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Report on the role of arts and culture in conflict instigation and resolution

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Widok. Foundation for Visual Culture

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Executive summary

The second deliverable in the course of the research (January – June 2019) within WP4 (Troubled Pasts in Arts and Culture) is the "Report on the role of arts and culture in conflict instigation and resolution." The aim at this stage was to explore public reactions (including critics', professionals' and public debates) toward selected artworks, artistic events and cultural projects. More specifically, the analysis concentrated on understanding whether art and culture create moments of rupture of the social consensus, whereby societies revise and transform their attitudes towards difficult aspects of their collective identity and address the repressions of unwelcome contents and emotions (such as guilt, shame, repulsion). To address this aim, the first step was to identify the potentially beneficiary effects of artistic and cultural artifacts for a constructive debate about troubled pasts. The main focus was to look at public responses (including professionals, critics, art and cultural workers) to the selected artistic works and events by gathering and analyzing published reviews, and any other forms of recorded reception (including conducting their own interviews with participants of these events (curators, artists, members of the audience). The previous deliverable in WP4 (D4.1, "A database of collected data of artistic and cultural artefacts related to troubled pasts in the eight case studies") included the collection of the most pronounced, discussed, controversial, i.e. pivotal cases of artistic events and artefacts from each country, provided the basis at this stage of our research. The analysis followed a diversified (in terms of media, genre, strategy and initially recorded response) set of cases for each country which provided a detailed and multidimensional (public, critics, academics) account of the works' reception. The cases were grouped in clusters, which became a point of departure for comparative, cross-country analysis.

1. Introduction

Past conflicts and troubled pasts return as echoes, spectres and signs activated by the current conflicts, armed clashes, traumas, or what is often called "the spectacle of war", channelled to global audience through multiple media, in countless visual and verbal genres, modes and forms. As much as local conflict might be a matter of the past, globally the conflict remains a present concern and an urgent political, social and cultural issue. Thus, the relationship between the two remains an important point of reference, even if not the core of our research scope. Another such global point of reference is migration. According to recent research over 60 million people were forced to displacement at the end of 2017[1]. It is the first time since World War II that the scale of the tragedy has reached such levels. Despite so many peacekeeping efforts, both on the part of political agents as well as cultural and artistic organizations and individuals, the reminders of conflict's persistence – conflict as a form of human presence in the world and human relationality – and human tragedy seem abundant. In 2018, when the RePAST project begun, one witnessed in Europe numerous commemorations related to the centenary of the World War I. At the same time, current conflicts in regions such as Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan, Israel and Palestine, animosities in Northern Ireland, the Balkans, conflict verging at war between Russia and Ukraine are filling the news, and their images became the daily bread of the global public. When thinking about conflict in a comparative perspective, one needs to be aware that employing the term "conflict" is both useful, as it points to a certain global tendency and continuity, and problematic at the same time, as it equals and levels phenomena and events which should definitely be differentiated.

Visual and performative arts have regularly responded to both ongoing conflicts as well as to past ones, be they forgotten, repressed or resurfacing. As will be evidenced below, they also present a quite unique ability to spark conflicts and offer space for emotional and intellectual response, reliving, working through, etc. And yet while studying artistic and cultural practices relating to the past / present conflicts, we should also be aware that there are artists and cultural workers living and working in actual zones of conflict (or those for whom the memory of conflict is still very vivid – some of which are included and analysed in our project, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Cyprus and Ireland). Most often, these artists respond on site and in real time. Some of them become or collaborate with activists – a tendency which is observed globally by art critics: on the one hand artists turn to activism and use their skills and creative energy to fight for a cause, while on the other, numerous activists around the world use and employ artistic strategies, media and forms of communication. The German artist who has lived and worked in England (and as such was out of the scope of our research in WP4), Wolfgang Tillmans, has for years now been involved in photographic campaigning. Two of his most recent undertakings (realised in collaboration with other artists and activists) include a campaign against Brexit *No Man is an Island, no Country by Itself* (http://tillmans.co.uk/campaign-eu), and *Vote together* (https://votetogether.eu/en/about/), encouraging voters to participate in and spread awareness of the European elections in the spring of 2019. The tools have not so much been appropriated as they have been shared and exchanged,

