heritage of Socialist Realism, and the transnational artworld’s fetishization of Socialist Realism as a primarily totalitarian style has ensured that contemporary Albanian art is assimilated into the more widely accepted narrative of the Eastern and Central European avant-garde as the movement(s) that resisted and deconstructed socialist culture.

American art.)³⁸ Art historian Miško Šuvaković has characterized the relationship between the three avant-gardes in terms of their utopian goals: the historical avant-gardes sought an “idealist utopia,” while the neo-avant-gardes sought a “concrete or critical utopia.” In contrast to these utopian goals, the post-avant-gardes are characterized by “analytical, critical, parodical and simulational strategies of ending, critique, and second-degree (meta-)usage of modernist and avant-garde arts and culture.”³⁹

In general, the phenomena of both the neo- and the post-avant-garde are frequently associated with the dissolution of metaphysical grounds in both Western and global civilization that characterized late socialism and the subsequent—apparent—end of the attempt to construct historical communism in 1989. Aesthetician Aleš Erjavec, in his introduction to *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition*, equates late socialism with postsocialism, describing these coincident phenomena as “the proclamation of the end of socialism from within socialism itself.” Erjavec sees the breaks between nations such as Yugoslavia, Albania, and Romania and the USSR—and these same nations’ subsequent turn to the idea of “socialism as world progress” instead of “world revolution”⁴⁰—as evidence that socialism had already waned to the point of abandoning

³⁸ In the context of America especially, the foundational text is Hal Foster’s *The Return of the Real*, which assesses the apparent ‘failure’ of the historical avant-garde and the forms of artistic recapitulation that have taken up its projects in the postwar years. Broadly speaking, the writers associated with the formation of the American journal *October*, especially Foster and Benjamin Buchloh, have investigated both the (largely Western) European and American neo-avant-gardes at length. In the context of Southeastern Europe, discussions of neo- and post-avant-gardes working in relation to totalitarianism have often unfolded in relation to key artistic groups such as the Slovenian-based collective NSK (Neue Slowenische Kunst) (and the corollary music entity Laibach). On NSK and Laibach, see Zdenka Badinovac, Eda Čufer, and Anthony Gardner, eds., *NSK: From Kapital to Capital: An Event in the Final Decade of Yugoslavia* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015), as well as Andrew Haydon’s review of the significantly titled Laibach concert “Monumental Retro-Avant-Garde” (held at the Tate Modern on April 14, 2012). Haydon’s review can be found in *Exeunt Magazine*, May 4, 2012, <http://exeuntmagazine.com/reviews/laibach-monumental-retro-avant-garde/> (accessed November 6, 2017).

³⁹ Miško Šuvaković, “Remembering the Art of Communism: Analysis of Contradiction: Approaches and Transgressions,” *Third Text* 23:1 (2009), pp. 22–23.

⁴⁰ Aleš Erjavec, *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition*, p. 3.

its initial ideals and goals. Thus, the official artistic production of late socialism is framed as corresponding almost solely with an ‘exhausted’⁴¹ form of cultural production, and the art of the neo- and post-avant-gardes are seen as continuing a tradition that deconstructs and critiques official culture.⁴²

Having outlined the typical ways that the neo- and post-avant-gardes are read against the official culture of late socialism (of which public monuments are a part), it is necessary to consider the variations of the counter-monument, to allow us to understand what elements of postsocialist artistic practice go beyond this paradigm. As I outlined in Chapter 4, Quentin Stevens, Karen Franck, and Ruth Fazakerley have compellingly charted the distinction between the counter-monument (or the anti-monument) and what they term the dialogic monument.⁴³ As they point out, the English-language literature on the counter-monument has largely used the concept of ‘counter-monumentality’ to describe “anti-monumental features,” which are aimed critically at the forms, strategies, and meanings of traditional monumentality.⁴⁴ Alongside this tendency, they identify the notion of the “dialogic monument,” a form of counter-monument⁴⁵ that creates its meanings specifically through dialogue with a particular monument already existing at a

⁴¹ See the introduction to the recent survey of public art during late socialism in Czechoslovakia, Pavel Karous, ed., *Aliens and Herons: A Guide to Fine Art in the Public Space in the Era of Normalisation in Czechoslovakia 1968–1989* (Prague: Arbor Vitae, 2014), p. 13. Although specific to Czechoslovakia, the catalog’s judgment of official, modernist public art after the late 1960s as both ideologically and aesthetically empty, repetitive, and enervated is reflective of broader trends in the reception of (especially official) art under late socialism.

⁴² These strategies—of ‘critical utopianism’ on the part of the neo-avant-garde and of ‘ending and critique’ on the part of the post-avant-garde—correspond with both the counter-monument’s deconstructive tendencies and its frequent ephemerality.

⁴³ Stevens, Franck, and Fazakerley, “Counter-monuments,” pp. 951–972.

⁴⁴ Stevens, Franck, and Fazakerley, “Counter-monuments,” p. 962.

⁴⁵ As the authors note, part of the confusion of these two categories has resulted from the fact that the German term *Gegendenkmal* that is used to describe dialogic monuments is also translated into English as “counter-monument” (p. 962). This blurs the line between later works that criticize monumentality as a concept (anti-monuments, in the authors’ terms) and those that respond to a particular monument.

site.⁴⁶ This distinction is useful, insofar as it allows us to distinguish between artistic practices that can be framed as responding to the socialist past socialist monumentality in a general way, and those that address the particular spaces, bodies, and histories emergent in a specific monument. However, it is unclear from Stevens, Franck, and Fazakerley's analysis precisely what role in the 'dialogue' the initial, 'traditional' monument is meant to play. The traditional monuments in their examples are understood as "imparting clear, unified messages," frequently of affirmation,⁴⁷ but their agency in the dialogue established seems essentially one-dimensional. I contend that weakly monumental works in fact reconfigure and extend the kinds of agency that socialist-era monumental practices exercise.

Before discussing the theoretical aspects of weak monumentality in greater depth, it is useful to consider some particular works that allow us to grasp more clearly how the philosophical framework of the theory might emerge from specific artistic practices. One such work is Albanian artist Enisa Cenaliaj's performance *Welcome, Dear Workers*, which—in a way distinct from the works by David Maljković and Armando Lulaj discussed in Chapter 4—reveals a fresh set of new possibilities for the recapitulation of socialist monumentality in Southeastern Europe.

III. *Welcome, Dear Workers*: The Empty Pedestal and the Worker in Neoliberal Postsocialism

On a grey and cloudy day in late March of 2005, artist Enisa Cenaliaj stood motionless atop an empty pedestal in front the building once known as the Stalin Textile Factory [**Figures 5.4–5.6**]. Dressed in worker's coveralls and painted all in white, the

⁴⁶ Stevens, Franck, and Fazakerley, "Counter-monuments," pp. 962–967.

⁴⁷ Stevens, Franck, and Fazakerley, "Counter-monuments," pp. 961, 955.

artist remained on the pedestal for approximately 40 minutes, while workers employed within the factory (which no longer produced textiles, and which was now privately owned) passed by below her.⁴⁸ Cenaliaj adopted a peculiar pose, her body appearing to stride forward while her arms remained held at her sides, matching the implied motion of her gait. Though from a distance her gaze seemed to be focused directly ahead, her eyes remained closed. The whiteness of her form contrasted sharply with the fading orange façades of the factory and with the bedraggled state of the pedestal, the stone surface of which was obscured by graffiti and the torn remains of posters advertising candidates for local political positions. The iconic red star that graced the front of the pedestal was barely legible, its color and form eroded by time and neglect.

Cenaliaj's performance was entitled *Welcome, Dear Workers* (*Mirësevini të dashur punëtorë*), a title that accompanied the work in the form of slogan written on a banner hung across the façade of the central entrance to the factory, installed especially for the duration of the performance.⁴⁹ With *Welcome, Dear Workers*, Cenaliaj intended to draw attention to the situation of the working masses in the context not only of socialism but even moreso of contemporary Albania. Realized as part of the as part of the project *1.60 Insurgent Space*, organized by Italian artist and curator Stefano Romano, the performance was one of several actions and interventions carried out in various spaces around the capital city during the first nine months of 2005. Describing her performance, Cenaliaj explained,

⁴⁸ Communication with the author, July 15, 2016. On Cenaliaj's performance, see also Amy Bryzgel, "All Made Up: Painted Bodies in Performance Art since Perestroika," *The Calvert Journal*, May 27, 2016, <https://calvertjournal.com/articles/show/6107/painted-bodies-performance-art-eastern-europe> (accessed 10 June 2016).

⁴⁹ Amy Bryzgel, *Performance Art in Eastern Europe*, pp. 131–133.

It's an undeniable fact that the whole neighborhood took its name from that textile factory, which is why even today the area is called *Kombinat* [the Albanian term for an industrial combine].⁵⁰ Furthermore, the whole façade of the former factory remains generally unchanged. However, if you go deeper into the complex, everything has fallen down, and it gives you the impression of being in the specter of a factory. This impression also comes from the fact that, at the beginning and end of work shifts, the workers themselves 'disappear' into nothing, only to return from nothing at the close of the workday.⁵¹

She continued,

... I believe that the workers of the socialist times are, in essence, the same workers that we see today, except that in those days the conditions were the same for everyone and today the working conditions are much worse. ... My placing the worker on a pedestal had nothing to do with the role played by statues in the time of the dictatorship. Rather, it emphasizes the fact that this class [the working class] still exists—not just that they exist, but that they must insist on the rights that, at minimum, should belong to them. It's an attempt to say, 'people, listen, we exist, and we deserve better.'

Cenaliaj's declaration that her work did not relate to the 'role played by statues in the time of the dictatorship' was belied by the significance of the pedestal she chose to occupy. The pedestal had once been home to one of the first works of public sculpture created in Tirana under socialism: Odhise Paskali's 1949 bronze statue of Joseph Stalin, who had stood on the pedestal in a rather atypical posture, with his right arm extended benevolently to welcome the throngs of (primarily female) workers employed in the factory [Figure 5.7]. Paskali's statue epitomized the masculine imaginary of socialist sculpture: the regal form of the male leader presiding benignly over the working masses, but the consolidation of socialist ideals in that single form was always incomplete. Its counterpart was the masses themselves, that often amorphous and diverse body that

⁵⁰ On the history of the *Kombinat* neighborhood, see Luigi Za, *Kombinat: storia e vita quotidiana di un quartiere simbolo di Tirana* (Nardò: Besa, 2012).

⁵¹ Qtd. in "Në një 'Statujë' të Gjallë Postkomuniste." The ensuing quotation from Cenaliaj is taken from the same source. Translation by the author.

perpetually functioned as both the ambiguous product and the uncertain origin of socialist culture.⁵²

This relationship is evident in Abdurrahim Buza's 1949 painting *Volunteer Work in the Stalin Textile Factory* [Figure 5.8], which shows work being completed on the plaza in front of the factory and indeed on the pedestal itself. Beneath Stalin's welcoming gesture (which simultaneously serves as a gesture towards the future) labors a sea of men, women, and children, some dressed as urban residents and others in costume that marks them clearly as hailing from more remote regions of the country.⁵³ Buza's painting in many ways epitomizes the relationship between the working masses and the monument: the monument becomes a concrete symbol that expresses the collective ideals for which the workers below are presumably united, and thus expresses a dialectical collective unity of those masses. At the same time, the diversity of the figures below—their almost motley character is highlighted by Buza's characteristically naïve style of painting—gestures towards the distributive unity of the masses in relation to the monument. Although the painting clearly establishes a hierarchical relationship that places the monument above the masses, the fact that the painting coincides with the creation and placement of Paskali's statue in the open space outside the factory emphasizes the role of the masses in the construction of their own symbols.

Of course, not only did the monument not emerge organically from the labor of the masses, but Paskali's Stalin monument was perhaps one of the clearest and earliest

⁵² Ardian Vehbiu explores the relationship between the discursive categories of “the people,” “the masses,” and “the individual,” respectively, in socialist Albania in “Populli, Masat, Individi,” *Peizazhe të Fjalës*, August 29, 2016, <https://peizazhe.com/2016/08/29/populli-masat-individi/> (accessed November 5, 2017).