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[1] See https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2018/6/5b222c494/forced-displacement-record-685-million.html

and so has been the so-called "know-how." It has thus become more and more problematic (and questionable: is it really necessary?) to draw sharp lines of distinction between painting on the one hand and graffiti on the other, a comic book and a video work, public space and a professional art gallery space, street and museum, the internet etc. In our research our premise has been that we concentrate more on "artistic interventions" or events rather than on artistic objects or canonical works.

In the context of art-related practices and conflict the recurring and pressing question has been the following: what can art really do? What does its agency consist of? What can artists do, whom do they speak to (whose needs, anxieties and traumas)? Many have voiced doubts, and many will. Often quoted critic and writer, Jean Fisher, in his article provocatively titled *Towards a Metaphysics of Shit* (published on the occasion of Documenta 11 [Kassel, Germany], curated in 2002 by Okwi Enwezor) phrased this doubt as follows: "Can art function as an effective mediator of change or resistance to hegemonic power, or is it doomed to be a decorative and irrelevant footnote to forces more powerful than its capacity to confront?" On the one hand, artists need to be granted freedom beyond instrumentalization, the logic of art market or propaganda. As much as we would want art to have direct and meaningful impact on individual, social and political life, we need to bear in mind that art should not and never be evaluated first and foremost by its political or social aims or efficiency. Thus, in the RePAST research the focus has been on negotiating between the two: artistic and social relevance. It may be difficult to grasp and accept, but the unexpectedness, ambiguity, the ability to introduce shocking analogies and apparent abusiveness confirms art's value rather than its didacticism, straightforwardness, or ideological program. It may also seem challenging for institutions and authorities to grant art the freedom to question the status quo and to introduce dissonance or even dissensus in society. However, good art should always remain sceptical of any settled or imposed structure or hierarchy, privilege, dominance.

The previous deliverable D4.1 ("Database of collected data of artistic and cultural artefacts related to troubled pasts in the eight case studies") included the collection of the most pronounced, discussed, controversial, i.e. pivotal cases of artistic events and artefacts from each country, provided a basis at this stage of our research. The choice of cases representative for each country (from the period 1993 onwards[2]) was made during the course of a four-month research including the experience of each researcher as active participant in culture, archival research, professional and general press research, consultations with professionals in the field (art critics, curators, scholars, cultural journalists, artists, etc.). The items gathered in the database, as stated in D4.1, were already a selection made by the WP leader of the material assembled by the researchers in eight countries. The rationale behind the selection was based first and foremost on the careful study of the assembled material in the light of the objectives set for this Work Package. It was crucial to concentrate on the cases which would offer the most complex, multidimensional, artistically challenging, socially relevant insights, and would have comparative potential. Thus, the choice was not determined by statistics (how big was the audience) nor was it motivated by the

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[2] With a few exceptions which were found necessary as points of references, milestones or markers of new memorial or artistic traditions.

scale of the controversy, nor by popularity of the author/artist, nor by the critics' praise, but rather by the need to provide as unique, rich and heterogeneous a collection as possible, so that the further individual as well as comparative (be it in country-based, genre-based, medium-based, issue-based etc. context) analysis can be pursued accordingly.

The database included very heterogeneous examples of artistic practices and interventions (performance, video, painting, sculptures well as works of literature, theatre, monumental and counter-monumental interventions in public space, productions of popular culture and street art, etc.). Having studied all of them carefully, the WP leader decided to narrow the selection for further steps of the research, so that the researchers can concentrate on 7-10 cases and provide documented reception, which then serves to determine the role of arts and culture in conflict instigation and resolution and will be used for a comparative interpretation of the cases (D4.2), as well as for a broader discussion on the visual culture's agency in social change (D4.3).

This does not mean of course that the other cases in the database have been rejected or considered irrelevant. They can still be used at later stages, provide context for the deliverables and outputs in this WP (as well as for multiple planned and not yet planned conference presentations, articles, study material, teaching material, etc.). However, in the light of the objective to grasp and describe the role of arts and culture in conflict instigation and resolution the cases selected were recognized as the ones which would provide the most conspicuous, diverse and inventive source material for the survey of the different roles and the study of when and how are artistic and cultural practices succeeding in moving, triggering, disorienting the public and, last but not least, in providing members of the public with critical tools that can serve not only to better understand the structure of collective memory but to consciously shape it.

The methodological approach for selection consisted in:

- conducting comparative analysis of the reception gathered during Task 4.1 based on the description of the cases' production and reception

- looking for analogies and possible dialogues in the cross-country analysis

- contacting curators, critics, artists themselves, researchers who have already worked on similar issues for further consultation and guidance

- concentrating on the potential for providing a unique and hitherto unknown approach to local cultures and their abilities to both address past conflicts and respond to current conflicts/debates.

In some of the countries, at this stage, we have added cases which had not been previously included in the database (though they still fall within the scope of our research) since in the course of looking at the archives of reception (art journal, cultural columns, critical academic analysis of the arts) the particular cases emerged as very useful, at times indispensable, for comparative analysis as well as for more diverse representation of the cultural memory of the countries under study. In concentrating on the reception of these cases the researchers paid attention to how their addressing the troubled pasts, or responding to collective memory crisis or specific historical-

political decisions concerning the shape of collective memory, translated into public reactions and how these reactions can be specified, according to who reacts and in what way, what kind of public distress is being caused, how is the public debate shaped, what is the "scandal" or controversy about, what is found unacceptable or offensive and how was it countered.

The selection is a-chronological since the focus here, as has already been stated, is not to trace particular developments in local cultures of memory, but rather concentrates on their "pain points"[3] (E. van Alphen), moments of exquisite intensity and rupture on the one hand, and on the other, artistic and cultural practices which either cause these moments or respond to them.

Each case has a separate index card which at this stage, besides registering basic information (such as title, author, date and place), as well as a descriptive part and a part where a brief commentary on the function of the artefact is at place, includes further criteria added by the WP leader, which will be discussed in detail below.

As previously, during the course of this stage of our research we have concentrated on the issues of gender and minorities. We specifically paid attention to how gendered aspects influenced the reception of artistic works, how reception was shaped by the gender of the public, what elements concerning gendered cultural memory were found specifically troubling and why. We recorded how female roles and perspectives on historical accounts, which have so far been obscured or marginalized, come to prominence and what is the public reaction towards them.

2. Selection of cases per country

Bosnia

- Presentation of Gavrilo Princip's monument in Lukovica ('Serbian part' of Sarajevo – Istočno Sarajevo) and Emir Kusturica's performance entitled *The Rebelled Angels in Višegrad*
- The Sarajevo Red Line Memorial (Haris Pašović)
- Jasmila Žbanić's *Grbavica* and the director's speech at the Berlin Film Festival
- Šejla Kamerić
- Aida Šehović
- Mladen Miljanović
- Radenko Milak
- Sarajevo War Theatre / Haris Pašović (including Susan Sontag's staging of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in Sarajevo while the city was under the siege)

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[3] See: E. van Alphen, *Art in Mind: How Contemporary Images Shape Thought*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2005.

Cyprus

- *Iconoclastic Controversies: A Visual Sociology of Statues and Commemoration Sites in the Southern Part of Cyprus*
- Mothers of missing persons (intervention and monument unveiling)
- Arianna Economou
- Socratis Socratous at the Venice Biennial
- Andromachi Dimitriadou Lindahl
- Lia Haraki
- Christodoulos Panayiotou