⁵³ It is significant that two of the prominent figures along the front edge of the painting wear costumes that suggest they are from the south of the country (Labëri or Toskëri) and from the north (Gegëni) respectively. For a discussion of the ethnographic associations of different Albanian folk costumes under socialism, see Chapter 2.

examples in socialist Albania of the wholesale implementation of a sculptural program developed elsewhere. The representation of Stalin was one of the first public sculptures reflecting Albania's ideological commitment to Stalinism, but the fact that the country never officially belonged to the Soviet Union meant that the public adoption of Stalinist iconography was perhaps even more artificial in Albania than it was in other nations more directly within the Soviet sphere of control.⁵⁴ After Stalin's death, the other major statue of the Russian dictator, which had stood in Tirana's central square, was displaced to a more peripheral location in 1968 to make room for an equestrian portrait of the national hero Skanderbeg. Thus, the cult of Stalin—during the period of late socialism in Albania—had already been displaced, in a sense: Stalin's name and image still attached itself to places like factories, but it no longer exercised as compelling a command over public space. Following the end of socialism in Albania, Paskali's statue of Stalin was first relocated to the Center for the Creation of Artworks (*Qendra e Realizimit të Veprave të Artit*, the foundry along the Lana River in Tirana where large-scale bronze sculptures were cast during and after socialism),⁵⁵ and then later added to the haphazard collection of statues located behind the National Gallery of Art, near the city center.⁵⁶

The empty pedestal has for some time been associated with the period of transition from socialism to free-market capitalism. Although the visual trope has of course now extended well beyond the borders of the former Eastern Bloc (for example, to include a number of contexts in the Middle East), it remains essentially synonymous with

⁵⁴ On Albania's foreign relations, and their effects on monumental construction, see Chapter 2.

⁵⁵ This is where it was housed at the time the Cenaliaj carried out her performance.

⁵⁶ After the end of socialism, the statue of Stalin that had formerly stood in the city center was moved from its place on Stalin Boulevard and placed behind the National Gallery as well. See "Albania Removes Statues of Stalin," *The New York Times*, December 22, 1990, <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/12/22/world/albania-removes-statues-of-stalin.html> (accessed November 8, 2017).

the triumph of ‘democratic’ ideals, and frequently with popular movements (as opposed to state-instituted reform). As Sergiusz Michalski writes, “The pulling down of a statue is telegenic and provides the welcome illusion of symbolically condensing a much longer historical process.”⁵⁷ The trope of the empty pedestal was recently thematized in the exhibition *The Empty Pedestal, Ghosts from Eastern Europe*,⁵⁸ curated by Marco Scotini at the Museo Civico Archeologico in Bologna. The exhibition, which drew its central concept from a 1976–87 series of drawings [**Figure 5.9**] by the Uzbekistani artist Vyacheslav Akhunov entitled “Abandoned Pedestals (The Empty Pedestals Intended for Monuments of Leaders),”⁵⁹ explored the relationship of the pedestal and the affirmative statue of the leader in a number of ways, establishing the theme as one that opens up important questions about the ways history returns in the postsocialist period. In an important sense, the empty pedestal functions as one of the most iconic empty signifiers of socialism. It rivals philosopher Slavoj Žižek’s example of the famous photograph of the Romanian flag after the fall of Ceaușescu—with its communist star cut away—as an “index of the ‘open’ character of a historical situation ‘in its becoming.’” It reflects what Žižek characterizes as “the intermediate phase when the former Master-Signifier, although it has already lost its hegemonical power, has not yet been replaced by the new one.”⁶⁰ Thus, the empty pedestal serves as a particularly appropriate site for the

⁵⁷ Sergiusz Michalski, *Public Monuments*, p. 148.

⁵⁸ *Il Piedistallo Vuoto/The Empty Pedestal, Ghosts from Eastern Europe*, Museo Civico Archeologico, Bologna, January 24–March 16, 2014. For more information, see the catalog, *Il Piedistallo Vuoto/The Empty Pedestal* (Milano: Mousse, 2014).

⁵⁹ See Marco Scotini, “The Empty Pedestal: A Conversation with Vyacheslav Akhunov,” Laura Bulian Gallery, 2014, <http://www.laurabuliangallery.com/assets/the-empty-pedestal.-conversation-with-vyacheslav-akhunov.pdf> (accessed November 4, 2017).

⁶⁰ Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. 1–2.

enactment of works that seek to hold open the possibilities of both the socialist past and its potential futures.

The particular visual qualities of the pedestal upon which Cenaliaj stood are, then, of interest. Perhaps most salient is the visual interplay of the faded and damaged surface of the pedestal itself, the still-recognizable singularity of the communist star located centrally on its front, and the repeated yet barely legible political posters (promoting one Fatmir Nezaj for an illegible public office) spread across large areas of the pedestal's planes. The location of the performance—and Cenaliaj's statement about its intent—firmly grounds the work in relation to the contemporary capitalist context of the work: in effect, neoliberal economics and liberal democracy have become the new master signifiers that govern transition in regions like Southeastern Europe.⁶¹ Cenaliaj used precisely socialist monumentality—obliquely, through the navigation of its displacement—in order to recover the 'openness of the historical situation' despite the hegemonic capitalist conditions of postsocialist Albania.

Welcome, Dear Workers can be read as taking up a critical stance towards two distinct histories, and exploring the ways they appear to be overlapping, contradictory, and continuous. On one hand, Cenaliaj's performance points to an ideological void behind socialist monumentality, a failure to live up to its own promises to enlighten, nourish, and liberate the proletariat. Both visually and performatively, the replacement of the body of the most recognizable socialist dictator with the anonymous body of the female worker-artist represented a continuation of Central and Eastern European neo-avant-gardes' critique of late socialist culture. In Cenaliaj's case, this critique related

⁶¹ On this topic, see the introduction to Srećko Horvat and Igor Štikš, eds., *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism: Radical Politics After Yugoslavia* (New York: Verso, 2015).

most directly to the ways socialist monumentality and its corresponding public space constructed both gender and class. However, Cenaliaj's performance also took up both the language and the proclaimed ideals of socialist monumentality as a tool to critique the vicissitudes of postsocialist capitalism, the conditions of alienation endemic to neoliberal society in Albania in the early 1990s. In enacting this critique, Cenaliaj looked to the project of monumentality itself, to its striving for an emergent entelechy of collective memory and consciousness of the historical present. She sought socialist monumentality's promise of a unified apprehension of the present as a historical stage that is defined by—and therefore amenable to—shared emotion and collective actions. It is this curious critical ambivalence of *Welcome, Dear Workers* that most interests me: its simultaneous deconstruction of and *alignment with* the project of socialist monumentality. It is the ambiguity of this position that forms the foundation for the theoretical framework explored in the next section.

In a rather straightforward sense, Cenaliaj's *Welcome, Dear Workers* grapples with the same manifestation of the sublime that many socialist monuments did: it attempts to present the cognitively estranging unity⁶² of a proletarian consciousness across both time and space. In Cenaliaj's case, the new (contemporary) version of this consciousness is no longer nationally defined (although it is located in the specifics of *Kombinat*'s history, and visually in the body of the artist herself). Indeed, by taking the

⁶² I take the language of 'cognitive estrangement' from Seo-Young Chu, *Do Metaphors Dream of Literal Sleep? A Science-Fictional Theory of Representation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010). Chu draws the idea of cognitive estrangement from Darko Suvin's analysis of science fiction, but she adapts it by focusing not on the form of representation but on the referent itself. Cognitively estranging referents are those that are "neither totally knowable nor totally unknowable" (Chu, *Do Metaphors Dream*, p. 7). They are objects that escape easy understanding, but nonetheless clearly remain within the realm of *possible* cognition. In the case of socialist monumentality, such cognitively estranging referents include the global unity of proletarian consciousness, the corollary global unity of proletarian struggle, and the reconfiguration of historical time in social revolution.

place of Stalin, Cenaliaj avoided the kinds of national historical specificity that would have adhered in, for example, putting herself in the place of a statue of Albania's own former socialist dictator, Enver Hoxha. Replacing the absent form of Stalin was also an act of replacing an already abstracted translation of Stalinist philosophies (which lived on in Albania under Hoxha's control for longer than they did almost anywhere else in the region). This abstraction was mirrored in Cenaliaj's transformation of her own body: recognizable as a worker, legible as feminine, but with its individuality effaced by its stillness and whiteness.

Before attending to theoretical matters, we should also consider the possible references and meanings of this abstraction. These references reveal ways that Cenaliaj's performance, like the work of David Maljković discussed in Chapter 4, functions in relation to the heritage of aesthetic modernism, and how it uses the monument to stage a peculiar kind of confrontation with both the body and sculpture as they have developed since the 19th century in Western culture. This confrontation with modernism occurs primarily in two ways: first, through the engagement with the pedestal as an object, and second, through the clear relationship between Cenaliaj's work and other projects that have merged the female body with the (white) monochrome, especially Serbian artist Tanja Ostojić's 1996 performance *Personal Space*.

As Rosalind Krauss has pointed out, one of the key aspects of the development of modernist sculpture was the "loss of site" that first saw the monument become "pure marker or base, functionally placeless and largely self-referential," and subsequently saw the modernist "sculpture reach ... downward to absorb the pedestal into itself."⁶³ In the

⁶³ Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," p. 34.

case of the fall of socialist monuments⁶⁴ (which of course, as sculptures, had rarely obeyed the modernist line of transformation Krauss outlines), a new rupture was introduced between both sculpture and base, alongside a new form of rupture from site. Cenaliaj's performance atop the pedestal that had once held Stalin re-established the pedestal as both a situated (in relation to *Kombinat*) and universal (in its reference to 'global' socialism) zone of possibility.

Cenaliaj's performance can be productively juxtaposed with another performance on an empty pedestal in Southeastern Europe, Croatian artist Dalibor Martinis' *JBT 27.12.2004* [Figure 5.10], which took place just a few months prior to Cenaliaj's. In Martinis' performance, the artist stood on a recently vacated pedestal in Kumrovec, the birthplace of Josip Broz Tito, on the spot where the Yugoslavian dictator's statue had formerly stood. The bronze statue was destroyed on the eponymous date, and—in the process, was decapitated by the force of the explosives used to remove the sculpture. Having stood on the empty pedestal and assumed Tito's pose (and even dressed in a similar way), Martinis had himself photographed. Later, in an associated performance in Rijeka, he cut the head off of a small replica of the bronze statue of Tito.⁶⁵ Martinis' work is at once quite similar and very different from Cenaliaj's. The differences are first of all visual, in both the manner of performance and documentation: where Cenaliaj sought to visually differentiate herself from Stalin both in pose and in color, Martinis sought to mimic Tito's appearance quite closely, such that one could say that he occupied Tito's

⁶⁴ On the removal and destruction of socialist-era monuments, see Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art*, pp. 51–90.

⁶⁵ Details of both performances are drawn from the artist's website, *Dalibor Martinis*, "JBT 27.12.2004. Action/performance–Data recovery," <http://dalibormartinis.com/?workid=932> (accessed January 19, 2018). I have also benefitted from Amy Bryzgel's discussion of the performance in Bryzgel, *Performance Art in Eastern Europe*, pp. 263–265.

place on the pedestal rather than attempting to ‘replace’ him. In fact, Martinis notes that, “when I stood on the marble pedestal with the inscription ‘Josip Broz Tito,’ I realized it was not possible—neither physically, politically, or symbolically—for anyone to stand [there] except Tito himself.”⁶⁶ This distinction relates to concrete differences in the sites themselves that shaped the performances: Martinis stood atop a low pedestal that was, in a visually direct and conceptual way, rooted to the *place* where Tito was born, and that was marked with his name. Thus too the documentation of Martinis’ work is more direct and intimate: while the artist is some feet higher up by virtue of the pedestal, the viewer’s gaze is just slightly lower, and the overall effect is one of closeness to an elevated figure rather than distance across either time or space. In contrast, Cenaliaj occupied a pedestal that commemorated Stalin as both a person (the benefactor of socialist Albanian political ideology) and an idea, the symbol of a transnational network of socialist exchange and unity (the same unity that was seen as having produced the Stalin Textile Factory in *Kombinat*). The pedestal on which Cenaliaj stood is marked most conspicuously by the star of global socialism, and her body is elevated to a much more extreme degree, producing—in images of the performance—the need for a more panoramic view.⁶⁷

Andrew Herscher notes that Martinis’ performance was a kind of overidentification that also functioned as a “counteridentification,” in Herscher’s terminology. That is, it “refus[ed] ... the social action, [and] political effects” that are

⁶⁶ Dalibor Martinis, qtd. in Andrew Herscher, “Political Activism in Post-Yugoslavia: Heritage, Identity, Agency,” in *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism*, ed. Meg McLagan and Yates McKee (New York: Zone Books, 2012), p. 484.

⁶⁷ On the question of distance and scale in relation to socialist and postsocialist art, see Chapter 1 of this dissertation, and also Joan Kee, “Why Chinese Paintings Are So Large,” *Third Text* 26:6 (2012), pp. 649–663.

typically meant to be engendered by monuments as forms of heritage.⁶⁸ Amy Bryzgel, in contrast, aligns Martinis’s works with a more neutral position, suggesting that they “do not offer commentary” on their subject matter, but instead “restore [forgotten events] to life, without an addition of context, just as data from a damaged hard disk can sometimes be restored without the appropriate context.”⁶⁹ These two viewpoints—the obsessive overidentification with the past and the simple proffering of the past as decontextualized data for (re)consideration—are quite different, perhaps so different as to be importantly opposed. However, I think that both are indeed at play in Martinis’ work, and, in different ways, with Cenaliaj. She likewise wavers between strategies of avoidance (“My placing the worker on a pedestal had nothing to do with the role played by statues in the time of the dictatorship”) and significant emotional investment in the object of past valorizations (“this class [the working class] still exists”).⁷⁰ The back-and-forth, or both/and-ness, of this ambivalence is one crucial aspect of what I will expand upon below as ‘weak monumentality.’ First, though, I wish to further explore the art historical context to which Cenaliaj’s performance belongs.

Welcome, Dear Workers—precisely through the painted whiteness of the artist’s body—also invites comparison to another important work in the history of performance in Southeastern Europe: Tanja Ostojić’s *Personal Space* [Figure 5.11], in which the artist stood nude in the center of a five meter square area of marble dust on the gallery floor for two hours, throughout the course of an exhibition opening. Her body, completely shaved, was covered in white powdered marble. Ostojić had taken her place before visitors

⁶⁸ Herscher, “Political Activism,” p. 481.

⁶⁹ Bryzgel, *Performance Art in Eastern Europe*, p. 265. The latter quoted section in this sentence is Bryzgel’s quotation of the artist.

⁷⁰ See the quotation above, from Cenaliaj in “Në një ‘Statujë’ të Gjallë Postkomuniste.”

entered the gallery, and she departed only after they had also left: her body was inseparable from the powdered stone out of which it seemed to rise. The square of dust remained on the gallery floor for the remaining three months the exhibition was open.⁷¹ The performance represented a significant transition in Ostojić's artistic practice: it is the shift between previous works that involved carved marble (works engaged in a more traditionally sculptural practice) and subsequent conceptual/performance pieces that emphasized the female body's role as an object of exchange between Eastern and Western Europe. In *Personal Space*, as Zoran Erić has noted, Ostojić incorporated the avant-garde tradition of Kazimir Malevich's works—specifically, his white square—and re-imagined it through the body's presence.⁷²

We can consider Cenaliaj's *Welcome, Dear Workers* to be a kind of inversion of Ostojić's *Personal Space*. Rather than the legacy of utopian abstraction, its most immediate referent was the legacy of Socialist Realist utopian figuration. Instead of the gallery, its scene was the public space adjacent to the site of production. Where *Personal Space* primarily created a narrowly focused dialogue between the body, its surface, and the flatness of modernist abstraction, *Welcome, Dear Workers* projected the body almost immediately outside of itself, both effacing its specificity and asserting a certain fungibility with the bodies that surrounded it. Through this process of inversion, *Welcome, Dear Workers* establishes a relationship to the historical avant-garde and its

⁷¹ Zdenka Badinovac and Mika Briški, eds., *Body and the East: From the 1960s to the Present* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), p. 88. The performance was documented and subsequently photographs of the artist standing in the square were hung on the wall behind the square itself, which remained empty for the remainder of the exhibition. *Personal Space* was realized as part of the Second Yugoslav Biennale of Young Artists, in Vršac, Serbia.

⁷² Zoran Erić, "Personal Space—Public Body," *Art-e-Fact: Strategies of Resistance* (February, 2003), http://artefact.mi2.hr/_a01/lang_en/art_ostojic_en.htm (accessed March 19, 2014).

neo-avant-garde deconstructions even as its primary aesthetic and historical relations are much closer.

While the whiteness of Cenaliaj's body clearly referenced both the purified, utopian monochromatics of modernist abstraction (and its subsequent evocations in Southeastern European performance art), it also had other referents and established itself in contrast to other practices. The white body of the worker on a pedestal recalled almost immediately the whitened concrete monuments that were common in socialist Albania's public spaces.⁷³ The whiteness of her body also at least potentially spoke back against one of the most significant postsocialist transformations of Tirana's public space: mayor Edi Rama's painting of many of the façades in the Albanian capital city with bright colors. Rama first gained notoriety as an artist-politician during his term as the mayor of Tirana in the early 2000s, when he initiated a project to paint the facades of several socialist-era apartment blocks along one of the city's main roads in bold colors and eye-catching patterns.⁷⁴ The project was documented by artist Anri Sala, in Sala's video *Dammi i Colori* (2003) [**Figure 5.12**], and this fusion of politics, urbanism, and art subsequently made Rama a paradigmatic figure for that segment of the transnational contemporary artworld that desires to proclaim a continued political relevance for the arts in the age of

⁷³ Because of the materials and facilities necessary to cast large monuments in bronze—materials and facilities not necessarily readily available in Albania at the time—many monuments created in the country during socialism were cast in concrete rather than bronze. Sometimes, a monument would first be installed in concrete, but later cast in bronze when funds and materials allowed. See the images in Kujtim Buza, Kleanthi Dedi, and Dhimitraq Trebicka, *Përmendore të Heroizmit Shqiptar*, which document both bronze and concrete statues.

⁷⁴ The initial project was funded by the EU Commission. For Rama's narrative of the project, see the video "Architecture+Art: Crossover and Collaboration – Edi Rama and Anri Sala," documenting a talk given jointly by Rama and Anri Sala at the Tate Modern in October of 2009, <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/architectureart-crossover-and-collaboration-edi-rama-and-anri-sala> (accessed November 9, 2017). After Rama first designed some of the patterns for the buildings himself, Rama and Sala later invited major contemporary artists such as Liam Gillick, Rirkrit Tiravanija, and Olafur Eliasson to design patterns for buildings in Tirana.

global capitalism. Rama's narrative of the painted buildings has always emphasized it as 'an undemocratic means to a democratic end.' According to him, the success of the project was that the citizens of Tirana began to take more ownership of their shared spaces, including the facades of their buildings and their green spaces. However, Rama's project ultimately ignored peripheral areas like the *Kombinat* neighborhood, and—after Rama's election as Prime Minister of the country in 2013—his continued use of the rhetoric of avant-garde urbanism to justify oppressive policies has made his initial project seem all the more authoritarian.

Looking back at Cenaliaj's work now, the juxtaposition between the artist's stark white body dressed as a worker and the brightly colored surfaces elsewhere in the capital city, painted at the direction of the male artist (from a position of political authority), seems quite telling. This aspect of the work's engagement with its context was highlighted by its recent inclusion in the exhibition *Teatri i Gjelbërimit (The Theater of Greenery)*, organized at the FAB Gallery in Tirana in fall of 2016.⁷⁵ The exhibition sought to chart an alternative history of urbanism in Tirana, a series of happenings and projects that presented a different heritage for engaged contemporary art. Significantly, a number of the works featured in the exhibition—including *Welcome, Dear Workers*; Marco Mazzi's photographs in the Albanian Lapidar Survey; and Nikolin Bujari's *A Monument for a Monument* [Figures 5.13–5.14]—dealt directly with socialist monumentality as a lens through which to productively explore the present. Cenaliaj's performance took its place within a body of postsocialist works that used socialist

⁷⁵ The FAB Gallery is the gallery associated with the University of Arts in Tirana. *Teatri i Gjelbërimit* was open from October 23 to November 1, 2016. The exhibition was co-curated by Vincent WJ van Gerven Oei, Ardian Isufi, and Stefano Romano (who had originally curated the *1.60 Insurgent Space* public exhibition of which Cenaliaj's performance was a part). See http://departmentofeagles.org/portfolio_page/teatri-i-gjelberimit/ (accessed September 16, 2018).

monuments as a way to spatially narrate alternatives to the discourses of democracy and urbanism operative in Albania during the period of transition. Having considered the various ways that Cenaliaj's performance engaged with both its past and its present, I return again to the theorization of 'weak monumentality'—an artistic practice for which I take *Welcome, Dear Workers* to be paradigmatic.

IV. Weak Monumentality as a Theoretical Framework

There are two primarily philosophical points of orientation for both the name and the content of what I term 'weak monumentality': Italian Marxist philosopher Gianni Vattimo's notion of 'weak thought' and American queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's writings on affect and paranoid and reparative models of interpretation (discussed above). Before discussing these philosophical frameworks, however, I want to introduce another important notion of 'weakness' that relates to the context of postsocialist culture in Southeastern Europe. This is the concept of the 'weak state,' drawn from transitology, the body of knowledge focused on states transitioning to free market economies and new forms of democratic governance after the end of socialism. As Katherine Verdery has argued, what we can learn from the transition from socialism will be far more nuanced and effective if it is "informed by [accurate] conceptualizations of the social order that went before."⁷⁶ Thus, a large part of the study of political transition in former Eastern Europe has involved the careful understanding of what actually characterized socialist states. One key interpretive framework that developed early in the study of transition—and that is still widely accepted, though being applied in

⁷⁶ Katherine Verdery, "Theorizing Socialism: A Prologue to the Transition," *American Ethnologist* 18:3 (1991), p. 419.

new methodological ways and new fields—is that of Eastern European socialist states as ‘weak’ states.⁷⁷

The ‘weakness’ of these states is defined by multiple characteristics, two of which are of importance for the present inquiry. First, rather than monopolizing all power, socialist states often radically dispersed certain kinds of power to their citizens (such as the power of ideological denunciation) in order to assure efficiency and flexibility. As Jan T. Gross writes, “[t]he real power of a totalitarian state lies in its being at the disposal of every inhabitant, . . . at a moment’s notice.”⁷⁸ Second, the central party systems of even the most totalitarian states existed in a relationship of dependence on their peripheral official representatives and institutions for both information about the state of affairs in remote areas and for the implementation of policies with local populations.⁷⁹ I have attempted to show, in Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation, that socialist monumentality in particular represented similar processes of dispersal and availability (not least because the quality of monumentality itself was considered to reside primarily in the present, in the lives of socialist citizens).

The argument that—in important ways—socialist states were ‘weak’ perhaps lends itself most logically to analyses of political economy and sociology, but it also lays

⁷⁷ On the more recent aspects of this trend, see, for example, Alaina Lemon, “Writing Against the New ‘Cold War,’” pp. 11–12. Lemon poses a key set of questions in the spirit of exploring the possibilities of the weaker aspects of socialist states: “What else could ‘the state’ do besides dominating or denouncing? What did (and do) people try to do *through* the state and *in* it?” (p. 12). The notion of the ‘weak state’ is not a pejoratively evaluative term that frames the former socialist states as ‘weak’ in terms of political power, in global contrast to other states (such as Western European ones). Rather, it is a terminology intended to counter the prevailing notions that Eastern European socialist states were all ‘strong’ in a prevailingly centralized, totalitarian sense. See Verdery, p. 426.