Germany

- Zentrum für politische Schönheit (Center for Political Beauty)
- documenta X, curated by Catherine David (first woman ever)
- *Von Mäusen und Menschen*, Berlin Biennial curated by Maurizio Cattelan, Massimiliano Gioni, Ali Subotnick
- Gerhard Richter's paintings in Reichstag and in Bundestag (reference: *Atlas*)
- Esther Shalev-Gerz and Jochen Gerz, *The Monument against Fascism* – Hamburg-Harburg, and the idea of counter-monument
- Sasha Waltz at the Jewish Museum Berlin, *Dialoge II/99* and her participation in the Freiheits- und Einheitsdenkmal [Monument to Freedom and Unity], Berlin (forthcoming)
- Margarete von Trotta's *Rosenstrasse*

Greece:

- Fotos Lambrinos (mostly his *Panorama mias eptaetias: Hounta einai. Tha perasei?*)
- *Exercises of Freedom*, documenta 14 in Athens (curated by Adam Szymczyk)
- *Divided Memories 1940-1950. The distance between history and experience*
- Alinda Dimitrious' *The Girls of the Rain*
- Syllas Tzoumerkas Hòra proèlefsis (Homeland)
- Angela Melitopoulos, *Passing Drama*
- Monument to Thessaloniki's Jewish Cemetery

Ireland

- Bogside Artists Murals in Derry
- Marie Barnett's *Border Letters*
- Leila Doolen, *Bernadette Notes on a Political Journey*
- Amanda Dunsmore, *Keeper*
- Victor Sloan's *Explosion* series

- Michael Farrell, *Bloody Sunday* (and other works)
- *Remains* and the works of Willie Doherty
- André Stitt, *Conviction*
- *Art of the Troubles Exhibition*, Ulster Museum Belfast

Kosovo

- Restoration of Monument to Brotherhood & Unity
- Heroinat
- Mendoj Per Ty (Thinking of You)
- Lala Meredith Vula
- Petrit Halilaj
- *Shok*

Spain

- Miquel Risques. *Franco, Victoria, República, Impunidad y espacio urbano*
- Fernando Sánchez Castillo, *Síndrome de Guernica [Guernica Syndrome]*
- Santiago Sierra, Jorge Galindo *Los encargados* [The managers]
- Eugenio Merino, *Always Franco*
- Francesc Torres, *Oscura es la habitación donde dormimos* [Dark is the room where we sleep]
- Almudena Carracedo, Robert Bahar, *El silencio de otros*
- Femen, *Legal Fascism, National Shame*
- Núria Güell (with Levi Orta), *Ideologías Oscilatorias* (Oscillatory Ideologies)

Poland

- *Where is Thy Brother Abel*, curator Anda Rottenberg, Zachęta National Art Gallery
- Public Movement, *Spring in Warsaw. A Walk through the Ghetto*
- Joanna Rajkowska: *Greetings from Jerusalem Avenue* and *Oxygenator*
- Zbigniew Libera, *LEGO. Concentration Camp*
- Artur Żmijewski, *Berek* and his other works / activities
- *Maus* in Poland / works of Wilhelm Sasnal
- Yael Bartana, *And Europe Will Be Stunned*
- Anna Baumgart, *Fresh Cherries*
- Władysław Pasikowski *Psy (Pigs) /Pokłosie (Aftermath)*
- Piotr Uklański, *The Nazis*

3. Concise description of subsequent steps

Following the identification and analysis of the most pronounced or paradigmatic works of art, exhibitions, performances and other artistic events reacting to a crisis related to the troubled past in each analysed country (Task 4.1, M4-M8), at this stage of research our objective was the following:

• *To explore audience reactions (including critics and public debates) toward selected artworks aiming to disentangle their potentially beneficiary effects for a constructive debate about troubled pasts (Task 4.2).*

The above in turn served to understand:

• how artistic and cultural artefacts react to a crisis related to troubled past in the selected case studies (what are the possibilities, condition of possibilities for resolution or working towards resolution)

• how artistic and cultural artefacts instigate crisis in the present in relation to troubled pasts (how does this crisis resurface, who is involved, what are its productive /negative aspects / outcomes).