⁷⁸ Jan T. Gross, qtd. in Verdery, p. 426.

⁷⁹ Verdery, pp. 426–427.

an empirical foundation for both the art historical⁸⁰ and the theoretical arguments I put forward here. The weakness of socialist states—and the corollary weakness of their official monumental practices, in some cases—establishes the aesthetic paradigms to which practices of postsocialist weak monumentality respond and upon which they elaborate. In other words, weak monumentality attunes itself to the irregularities and decenterings⁸¹ that occurred in socialist monumental practices, whether these occurred geographically, or in terms of affective economies, or in terms of citizen subject positions. It does *not* primarily respond to socialist culture conceived as a ‘strong’ or concretely totalitarian and centralized form of culture. This is important not only because of the relationship these postsocialist practices take up vis-à-vis the past, but also because of their form in relation to the present. Although political, economic, and cultural models for transition⁸² in the Eastern Bloc involved many centralized, top-down (‘strong’)

⁸⁰ Although the terminology of ‘weak’ theories is generally absent from descriptions of historical movements or artists, there are examples. Peter Osborne uses the term ‘weak’ to describe Sol LeWitt’s conceptual art practice—in contrast to the ‘strong’ approach he identifies with Joseph Kosuth and the Art & Language Group. (See Osborne, “Conceptual Art and/as Philosophy,” in *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, ed. Michael Newman and Jon Bird (London: Reaktion, 1999), p. 50, cited in Nizan Shaked, *The Synthetic Proposition: Conceptualism and the Political Referent in Contemporary Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), p. 70–71). For Osborne (who, as Shaked notes, seems to use ‘weak’ in a pejorative sense), what makes LeWitt’s conceptualism ‘weak’ is its inability to really “challenge art’s object-status” (Shaked, p. 70). This is not too distant from the kind of ‘weakness’ that—methodologically—I am exploring here. Without Osborne’s implied preference for ‘strong’ theories over weak ones, I seek to pay closer attention to those practices that are not deeply and critically deconstructive of their own material conditions and content. In the particular cases discussed here, those conditions and content are the legacy of and material remains of socialist monumentality. However, we should note that the notion of a ‘weak’ historical and theoretical approach maps reasonably onto the field of global art history, since it is precisely in the global context that insisting upon ‘strong’ critical models engaged with the project of Euroamerican modernism and its avant-gardes can obscure the nuances of what many artists have tried to accomplish in specific contexts.

⁸¹ This language is already well established in the literature on Eastern European postwar art, probably most clearly through Piotr Piotrowski’s invocation of the Derridean *parergon* (and of Norman Bryson’s subsequent attention to the notion of the ‘frame’) in his seminal survey of Eastern and Central European avant-gardes. See Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta*, p. 26. However, it has not been applied consistently to ‘official’ forms of culture (or even to traditional ones that persisted under socialism, despite no strong alignment with the state).

⁸² In the realm of culture, perhaps the most concrete example of centralized, top-down transition tactics is the establishment of the Soros Centers for Contemporary art throughout the region. On this phenomenon, see Octavian Eșanu, *The Transition of the Soros Centers to Contemporary Art: The Managed*

elements, there is an important sense in which the tactics of neoliberal modernization are also ‘weak.’⁸³ Thus, weak monumentality—as interpretive strategy and as historical practice—reveals shared aspects of the experience of state socialism and transition-era capitalism.⁸⁴ It also provides a new set of historical sites (in the literal and figurative sense) from which to critically examine the neoliberal present.

Broadly speaking, weak monumentality as a theoretical model takes its inspiration from Gianni Vattimo’s ‘weak thought,’ which attempts to construct a model of ‘groundless’ hermeneutic investigation appropriate to the postmodern era, in which transcendental and unchanging metaphysical narratives have lost their credibility. Vattimo’s writings on ‘weak thought’ take their own inspiration from Heidegger’s ideas, including those on the nature of truth in art.⁸⁵ ‘Weak thought,’ Vattimo writes, is the kind of thinking that grasps Heidegger’s assertion of the “eventuality”⁸⁶ of Being, his

Avant-Garde (Kiev: CCKK, 2008). Broadly speaking, the political and economic processes of modernization that have taken place after the apparent collapse of socialism—including both ‘shock therapy’ tactics and localized modernization efforts by elites—have centralized, authoritarian aspects that can be considered ‘strong.’ (For these models and their implementation in postsocialist Eastern Europe, see Peter Gown, “Neo-Liberal Theory and Practice for Eastern Europe,” *New Left Review* 1:213 (September-October, 2005), pp. 3–60, and Paul Blokker, “Post-Communist Modernization, Transition Studies, and Diversity in Europe,” *European Journal of Social Theory* 8:4 (2005), pp. 503–525.)

⁸³ This is primarily because neoliberalism “involves *extending and disseminating market values to all institutions and social action*” as Wendy Brown argues (emphasis in original: Brown, “Neo-Liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy,” *Theory & Event* 7:1 (2003), <https://muse.jhu.edu/> (accessed November 6, 2017).) This extension occurs in ways similar to those that totalitarian states needed to disseminate their social agency.

⁸⁴ The parallels between the socialist and capitalist imaginaries have been insightfully explored by a number of studies, the key one being Susan Buck-Morss’ *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000). However, a fuller exploration of the parallels between the socialist imaginary and the forms of postsocialist capitalism operative in the transition period remains to be conducted.

⁸⁵ Specifically, Heidegger’s essay “On the Origin of the Work of Art,” trans. Albert Hofstadter, in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2001), pp. 17–86. Also important for Vattimo is Heidegger’s short lecture “Art and Space,” trans. Charles H. Seibert, *Continental Philosophy Review* 6:1 (1973), pp. 3–8.

⁸⁶ Although space does not permit, there is certainly a productive philosophical-historical investigation to be carried out exploring the convergence of Alain Badiou’s theorization of the ‘event’—and its overwhelming recent application to the interpretation of contemporary art—and the ideas of ontological ‘weakness’ discussed here.

“enfeeblement of (the notion of) Being [though his emphasis on] the explicit occurrence of its temporal essence (which is also and especially ephemerality, birth and death, faded trans-mission, [and] antiquarian accumulation).”⁸⁷ Vattimo sees this thinking being taken up by Sartre when the latter proposes the ‘dissolution’ of the meaning of history into historical actors, since this process of dissolving highlights the abandonment of the association of history’s meaning with stable presence.⁸⁸

It is significant that one of Vattimo’s engagements with ‘weakness’ in a philosophical sense is precisely through the notion of the monument,⁸⁹ a form that one might presume to be tied to both deep and clear definitions of the meaning of history and Being. For Vattimo, what Heidegger discovers in the notion of art-as-monument is *not* ‘deep meaning,’ but a kind of partial and temporary truth that is never completely embodied. What I take to be crucial to Vattimo’s ‘weak thought’ is its situated and limited character, its reliance on contingencies rather than its search for deep, abiding ideals. In other words, for Vattimo, art-as-monument always *appears* to be “a monument of foundation,”⁹⁰ but it is *actually* always doing something far more specific, limited, ephemeral, or amorphous. Vattimo recognizes that the apparent disappearance of ‘monuments of foundation’ in the present becomes a cause for both ethical and existential concerns: essentially, the fear of inescapable ethical relativism and radical historical contingency that seem to characterize late capitalism. He writes,

⁸⁷ Vattimo, “Dialectics, Difference, Weak Thought,” in *Weak Thought*, ed. Gianni Vattimo and Peri Aldo Rovatti (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), p. 45.

⁸⁸ Vattimo, “Dialectics, Difference, Weak Thought,” p. 45–46.

⁸⁹ In Vattimo’s essay “Ornament/Monument,” in *The End of Modernity*, trans. John R. Snyder (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. 79–89.

⁹⁰ Gianni Vattimo, “Postmodernity and New Monumentality,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 28 (Autumn, 1995), p. 44.

The problem is whether history can give itself only as the illusion to establish the sole and necessary ground of Being, or also as the lucid recognition of the eventuality of Being. The reduction of monuments to masks, or even to sheer signs and documents referring to life-forms that raise no claim to the status of metaphysically grounded models, should not be regarded as a symptom of the ‘moral crisis,’ namely, of the decadence of our society. On the contrary, it is an essentially positive stage toward the new possible monumentality⁹¹

Crucially, this new possibility does not entail the complete philosophical deconstruction of the preceding categories and forms of historical meaning. Likewise, weak thought cannot simply dissolve the legacy of metaphysical thinking about Being: Vattimo argues that “postmetaphysical thinking cannot avoid working with metaphysical concepts, declining and distorting them, entrusting itself back to and away from them, transmitting them as its own heritage.”⁹² The same is true, not only for the notion of ‘monument’ (which has already expanded itself throughout modern history⁹³), but also for particular historical traditions of monumentality and particular monuments. It is not simply a matter of ‘countering’ (in the sense of the counter-monument) the heritage of monumentality or of particular monuments, but also of discovering practices that ‘entrust themselves both back to and away from’ the heritage of monumentality.

Of equal importance to my proposed theory of ‘weak monumentality,’ and in some ways even more crucial in terms of theorizing the significance of works discussed in this and the previous chapter, is Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s adaptation of Silvan Tomkins’ ‘weak affect theory.’ For Tomkins and Sedgwick, a weak theory is one that succeeds precisely in its specificity to the physical and emotional relationships between

⁹¹ Vattimo, “Postmodernity and New Monumentality,” p. 44.

⁹² Vattimo, “Dialectics, Difference, Weak Thought,” p. 47.

⁹³ This observation already has its own long history, dating back to Riegl’s “The Modern Cult of Monuments,” which describes the development of the concept of the monument—and its corollary expansion to include new types of objects and values.

very particular bodies in very particular situations, but goes no further.⁹⁴ The reason Sedgwick’s writings are so applicable to the issue of monuments in particular is that historians and critics alike have an abiding tendency to offer what Sedgwick calls ‘paranoid readings’⁹⁵ of monuments. That is, we tend to try to read monuments through a “hermeneutics of suspicion.”⁹⁶ We attempt to approach them in ways that demystify or demythologize them, or otherwise aim to anticipate their ideological complicities and lay bare their role in various machinations (the propagation of state power, the reinforcement of nationalist identities, the embodiment of patriarchal social structures, and so forth). As a corollary to this, historians and critics alike often heroize those practices that aid in promoting skepticism and suspicion about any truth claims that might adhere in monuments.

Furthermore, Sedgwick’s adaptation of Tomkins’ theories is unabashedly interested in the possibilities of reparative interpretation: of finding joy, pleasure, escape, or hope in the objects and people that give our lives meaning—but not in any sweeping, ideal way: instead precisely by turning to specific embodied responses and desires.⁹⁷ Reparative interpretations are “ameliorative” and sometimes affirmative as well, and for this reason they run contrary to paranoid readings’ drive to expose, uncover, and critique. Reparative interpretation situates itself primarily amongst “fragments and part-objects,”

⁹⁴ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, pp. 93–121.

⁹⁵ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, pp. 123–151.

⁹⁶ The phrase comes from Paul Ricoeur, in the context of his readings of Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche. See Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 34.

⁹⁷ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, p. 144.

both constructing new futures from them and recovering new aspects of the possibilities of the past.⁹⁸

There is a strongly therapeutic bent to Sedgwick's discussion of reparative interpretation and weak theory, and here I want to take care. I want to avoid the tendency—particularly common in the late 1990s and early 2000s—to read the object of the present discussion (postsocialist art from Southeastern Europe) primarily as “a form of therapy ... to relieve [the region] from the burden of its trauma.”⁹⁹ As Anthony Gardner points out, the interpretation of postsocialist contemporary art as ‘therapy’ essentially reduced this art to “merely a symptom of the region’s weakened geopolitical contexts.”¹⁰⁰ The problem with the interpretive situation that Gardner describes, I think, is not necessarily the possibility of reading art as a therapeutic enterprise among postsocialist artists, but rather the way that that interpretation was used to reinforce a corollary ‘strong’ theory about the authoritarian socialist past. In other words, the possibilities and openness of a potentially ‘reparative’ hermeneutics operative in postsocialist art were subsumed to a horizon that “was limited geographically and historically to communism’s frames and effects.”¹⁰¹ It was allowed only to demonstrate that the immediate past was something that was in need of criticism, something from which artists needed to escape and emerge. This in turn effectively masked the construction of a strong theory in which ‘democracy’ emerged as a new absolute.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, p. 146. In this sense particularly, there is an important affinity between Sedgwick's analysis and Svetlana Boym's analysis of the function of nostalgia in postsocialist contexts. See Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, especially pp. 49–71.

⁹⁹ David Elliott, qtd. in Gardner, *Politically Unbecoming*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁰ Gardner, *Politically Unbecoming*, p. 19.

¹⁰¹ Gardner, *Politically Unbecoming*, p. 19.

¹⁰² See the discussion of Armando Lulaj's *NEVER* in Chapter 4 for further aspects of democracy's role as master signifier in postsocialist Eastern Europe.

The kind of artistic projects that I propose we consider under the rubric of ‘weak monumentality’ do not advance this reification of a strong theory of democracy, nor the pathologization of Southeastern Europe’s recent historical circumstances.¹⁰³ Weak monumentality is often in search of the heroic narratives of the past not in order to recover their greatness or totality, but in order to perceive how they have been lost with the advent of free markets and neoliberal society (and the individual bent of ‘democratic’ ideals in these conditions). In this way, weak monumental projects are again similar to the kinds of practices Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick identifies with ‘weak’ affect theories: namely, they try to escape the closed future of anticipatory, paranoid theories.¹⁰⁴ There are, in the context of postwar Southeastern Europe, different versions of this closed paranoid future: the fear of a catastrophic resurgence of ethnic hatreds so often associated with the Balkans;¹⁰⁵ the perception of a pervasively corrupt state apparatus;¹⁰⁶ simultaneous fears about both Russian (in the case of Serbia) and radical Islamic (in the cases of Bosnia and Albania) influences on the region; and so forth. Most of these geopolitical discourses feed into a rhetoric of ‘stability’ that seeks (as paranoid theories

¹⁰³ This is not to suggest that these works cannot be subsumed under essentially ‘therapeutic’ curatorial frameworks, but that they are not primarily interested in concretizing this hermeneutical framework themselves. There are many reasons for this, but one of them is that at least some of these works perceive the wounded subject to be the past itself, or else its representation (the monument). Thus, rather than reinscribing the idea of the region’s present as traumatized and weakened, practices of weak monumentality perceive the possibility of repairing the past, and even the past’s heroism, without projecting a perfect recovery of that past. (This latter would correspond too closely to the kinds of nationalist myths that weak monumentality complicates, even if it sometimes incorporates their monumental vocabulary.)

¹⁰⁴ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, p. 130.

¹⁰⁵ This narrative, while it is perhaps waning, still exercises a tremendous force over imaginative constructions of the region in popular and some academic circles, thanks in part to the popularity of books like Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* (New York: Picador, 2005). The book was originally published in the early 1990s, but the fact that it has been reprinted in the new century in an expanded edition featuring Kaplan’s subsequent popular essays on recent developments in the region evidences the author’s continued influence on popular conceptions of the Balkans. On the general historiographic and discursive production of the ‘Balkans,’ see Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*.

¹⁰⁶ For an analysis of the way that corruption serves as a political master signifier in the region, see Blendi Kajsia, *A Discourse Analysis of Corruption: Instituting Neoliberalism against Corruption in Albania, 1998–2005* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 101–127.

do) to avoid surprise and the negative affects¹⁰⁷ associated with it, and as such they actively reject discourses of revolution, which generally promote instability and the re-evaluation of hierarchies.

V. Weak Monumentality and (Re)New(ed) Political Subjectivities

In many ways, weak monumentality is as speculative as the socialist monumental practices with which it engages: its speculative imaginary is grounded in forms drawn from the socialist rhetoric of unified and mutually intelligible global revolution, even if the scope of its projected community is not always as broad. The stance that weak monumentality takes towards these prior revolutionary projects is one that—again to borrow Sedgwick’s terminology for reparative impulses—is “additive and accretive. . . . [I]t wants to assemble and confer plenitude on an object that will then have resources to offer to an inchoate self.”¹⁰⁸ There are differing versions of postsocialist art seeking to protect, add to, and build upon the kinds of collective social models posited by socialist monuments, but many of them involve the recapitulation of the Partisan resistance. Here I would like to return to Adela Jušić’s *Unknown Partisan Woman*, with which I began this chapter, and to a set of concerns that animate that work, along with the work of the Monument Group, discussed in the Introduction. If the cognitively estranging referent of Enisa Cenaliaj’s performance was the speculative notion of a global proletariat—locally manifested in the workers of a specific neighborhood, a specific city, a specific nation—then another important such referent is the transnational antifascist struggle.¹⁰⁹ As I have noted in previous chapters, the Partisan resistance to occupation was one of the key—

¹⁰⁷ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, pp. 136–138.

¹⁰⁸ Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*, p. 149.

¹⁰⁹ I discuss the conceptual significance of the Partisan resistance above in Chapter 1, and its manifestation in relation to different nationalisms in monumental projects in Chapters 2 and 3.

perhaps *the* key—object of memorial representation during the late socialist years in Albania and Yugoslavia alike. Both the Partisan resistance itself—as a kind of amorphous collective experience—and socialist attempts to commemorate it have figured prominently in postsocialist artworks that engage with the socialist past. These postsocialist projects have often combined criticism of the patterns of commemoration that characterized the socialist period with an explicit *return* to these patterns of commemoration as a necessary counterpoint to the individualist and consumption-oriented society of postsocialist neoliberal globalization. They have also used the politically engaged transnationalism of the Partisan narrative as a way to counteract the new, postsocialist (re-)construction of nationalist identities. As in projects like Cenaliaj’s or Martinis’, artists’ goals are often at once to avoid certain aspects of socialist monumentality and to take up the legacy that this monumentality offers.

In 2000–2001, Milica Tomić—one of the artists who would later found the Monument Group in Belgrade—undertook a performance, the documentation of which was later displayed as a photographic installation on billboards. The project was entitled *Remembering* [**Figures 5.15–5.16**],¹¹⁰ and grew out of the artist’s work in the small Austrian town of Erlauf. Erlauf was where, one minute after midnight on May 8, 1945, United States General Stanley Reinhardt met with Soviet General Dmitrii Drichkin, celebrating the Allied victory ending the Second World War.¹¹¹ In May of 2000, as part of a temporary art exhibition organized in Erlauf to commemorate the anniversary of the

¹¹⁰ Descriptions of the project, and the citations of the artist’s ideas about the work given in the paragraphs below, are drawn from the artist’s writings in her portfolio, available from her website, *Milica Tomić*, <https://milicatomic.wordpress.com/about/> (accessed January 6, 2018).

¹¹¹ Information on the town of Erlauf, and on a number of art projects created there in the early 2000s (including Tomić’s) can be found on the website of the Museum der Friedensgemeinde Erlauf, *Erlauf Erinnert*, <http://www.erlaufferinnert.at/home.php?il=2&l=de> (accessed February 3, 2018).

victory over fascism, Tomić made a series of photographs of citizens of the Austrian town standing in front of Russian sculptor Oleg Komov's 1995 *Peace Memorial* [Figure 5.17] in the town.¹¹² Komov's monument is done in a traditional figurative style that recalls that artist's earlier numerous renowned Socialist Realist monuments created in the Soviet Union (although it is decidedly restrained compared to many monuments celebrating the Soviet military). It depicts an American soldier standing together with a Soviet soldier, turning towards each other, each holding bunches of flowers. A young girl stands between them, her arms reaching outwards to touch their shoulders, as if she is the force that turns them to each other. Tomić's first series of photographs, *Erlauf erinnert sich...* (*Erlauf Remembers*) [Figures 5.18–5.19], shows citizens standing in front of the young girl's figure, becoming the object of the gazes of the two soldiers as they turn inward. The photographs—installed as a series of ten billboards in the town—show the people of the town gazing implacably forward as the young girl in the statue does, but their incongruity with the figures of the two soldiers creates an air of uncertainty, a question about the degree to which the legacy of the victory over fascism is remembered and how it lives on in the contemporary moment.

Tomić's subsequent work, *Remembering*, offers a kind of answer to this question: in this photo series, the artist herself stands between the two figures, obscuring the young girl. Tomić is dressed in the garb of a Partisan soldier, and while her gender matches that of the young girl in Komov's sculpture, her militancy suggests a different role than that of the girl bringing together America and the Soviet Union. In one photo, the artist stands smiling, her blonde hair in two long braids, staring resolutely forward, as the faces of the

¹¹² The monument was erected the year after Komov's death in 1994. 1995 marked the 50th anniversary of the declared end of the Second World War, and two monuments were installed in Erlauf in that year.

two soldiers seem to regard her presence approvingly. In another photo, Tomić turns to the Soviet soldier, her arm extended to grasp his wrist, as if she is about to take his hand. As the artist describes, placing herself between the soldiers representing the American and Soviet armies was “an act of establishing continuity with the People’s Liberation Struggle [the Partisan resistance]” that took place in Yugoslavia during the Second World War, recovering the “emancipating potential” of the military movement through explicitly (re)placing it into dialogue with monumentality.

Tomić’s action and its documentation performs at once a geographic historical reinsertion—the return of the Partisan narrative of the Southeastern European struggle to its place in the narrative of the victory over fascism—and a specific call to embody history in new ways. Enisa Cenaliaj took the place of a dictator (Stalin, a foreign figure whose political influence was manifest more overwhelmingly as the source of a localized ideology), in a site that possessed its own important local legacy in addition to a transnational significance in the narrative of Soviet-Albanian friendship. Milica Tomić, in contrast, acts in a historically significant site remote from the places of the Partisan struggle, but linked to them by overarching geopolitical frameworks (the emergence of Cold War configurations after the end of the Second World War, and Yugoslavia’s unique position between them). Where Cenaliaj effaced significant aspects of her body by painting it white, Tomić made her body signify a specific historical trope, the female Partisan, and placed it between the plain bronze surfaces of the male figures in Komov’s sculpture. It is also significant that Tomić’s interjection occurred in relation to a *post-socialist* monumental project that nonetheless embodied the aesthetic generally associated with socialism. (Komov was a well-known monument-builder in Soviet

Russia, and thus the monument itself establishes socialist statuary as a ‘tradition’ that continues even after the ‘end’ of its historical moment, even if it is largely ignored by scholars of postwar monuments.) By doing so, she upsets a presumed temporal relationship, in which the monument belongs to the socialist past, and the artist addresses it from the position of a postsocialist present. In Tomić’s performance, the monument belongs to a more recent past—perhaps even to the present—while the artist transforms herself into a figure that belongs to the more distant past.

Tomić’s intervention relates to the antifascist legacy of women in Yugoslavia in a way that several other artists have also explored. Sanja Iveković, for example, created a series of photos entitled *GEN XX* (1997–2001) [Figure 5.20] using photos of fashion models depicted in images resembling magazine advertisements. The artist chose the models for their resemblance to women declared as National Heroes of Yugoslav socialism for their role in the struggle against fascism. (Most were convicted of antifascist activities, and were executed or sent to prison camps.) The texts superimposed on the photographs of the models, drawn from a 1955 publication on women in the National Liberation War, told the stories of the women, including the ages at which they died.¹¹³ Iveković’s work translated the remembrance of women who sacrificed their lives for the Partisan cause into the paradigm of mass consumption recognizable to audiences of the 1990s, and in this way it commented on the difficulties of sustaining that remembrance beyond its historical moment. Both Tomić and Adela Jušić similarly address the difficulties of sustaining the memory of the Partisan struggle, and particularly

¹¹³ Nataša Ilić, *Sanja Iveković: Selected Works* (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 2008), p. 162.

of women's involvement in it.¹¹⁴ What is of most interest to me here is the way that Tomić and Jušić both stage this recovery of remembrance in relation to monuments, in ways that use the monument to help establish a new ground for politically engaged view of history. These practices are 'reparative' in Sedgwick's sense both in their attempt to remember particular forgotten histories and in their recovery of the monument as a form that is adequate to these histories, in certain ways.