That said, the following questions were set:

- What were these artistic / cultural events (genre, medium, form)?
- Who was the author (artist, curator, performer, etc.)?
- Where did they take place; in which context?
- Who participated – what type of audience?
- In what way did they relate to the past – what was the form of address?
- What reactions were they met with (emotional, intellectual, other)?

At this stage of research, we begun providing answers for the following research questions posed at the outset of the project:

- How does memory function in and through artistic and cultural productions?
- What mnemonic and commemorative practices are being performed by the arts e.g. what is past (gone), what is present (pressing), and where does the past not let go?
- How does conflict emerge, is re-enacted, worked through and commented upon by means of visual and performing arts?
- What is art's and artists' role in the public sphere?

In order to describe in the most adequate manner the role of arts and culture in conflict instigation and resolution the researchers looked at reviews and responses (both press and academic), analysis published in press, online, on critics' blogs, etc. as well as academic interpretation (where applicable); in other words the researchers gathered the documentation of the reception of particular artefacts – thus forming a kind of archive which will be shared and used for further steps within the scope of the project and afterwards. The WP leader provided the researchers with the

research guidelines, described in detail, as well as offered a common protocol for approaching the studies' materials. The researchers sought to find answers to the following questions:

- What was the critics' response to the artefact: what arguments were used (both in favour and against the work);
- How was the artist's (author's) strategy described;
- Who are the authors / artists / curators / directors etc.; what is their background; what are they famous / infamous for;
- What (if any, if mentioned) artistic tradition it referred to, or could be interpreted as a part of;
- How is it described: i.e. as innovative, progressive, experimental, iconoclastic, offensive, stupid;
- What feelings (if any) were evoked (disgust, shock, relief, sadness… etc.);
- Was there any intense public reaction, i.e. protests, complains to authorities, or artists themselves;
- Was there a conflict over this particular artefact? (i.e. the work was removed, banned, film was not distributed, screened, etc.); who was against and in favour and why;
- What kinds of social / political traumas were evoked in the discussion;
- (if applicable) in academic discussion how was this particular work interpreted (short description of the argument).

For some of the researchers (and this has been decided individually for each case), when it turned out that the recorded reception was not providing answers for the research questions, or the answers provided were scarce and not satisfactory, and it was suspected that more useful data could be found in personal accounts / testimonies, they were advised to directly contact people involved in cases under research (curators, critics, artists) and in personal exchange address the above questions (this was done via email or life interview with the person). This protocol was applied for some of the cases in Cyprus, Kosovo, Poland and Bosnia. Thus, obtained data was used by the researchers to provide detailed descriptions filled in the index cards.

The analysis (discourse analysis) concentrates on the language and arguments used – both by art professionals, critics, but also politicians, journalists, ordinary members of the gender public – to discuss art (both praise and discredit it) and the discourse around what has been expected of the arts: why art fails (if it does), why art succeeds in moving the public, in bothering it, disorienting it (affect and trauma theory), and, last but not least, provides the audience with aesthetics and/or critical (discursive) tools that can serve not only to better understand the structure of collective memory but to consciously shape it (critical theory, visual culture studies). For the above analysis the researchers employed a multidisciplinary toolbox which can be expanded in relation to specific cases (following Mieke Bal's idea of the "theoretical object"[4], i.e. art-object which produces theory

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[4] Mieke Bal, "Narrative inside out: Louise Bourgeois' Spider as Theoretical Object*,*" *Oxford Art Journal,* Vol. 22, No. 2, Louise Bourgeois (1999), pp. 103-126.

rather has already existing theory applied to it; such object also necessitates reflection on theory itself and thus is a form of critique). In the light of this concept the analysis presented moves from a studied object towards structural or theoretical statements rather than merely looking for illustrations or confirmations of the previously adopted frameworks.

The conviction behind this framework of research is that it is only by looking closely and each time accommodating one's look to the objects of interest (thus responding to and acknowledging their situatedness, site- and context-specificity) one is able to arrive at a truly comparative and interdisciplinary approach, respectful of any differences and dissonances among the many various cases, and yet attentive to analogies and correspondences which at the end will bring one to unique and novel conclusions, while not offering closure but rather opening this space up for further research and analysis.