In some cases, the role of specific monuments in these artistic practices might be said to be marginal; the integrity of monuments' existence is dispersed and dematerialized, sometimes in favor of the rematerialization of other objects, like the body, and sometimes in favor of the emergence of a (re)new(ed) discursive constellation. Some might argue that this displacement of the monument from a central and privileged position of meaning-making (that is, from the status of a subject to the status of an object) indicates that the postsocialist artistic practices I am describing are really 'about' something other than monuments or monumentality. However, I contend that the practices that constitute weak monumentality are more akin to a mode of investigation that—as anthropologist Kathleen Stewart puts it in her discussion of weak theory—“gropes for a haptic space in the middle of things. The objects of such a practice are

¹¹⁴ A slowly growing body of scholarship investigates the role that women played in the Partisan struggle in Yugoslavia. (Unfortunately no such comparable study exists in the Albanian context.) While the Yugoslav government's acknowledgement of the role played by women Partisans was frequently limited and used to draw attention away from prevailing conservative limitations on socialist women, it is clear that the Partisan struggle presented an opportunity for a great number of women to participate in shaping society militarily in ways not previously available to them. In turn, the socialist emphasis on the Partisans as a liberating force that gave rise to socialist society made the myth of the Partisan woman's heroism available to artists, and contemporary artists have used this myth as such, and as a tool to emphasize real stories of real women who participated in the antifascist resistance. On women's participation in the Partisan struggle and its narrative staging, see Barbara Jancar-Webster, *Women & Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945* (Denver: Arden Press, 1990); Natascha Vitorelli, “With or Without Gun. Staging Female Partisans in Socialist Yugoslavia,” in *Partisans in Yugoslavia: Literature, Film, and Visual Culture*, ed. Miranda Jakiša and Nikica Gilić (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2015), pp. 117–135; and Jelena Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans: A History of World War II Resistance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

things noted obliquely, as if out of the corner of the eye, but also, often, as punctums or punctures.”¹¹⁵ Like Adela Jušić’s partially hidden, modest monument to the Partisan women whose sacrifice remains unacknowledged, the artistic strategies I am considering are concerned with oblivion, marginality, and diffusion as characteristics endemic to monumentality.¹¹⁶

At times it is the ideological form—rather than the material referents and legible themes—of postsocialist artistic practice that is drawn from socialist monumentality. Here, I return to the example first discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation, to the Monument Group. The group was less an artistic entity than it was a political discussion group; it was only in 2005 that its members labeled the group ‘the Monument Group.’ Its initial purpose was to create debate regarding a proposal put forward by the Belgrade City Council for a monument in the Zvezdara City Park to “fallen fighters and victims of [the] 1990–1999 wars in the territory of Former Yugoslavia.”¹¹⁷ The group, led by Milica Tomić, found the proposal noteworthy because it was “the first time after the breakup of Yugoslavia that the state of Serbia ... raise[d] the issue of the common ground between politics and art.”¹¹⁸ Over the course of the next several years, the group produced a number of responses and convened numerous discussions while the Belgrade City

¹¹⁵ Stewart, “Weak Theory in an Unfinished World,” p. 71.

¹¹⁶ Of course, as Sergiusz Michalski has compellingly shown, many artists, in Western Europe and America in particular, beginning around the 1960s, began to propose and realize monuments that emphasized their own ephemeral nature or invisible character. These are the monumental works frequently described by scholarship on public art as ‘counter-monuments,’ however, precisely because their characteristics seem *inimical* to monumentality rather than *part of it*. (See Michalski, pp. 172–184.) Works such as Cenaliaj’s, Martinis’, or Jušić’s could perhaps even be described as ‘post-counter-monumental,’ insofar as they move beyond prior critiques of the monument. My assertion here is that they do so precisely by taking up stances associated with socialist monuments.

¹¹⁷ See the Monument Group’s description on their website, *Grupa Spomenik/Monument Group*, <https://grupaspomenik.wordpress.com/timeline/> (accessed February 9, 2018). Information on the group’s activity can also be found in Piotr Piotrowski, *Art and Democracy*, pp. 176–178.

¹¹⁸ See the Monument Group’s description of the genesis of the group on its website, cited in the previous note. Subsequent references to the group’s description of their activity are taken from this same source.

Council revised and reissued the calls for the monument. The City Council first removed the reference to “fallen fighters” (mentioning only victims) from the call for proposals, and then later—in 2005—changed the dedication of the monument to “the victims of the wars and defenders of the fatherland from 1990–1999.” It also changed the proposed location to the Savski Square, in the heart of the city.

The Monument Group subsequently published a pamphlet—*Politics of Memory*—containing transcripts of conversations drawn from the meetings and discussions about the monument projects. The pamphlet was exhibited as part of what the group referred to as a “distributive monument,” one that emphasized the transformation of the monument into a shared discursive, intersubjective relation. The printed pamphlets were displayed stacked in boxes in the exhibition space in a decidedly monumental monolithic form [Figure 5.21], but since visitors were encouraged to take the pamphlets, the monolith was gradually dispersed itself in both time and space. This dispersion is significant, since it marks a difference from one of the quintessential counter-monuments, Jochen and Esther Gerz’s 1986 *Harburg Column Against Racial Hatred and Injustice* [Figure 5.22], which gradually receded into the ground, eventually becoming inaccessible.¹¹⁹ The disappearance of the *Harburg Column* is generally read as a call to action: as the monument disappears, the need to *replace* it with some form of direct action against injustice, to shoulder the burden of memory, emerges.¹²⁰ There is a subtle but important difference in the case of the Monument Group’s ‘distributive monument’: here instead the monument itself transforms, animating and giving name to the connections that are established between the discussants documented in the pamphlet, the members of the

¹¹⁹ The *Harburg Column*’s lead surface, while exposed, allowed visitors to write upon its surface.

¹²⁰ See James E. Young, “The Counter-monument,” p. 276.

Belgrade City Council and other civic organizations at whom the discussions and their publication were first directed, readers at the exhibition, future readers, and so on. The monument is both re-materialized as text, and re-instantiated as a new public, a new set of participants.¹²¹

The paradigm of the counter-monument emerged out of the need for a shared mourning of the traumas of the Second World War, and the association of monuments and counter-monuments alike with victims became even more central to their sociopolitical identity. At the same time, the practice of constructing monuments to victims also produced a new view of history. As Branimir Stojanović suggests in the *Politics of Memory* pamphlet, the monument commemorating the victim becomes “a post-historic monument” in the sense that it “impl[ies] that we are outside of history, that we are [at] its end, that we have knowledge of the outcome and that the victim is fixed ... and that we know who it is.”¹²² That is, the practice of dedicating monuments to the victims of aggression—as a means of resisting totalitarian hero-worship and cults of personality—has, in its own way, obscured a certain aspect of the monument’s connection to lived history and its uncertainties. The association of the monument with victims suggests that the victims and aggressors of history are established, and thus that the work of commemoration has already been done.¹²³ Thus, the Monument Group’s ‘distributive monument’—which I want to frame as a work that can best be understood as ‘weak monumentality’—is distinct from the prevailing notion of the counter-monument

¹²¹ The group has also described the publication and display of the pamphlets as a “participatory object,” which highlights the parallels between the texts and the more unified material notion of the monument itself as a single object.

¹²² Branimir Stojanović, in Milikić, Stojanović, and Tomić, *Politics of Memory*, p. 9.

¹²³ I discuss this topic at slightly greater length in “The Persistence of Monumentality,” in *Collective Monument*, ed. Raino Isto (College Park: The Stamp Gallery, 2017), pp. 2–12.

precisely insofar as it eschews the emphasis on the memory of victims in order to instead put forward the necessity of continuing to occupy history in a politically engaged way.

As I noted in the Introduction to this dissertation, Andrew Herscher has described the Monument Group's project as one aimed "not [at] the renewal of memory but [at] the renewal of a politics of emancipation—the only politics that can produce an emancipated subject of memory."¹²⁴ This is, as I have argued, precisely the project that socialist monumentality itself so often aimed at: the (re)insertion of socialist subjects into history precisely by emphasizing the way that history is lived in the present, that it cannot ever be fully completed, and that the work of both memory and historical narrative is distributed among a collective whose labor of meaning-making at once shapes history and *is* history. Put differently, the 'distributive monument' produced by the Monument Group is similar to what I have called (following Peter Osborne) the 'distributive unity' of socialist monumentality, its resistance to dialectical resolution.¹²⁵ Here, 'weak monumentality' identifies itself with the legacy of socialist monumentality not so much by working with particular objects, but by embracing ideological stances that belonged (though of course not exclusively) to socialist monuments as historical and discursive sites and forms. In doing so, it brings to bear that ideological mode as a way to address the traumas of late socialism, and the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia as both utopian project and actually existing state.

VI. Is Weak Monumentality a Humanism?

On May 5, 2016, the artist Nada Prlja orchestrated a workshop entitled *Humanistic Communism* [Figures 5.23–5.24]. The workshop was organized in

¹²⁴ Andrew Herscher, "Towards a Political Subjectivization of Memory," p. 58.

¹²⁵ See also my discussion of the Vlora *Independence Monument* in Chapter 2 above.

association with Prlja's participation in the exhibition *Double Feature #4*—featuring Prlja's work and that of the Albanian artist Nikolin Bujari—at Tirana Art Lab (TAL), one of the few contemporary art spaces in the Albanian capital city that have been consistently active in the past decade. The exhibition featuring Prlja and Bujari's works, one of a series of shows at TAL pairing the work of Albanian contemporary artists with other artists from the region in the format of a short-term residency, coincided in part with the participation of Tirana Art Lab (and its directors, Adela Demetja and Romeo Kodra) in the transnational research project *Heroes We Love*,¹²⁶ realized through the cooperation of curators, scholars, and artists across Central and Southeastern Europe between 2015 and 2017.¹²⁷ Prlja's workshop involved, according to the press release from TAL, a “group of participant[s]” that would “show love and care toward the old socialist monuments, by hugging, caressing, kissing, cleaning and by daydreaming together of a system that might alternate [*sic*] or improve the cruelty of current or new systems to come.”¹²⁸ A group of only four people (not including the artist herself) took part in the workshop, which took place in a space located immediately behind Tirana's National Gallery of Art. This space is the current resting place of several bronze socialist-era statues—including Odhise Paskali's statue of Stalin, which Enisa Cenaliaj ‘replaced’ atop the pedestal in *Kombinat*.

The workshop was also framed as part of Prlja's project “Subversion to Red,” which—in the artist's words—sought to “encourage a return of the idea of communism,

¹²⁶ Information about Tirana Art Lab's participation in the project and the exhibitions realized during the collaboration can be found at <http://www.tiranaartlab.org> (accessed January 13, 2018).

¹²⁷ See the project's website at <https://heroeswelove.wordpress.com/about/> (accessed January 13, 2018).

¹²⁸ “Double Feature # 4 Nikolin Bujari & Nada Prlja,” *Tirana Art Lab*, <http://www.tiranaartlab.org/double-feature/double-feature-4-nikolin-bujari-nada-prlja> (accessed January 13, 2018).

by ... reviv[ing] the notion of idealism in contemporary society as an alternative form of motivation.”¹²⁹ In the associated exhibition at TAL, Prlja showed the video *Redi-ness: Gestalt* (2013), also part of “Subversion to Red,” which features artist Kai-Oi Jay Yung reciting a famous monologue from Yugoslavian director Dušan Makavejev’s 1971 film *W.R. Mysteries of the Organism*. Jay Yung directs a group of fellow performers through a series of actions, including reading parts of the monologue, at times encouraging them to imitate her, at times contradicting their apparent imitation, and at times querying them about ideas and actions.¹³⁰ The video presents an ongoing process of navigating ideology by means of both bodily movements and materializations (whether written or vocal) of texts, framed by repeated interpolations (by means of paint, cellophane, and other materials) of the color red between and around the participants. Prlja’s workshop, like the video, sought possible ways of restructuring current relationships to apparently ‘past’ ideologies (and ways to revive those ideologies) through embodied practices.

The *Humanistic Communism* workshop took place on the fifth of May, the date established during Albanian socialism as Martyrs’ Day, commemorating those fallen in the National Liberation Struggle. During the workshop, the participants interacted with the collection of bronze statues housed behind the National Gallery, a motley collection of sculptures that has grown over time in the postsocialist years to include: a three-quarter bust of Partisan heroine Liri Gero by Muntas Dhrami; a northern Albanian mountain warrior taking aim with his rifle, also by Dhrami; a sculpture entitled *Në Njërën Dorë Kazmën, Në Tjetrën Pushkën (In One Hand the Pickaxe, In the Other the Rifle)*, a title that

¹²⁹ A description of the workshop and the “Subversion to Red” series of projects can be found on the artist’s website at <https://nadaprlja.com/humanistic-communism/> (accessed January 13, 2018).

¹³⁰ The video can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srYWot7jC4o> (accessed January 13, 2018).

referenced the popular slogan of the Albanian Party of Labor), by Hektor Dule; a damaged statue of Lenin, originally created in 1954 by Kristina Koljaka, formerly housed in front of the National Gallery of Art during the socialist years; two statues of Stalin, one by a Russian sculptor that had formerly stood Skanderbeg Square, and the other Paskali's statue; and finally, a stone bust of Enver Hoxha, wrapped in a white tarp, presumably to prevent vandalism.¹³¹ The participants in Prlja's project—three young women and one young man: Aurora Kalemi, Mirjana Meçaj, Ruzmira Beqiraj Bejaj, and Lucas Vogt—can be seen in documentation of the workshop embracing the statues, caressing them, kneeling before them, imitating their stances, hiding within the sweep of their jackets (in Stalin's case), and obstructing their telegraphed movements (in the case of Dhrami's northern rifleman). These documented motions and poses present a curious counterpart to *Redi-ness: Gestalt*, where the bodily movements of the participants are manipulated by human interaction; here, by contrast, the statues seem to play the passive role. They obstruct and conceal, and they provide paradigms for bodily movement, but their dirtied and sometimes damaged surfaces appear inactive.

The statues are humanized (through embraces, as well as through physical interjections) but they are also—perhaps inevitably—even further objectified by the process, recovered from their limbo in order to serve as a stage for human actions that necessarily seem to surpass and overcome them in significance. This is clearly part of the careful line that the 'humanism' of Prlja's project wants to walk. It seeks to recover the socialist material past, and with it its ideals, and as such it presupposes that that past is distant and objectified. At the same time, it does not merely want to manipulate (or for

¹³¹ On the chronology of the removal of several of these statues and their placement behind the National Gallery, see Besnik Mustafaj, *Midis Krimeve dhe Mirazheve: Ese* (Tirana: Onufri, 1999), pp. 89–133.

that matter be manipulated by) that past, but rather to actually care for it in a way that avoids the overly paternal urge to dominate the past.

In an earlier intervention carried out in 2012 [Figure 5.25], an artistic group identifying themselves simply as ‘Ag’ had likewise attempted to return credibility to the horizon of communism as a structure of experience. The group had, during the night, painted the statues of Stalin and Lenin—at that time, Paskali’s Stalin and the bust of Hoxha were still housed in the Center for the Realization of Works of Art—behind the National Gallery in red paint. The group left behind a manifesto reading:

Why is it that today, on this February 10 at 4am, Lenin and Stalin woke up red?

- 1) Because what is old cannot be torn down
- 2) Because the past does not get lost
- 3) Because this red is new¹³²

In both Prlja’s workshop (and the “Subversion to Red” project overall) and the Ag collective’s *Red Stalin and Lenin*, the artists have taken up a reparative attitude towards the socialist past, but in a different sense than the artists discussed in the immediately preceding section. Adela Jušić and Milica Tomić use and interact with monuments as a way of recovering a particular narrative that belonged to socialism’s history in Southeastern Europe, the role of women in the Partisan struggle in Yugoslavia. At the same time, however, the transnational ideals of that struggle suggest a broader framework for the history that is enacted in their works. In Enisa Cenaliaj’s performance, the former site of the monument serves as a context for restaging the socialist emphasis on working class unity at simultaneously local and global scales. (Dalibor Martinis’ work is comparatively much more localized, as I have suggested, but it does gesture importantly

¹³² See Department of Eagles, “Interview with Ag,” *Department of Eagles* January 23, 2014, <http://departmentofeagles.org/2014/interview-with-ag/> (accessed January 14, 2018). The manifesto was given in both English and Albanian; the English text is quoted here.

at the more universal category of cultural heritage, which makes its own demands to a global scale of understanding.) The Monument Group responded to a localized proposal for a specific monument (one that took on an ever more nationally specific tone), but its reclamation of the socialist ideology of history occurred primarily at a universal level of availability. It presumed the possibility of including ever-wider circles of participants in the ‘distributive’ range of the textual monument. This last paradigm is closest in scope to what Prlja and the Ag group seem to intend: a recovery of communism as a universal humanist ideal that is capable of renewal in the context of the neoliberal present and its conditions of global economic exploitation.

This recovery is more than simply a continuation of earlier, socialist-era models of Marxist-Leninist history: the possibility of communism (or global socialism) is no longer a historical teleology, but a possibility that can, in different historical circumstances, be reintroduced and reconfigured. This is done, however, through the past, and in the cases I have discussed, through the monument as a representation of that past. As Boris Groys has noted, the historical avant-garde “wanted to abolish the aesthetic protection of the past,” in order to produce a revolutionary transformation in history.¹³³ More recent artistic practices, however, have (as discussed in Chapter 4) turned increasingly towards the investigation of history. There is nothing inherently humanist in this investigation, but it is worth concluding this section with a brief consideration of the humanistic possibilities that emerge from the practices I have posited beneath the rubric of weak monumentality. Weak monumentality sometimes manifests as a form of what we

¹³³ Boris Groys, “Art, Technology, and Humanism,” *e-flux Journal* 82 (May 2017), <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/82/127763/art-technology-and-humanism/> (accessed February 10, 2018).

might call (to adapt Groys) “the protection of art ... by art”¹³⁴—a kind of corollary to humanism that sees aesthetic objects as worthy of protection because of their inherent link to human social expression and desire. In other cases, weak monumentality is even more explicitly humanist—in Prlja’s *Humanistic Communism* the goal is to rediscover a position from which to preserve the dignity of human existence, and this is accomplished by extending a version of this same dignity to monuments as both autonomous objects¹³⁵ and products of human creativity.

The humanism of weak monumentality is closely tied to its affective commitments. I have discussed above¹³⁶ the ways that projects like David Maljković’s engagement with the Petrova Gora memorial complex are premised upon the deepening of feeling: as Maljković says, his goal is frequently “just to feel, to feel something more, to try to see the capacity of the feelings that you can bring in a certain project or work.”¹³⁷ Similarly, the Ag collective describes their intervention in terms of the rediscovery of feeling. They explain that by placing the statues behind the National Gallery, they have been transformed into fetishes, “as if they have the mystical power of bringing back unwanted feelings, [ones] that shouldn’t be felt. In this sense, by painting the statues, we’re fighting the fetishes of our parents because we want to feel these unfelt feelings.”¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Groys, “Art, Technology, and Humanism.”

¹³⁵ I am not attempting to suggest, in emphasizing the humanistic aspects of weak monumentality, that these practices discount the modes of agency unique to monuments *as objects*. Such modes of agency have become popular topics of analysis in cultural studies and the social sciences in the past decade as part of the increasing popularity of theoretical models such as Object-oriented Ontology and Actor Network Theory, both of which emphasize the roles played by nonhuman forces in fields that were formerly the purview of the human (history, society, art, and so on). Although it is beyond the scope of my current discussion, it would be productive to examine the ways that some versions of weak monumentality avoid the implicit antihumanism of many contemporary art practices focused on the nonhuman, and yet shares with those practices an abiding interest in recovering the agency of autonomous objects (in its case, monuments).

¹³⁶ See the second half of Chapter 4.

¹³⁷ David Maljković, in an interview given in association with the exhibition *Sources in the Air*.

¹³⁸ Department of Eagles, “Interview with Ag.”

These projects of adding new feelings and regaining feelings that have been lost or obscured establish weak monumentality as a kind of recovery of what Christina Kiaer calls the promise of “socialism as an alternative affective economy,”¹³⁹ as a different regime of feelings, emotions, urges, and desires. While some maintain that this promise died after the Second World War,¹⁴⁰ with the advent of various totalitarian socialist models, I argue that the practices discussed in this and the preceding chapter find the remnants of this alternative affective economy in the late socialist period as well, and adapt it for new global political conditions.

VII. Conclusion

There are many ways in which artists working after the fall of socialism in Southeastern Europe have addressed the relationship of public monuments to the political transformations that have taken place in the region since the end of the Second World War. The period from 1945 up to the present has seen two distinct waves of globalization. The first was a socialist globality premised in part upon the transnational character of the struggle against fascism, a struggle that became a narrative blueprint for subsequent conflicts with capitalism and imperialism. The second is the currently existing neoliberal version of globality, which rejects the explicitly ideological conflicts of the Cold War in favor of the total penetration of free market systems and new patterns of

¹³⁹ Christina Kiaer, “Lyrical Socialist Realism,” *October* 147 (Winter 2014), p. 77.

¹⁴⁰ Kiaer, for example, ends her analysis of Aleksandr Deineka’s affective ‘lyrical socialist realism’ on a mournful note, lamenting that the “idealistic feelings [projected by Deineka’s works] would eventually be ruthlessly instrumentalized, even trampled, and that the idea of the Soviet Union as a modern lyrical community would become harder and harder to sustain” (p. 77). I submit that this analysis, which seems to take for granted that these possibilities were never recovered in the late socialist period, comes to its dreary conclusion in part because it privileges the Soviet Union as the key exemplar of socialist culture. My purpose in this dissertation is precisely to attempt to provide counterexamples to this pessimistic assessment by broadening the geographical scope of what we might consider the exemplars of socialist culture to be, and further to suggest that postsocialist artists have similarly discovered redemptive possibilities in late socialist culture.

consumption throughout the world, in the name of both stability and economic prosperity. Working against both of these waves of globalization have been differing forms of fragmentation, re-alignment, and localized unification. These have sometimes been ideological and almost equally global in scale, such as the Non-Aligned Movement's challenge to Cold War geopolitical duality. Others have been nationalist in character, such as the conflicts in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, or Albania's increasing isolation after the 1960s. Still others have been radically local, focused on producing collectivity in particular cities or neighborhoods. Socialist-era public monuments have often played roles in these navigations between different versions of the local or regional and the transnational, and contemporary artists have sought in different ways to supplement the agency of monuments and socialist monumentality as a broader category.

In this chapter, I have shown how many works created in the postsocialist years that involve or relate to socialist monumentality take up a kind of reparative stance towards that history. Instead of critically deconstructing monuments as ideologically complicit remnants of a totalitarian past, artists such as Adela Jušić, Enisa Cenaliaj, Dalibor Martinis, Milica Tomić, the Monument Group, Nada Prlja, and the Ag collective have staged performative interventions that (to use Eve Sedgwick's language) seek to 'confer plenitude' upon the monumental past. Their strategies for doing so are varied, too varied to be subsumed under a single formal rhetoric, but I argue that they are united by a conceptual framework that we can term 'weak monumentality.' I have chosen this term for its resonance with the emerging traditions of 'weak thought' and 'weak theory,' both of which seek alternatives to the austere critical modes that to a large extent dominate studies of culture. As I suggested in the Introduction, this mode of analysis has

applications for art history that are much broader than the study of monuments and works that engage with them. It may serve us well as a way both to escape from an overly suspicious view of socialist culture, and to open ourselves to the significance of alternate narratives in the era of an increasingly global art history. It is particularly salient in the case of monuments, however, since they are precisely the kinds of objects that—despite our acknowledgement of the complex forces that shape the commission, realization, and installation of public artworks—we continue to regard primarily as legible reflections of hegemonic ideologies. The works discussed in this and the previous chapter are noteworthy in their attempts to build upon the complexity of monuments as a form of heritage, and in doing so to recover their temporal and affective nuances as the ground for a new history of the present.

Conclusion

Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a weak Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim. That claim cannot be settled cheaply. —Walter Benjamin¹

I dream of a Europe without monuments. By that I mean: without monuments of death and disaster. Perhaps philosophical constructions: monuments to love, to joy, to jokes and laughter... or else symbolic constructions... and everything that expresses the desire for a civilization without monuments. —Bogdan Bogdanović²

How might we characterize the *weakness* of the Messianic power with which Benjamin claimed his generation (and presumably ours as well) to have been endowed? We could take, as a starting point, a 2010 essay by Boris Groys, entitled “The Weak Universalism.”³ In this essay, Groys characterizes avant-garde art in the 20th century in terms of its weak Messianism, its grappling with an apocalyptic end to time. According to Groys, the avant-garde (in both its ‘historical’ and ‘neo’ manifestations) comported itself towards an inevitable (and ever-heightening) lack of time endemic to modernity.⁴ It did so by attempting produce what Groys (following Giorgio Agamben) calls “weak signs”: signs that had already been “emptied” of meaning by the coming end of time, and that would thus have some hope of surviving the unceasing changes of modern society’s semiotic structures. The repetition of this gesture by the artists of the 1960s and 70s neo-avant-gardes, Groys argues, was fused with the simultaneous expansion of the role of the artist, the increasing credibility of the notion that anyone could be and in fact is an artist. In this situation, avant-garde artists took up the role of weakening the ‘strong’ signs produced by mass culture, signs that pervade the experience of citizens as artists and

¹ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, p. 254. Emphasis in original.

² Bogdan Bogdanović and Alexandre Mirlesse, “Interview with Bogdan Bogdanović,” p. 6. Ellipses in original.

³ Boris Groys, “The Weak Universalism,” *e-flux Journal* 15 (April, 2010), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/15/61294/the-weak-universalism/> (accessed September 17, 2018).

⁴ That is, in the constant flux of modernity, everything is always about to come to an end, and therefore all time becomes apocalyptic. See Groys, “The Weak Universalism.”

spectators alike.

As compelling as Groy's characterization is, its attribution of Messianic weakness (semiotic or otherwise) to the avant-garde seems historically problematic. Groys avoids denoting a specific geographic branch of the avant-garde, and he draws his examples in the essay from Russia, Western Europe, and America.⁵ In doing so, he misses the specifically critical and deconstructive function of certain of the neo-avant-gardes (and what Miško Šuvaković calls the 'post-avant-garde'), in the former Eastern Europe and elsewhere.⁶ Their criticism was often aimed simultaneously at prior and coincident iterations of aesthetic modernism, at previous idealistic avant-gardes, and at the mass culture industry (in either its socialist or its capitalist iterations). The gestures and actions of these avant-gardes might have been 'weak' in the sense of their distribution, their ephemerality, or their democratization of the position of the artist in society.⁷ However, they were also 'strong' in the sense that Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick takes up from Sylvan Tomkins' writings: they were anticipatory insofar as they sought to predict the negative consequences of the future and thereby avoid the negative affects that would derive from failing to predict that future. (This is what Groys describes as the avant-garde's apocalyptic outlook: it 'weakened' certain aspects of itself precisely in order to avoid falling prey to the inevitable end of time that it predicted.) So, the critical neo-avant-garde was also a fortification: it was weak in some senses, and strong in others.

Thus, the "weak Messianic power" that Benjamin identifies might be found *not* in the neo-avant-garde's critical emptying-out of the signs of mass culture, but rather somewhere else: in the postwar (avant-garde or otherwise) adaptation of certain traditions

⁵ He focuses primarily on Kazimir Malevich, Joseph Beuys, and Andy Warhol.

⁶ See Šuvaković, "Remembering the Art of Communism," pp. 22–23.

⁷ In other words, the assertion that anyone could be and in fact was an artist.

that are paradoxically associated with ‘strong’ ideological formulations, such as monuments.⁸ This is, I think, precisely the process that architect Bogdan Bogdanović suggests, a process by which the monument is not so much subverted and emptied out, as recovered in its fullest possibility for transformation. Bogdanović is calling for the transformation of history as much as the transformation of monuments. Implicit in his hope for a Europe without monuments is a Europe without the need for a certain kind of monument, but not the dissolution of the monumental form itself. Rather, Bogdanović sees the need for the monument to change, to express new desires. These desires are different from the form of the counter-monument, which seeks not so much the transformation of the monument for a new era, but its negation or inversion as an object promoting obsolete structures of meaning and memory.

In the context of former Eastern Europe, there is a particular urgency to understanding the relationship between monuments and the legacy of the avant-garde during and after socialism, precisely because of the foundational emergence of Soviet “monumental propaganda” that was so closely tied to the ideologies of the historical avant-garde.⁹ Monumental sculptures, however, are often marginalized in art historical examinations of the postwar period. This has resulted in frequently superficial treatments of the complexities and multivalent meanings of monumental sculpture. In the Eastern Bloc, where monuments formed part of a radical restructuring of society, these superficial treatments give an incomplete and often inaccurate picture of how and why monuments

⁸ There are of course other places to look for these kinds of transformations, such as the way that historically marginalized groups have taken up aspects of dominant or ‘popular’ culture in order to forge new possible identities for themselves. Monuments—precisely because they are so often considered to represent strength—present one particularly fruitful field in which we might discover alternate forms of productive ‘weakness’ in postwar culture.

⁹ See, for example, Christina Lodder, “Lenin’s Plan for Monumental Propaganda,” and more recently, Leah Dickerman, “Monumental Propaganda,” *October* 165 (Summer 2018): pp. 178–191.

were actually created in postwar socialist societies. Just as problematically, monuments have been marginalized in examinations of contemporary art that respond to the socialist period. Contemporary art may be discussed in terms of the legacies of modernism and the avant-garde, but those legacies generally contain monumental sculptures only as fleeting and minor reference points.

As I have shown in this dissertation, in the case of Southeastern Europe, this marginalization of monuments is particularly problematic because it ignores the decisive role played by the monumental commemoration of the Second World War—and especially the Partisan antifascist resistance—in shaping the temporal and geographic understanding of socialism as a ‘revolutionary’ time. One of the key factors uniting Albania with the former Yugoslavia—the nations examined here—is the widespread public commemoration of the Partisan antifascist struggle. This commemoration took place especially during the period of ‘late socialism’ (roughly the late 1950s through the early 1980s), the period in which many socialist nations broke their ties with the Soviet Union and forged new global alliances that served to shape the definitions of socialism as a worldwide political structure as much as a concretely specific national one.

Despite the radical differences between Albania’s Stalinist governmental model and Yugoslavia’s experiment with self-management socialism and decentralized decision-making, both countries undertook concentrated efforts during the late socialist period to publicly remember the efforts of the Partisan forces. These efforts involved the commission of numerous public monuments—both individual sculptures and larger architectural complexes—in rural as well as urban settings.¹⁰ The commemoration of the Partisan resistance was part of the establishment of the legitimacy of the postwar socialist

¹⁰ See Chapter 1 above.

governments, since both Enver Hoxha (Albania's dictator) and Tito (Yugoslavia's) had played leading roles in the Partisan struggle. The local character of the Partisan resistance created a postwar narrative that was distinct from many other nations in the socialist bloc, who focused a great deal of postwar commemorative effort on monumentalizing the role of the Red Army in 'liberating' various territories from the fascists. In Yugoslavia and Albania, by contrast, most of the effort was focused on commemorating local forces, and indeed on doing so across a variety of landscapes: many monuments were set up in remote locations, and became important sites of pilgrimage in the landscape, far from urban centers.

The commemoration of locals who had died in the antifascist struggle also bled over into the commemoration of others who were killed in the first decades of the postwar 'building of socialism.' This was particularly true in Albania, where monuments were constructed—for instance—to workers who died in the process of building railroads for the country, and to women who took part in campaigns for women's emancipation and were subsequently killed by conservative reactionaries. The Partisan resistance was established as a corollary to the subsequent social revolution that supposedly characterized the establishment of socialism. This strategy also sought further back in history, establishing parallels with earlier historical moments, even as it continued to promote the model of 'revolutionary time'—of Messianic temporality in the sense Benjamin described, a 'different' time full of radical possibilities to transcend linear development.

The monuments produced to memorialize these various sacrifices adhered to the socialist ideology of art: that it should immediately reflect the historical conditions of its

production. In Albania, this meant a stringent adherence to the doctrine of Socialist Realism, a figurative mode of representation. In Yugoslavia, which sought to distinguish itself from the style of the Soviet Union's artistic production, it meant the proliferation of aesthetic modernist styles and their popularization (in the sense of bringing them closer to the people, and engendering both historical consciousness and artistic taste in the public) through monumental commissions. The supposed vigorous character of art—its immediate responsiveness to surrounding events and socialist structures—was always paradoxical in the case of monuments, which are traditionally associated with timelessness and eternity. This paradoxicality was increased by the temporal divisions produced in relation to the Partisan resistance, the social revolution that followed, and the era of 'actually existing socialism' that came afterwards. In other words, monuments were commemorating a past (and lives lost), while also celebrating something that was still very present. There was always a danger that commemorating a struggle as 'past' would overshadow the ongoing struggle to build and maintain socialist society in the context of Cold War ideological conflicts.¹¹

The association of monumentality not only with the Partisan antifascist struggle but also with those who died for the causes of emancipatory politics (the rights of women, the liberation of peasants from feudal systems, etc.) means that in the postsocialist period, artists can continue to engage with socialist monumentality as something other than simply a reflection of totalitarian state-building. Some works were even created with the labor of local populations, making them remnants not only of state power but also of local efforts to produce history. The stories of the personages

¹¹ This was particularly true in Albania, which adopted the Maoist notion of continual social conflict, but then later abandoned some of its aspects in order to be able to declare socialism's definitive progress in transforming society.

commemorated in monuments are often stories that circulate at local levels as well as national ones, and publics do not necessarily see them as authoritarian symbols. Post-socialist governments, on the other hand, have frequently targeted socialist-era public art as a remnant of a past that should be transcended, and postsocialist urban development projects often include the destruction or alteration of the socialist-era built environment. Thus, contemporary artists have turned to socialist monumentality not only in order to critique the mistakes of the past, but also to salvage a heritage for the present. They have sought not only to deconstruct monumentality as a concept, but also to expand and extend its meanings in the present. Sometimes that has meant re-establishing certain aspects of the conditions that created monuments; at other times it has meant facilitating fresh engagements with the legacies of socialist public commemoration.

These efforts form part of a broader tapestry of strategies undertaken by contemporary artists hoping to engage with the historical changes of the 20th century, and specifically with the history of socialism as a global phenomenon. However, the contemporary artworks considered in this dissertation also constitute a change in the very notion of monumentality's role in relation not only to socialism and neoliberal capitalism, but also to the politicized legacy of the avant-garde. What I have here termed 'weak monumentality' represents only one among many strategies that artists have used and continue to invent in order to engage with public monuments and their particular, unique contexts. This dissertation has shown, however, that the strategies of weak monumentality take up certain elements of socialist monumentality as both form and content; they aim to preserve the radical temporal and spatial ruptures that socialist monuments sometimes sought to produce. In doing so, they seek alternatives to the ways

that neoliberal capitalism has—in the wake of 1989—solidified its structures and presented itself as the only feasible model of political and economic existence.¹² These alternatives promise not so much Bogdanović’s dream of a world without monuments, as much as a world in which the monument can be made anew without releasing its claim on us, a claim that it makes in the name of history.

¹² On the apparent inevitability of capitalism, see Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Washington: Zero Books, 2009).

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