4. Thematic clusters

Following the many detailed discussions of the Database (D4.1) it was decided that rather than concentrating on one possible way of approaching the collected data in order to describe and analyse the role of art and culture in conflict instigation and resolution, a multidirectional approach is going to be adopted which will allow for following both the country-specific trajectories as well as concentrate on and address specific constellations or clusters of problems, strategies, scopes, issues, media, forms of address. In studying the many different types of artistic practices at work and different kinds of responses to the past conflict, several clusters of themes / problems / issues / genres connecting artistic practices and art-related objects have been introduced. The idea was not to group the cases in fixed sets but rather provide pathways through the material which in turn will allow for intersexuality and cross analysing. Thus, the same object can belong to a number of clusters and resonate with more than one set of themes (as will be evidenced later in the report).

In designing the clusters, the following were taken into account:

- How individual and/or collective traumas were addressed in each case;
- Relationship between personal and public memories;
- Attitude towards existing commemorations and "blank pages" i.e. events/people/sites which were not properly commemorated, but rather forgotten or repressed;
- Gender aspect in a broad perspective: who is the subject of the experience, what is the object of the experience, what form is the transmission taking, who is the addressee;
- What is the medium of the experience of a conflict: role of narrative / performative modes of communication;
- What emotions are at stake while addressing and transmitting a conflict;
- What is the intended relationship with the audience.

With the above in mind, the following clusters and sub-categories have been arrived at:

1. **Site-responsive art**

- Monuments;
- Counter-monuments;
- Quasi-monumental gestures;
- Iconoclastic gestures towards monuments in public space;
- Restorative gestures;
- Who claims the right to public space, by what means with what intention;
- Public space as a scene for staging of and negotiating conflicting memories;

2. Female memory of the conflict

- Addressing specifically female experience during conflict (rape, motherhood, female social and familial roles, exclusion and oppression);
- Commemorating female historical protagonists;
- Stressing the gendered aspects of collective memory;
- Feminine forms of memory / commemoration / resistance;
- Gender roles in remembrance of a conflict;

3. Biographies in the aftermath of conflict

- Artists whose oeuvre is devoted to the record of conflict;
- Personal meeting with the public;
- Entangled biographies and the history of the collective – on being an outcast;
- Artist vs. state and the politics of memory – conscious forms of resistance against exclusions and regimes of state memory;

4. *Body and conflict* (used as a TAG not a separate group of works)

- Non-verbal forms of artistic communication;
- Body as a site of experience of historical conflict;
- Body as a site of transmission of affects and traumas which do not find their proper representation in traditional genres of storytelling;
- Body as a means of communication beyond ideological division, conflicting interests, etc.;
- Body as the first and immediate site of an event's inscription and its preservation;

5. Exhibitions and artistic events as sites for and of conflict

- Curating which responds both to past and present frameworks of conflicts;

- Exhibition space as a public space where particular standpoints can be presented, negotiated, or countered;
- Exhibition as a form of research sharing;
- Exhibition as a way of acknowledging artistic as well as social phenomena
- Exhibition which "leaves" the gallery / museum space and includes the public as an audience and addresses an audience as the public.

6. **Moving images / moved audiences**

- Documentaries revealing hidden dimension of the past conflict;
- Micro-histories of life in / after conflict;
- International recognition of local and hidden stories;
- Popular medium facing huge social and historical trauma.

5. Comparative analysis

Site-responsive art

Artistic practices and intervention in public space offer alternative sites for commemorating lives of fellow citizens lost during conflict, sites for individual and collective mourning and solace in the aftermath of traumatic events. The trigger for their emergence might be absence of proper state commemoration or the sense of their inadequacy or insufficiency. Such is the case with _Sarajevo Red Line Memorial_ (2012, Haris Pašović, Bosnia) – an installation consisting of 11,541 red chairs lined up on Tito Street in Sarajevo to commemorate the victims of Sarajevo Siege. This counter-monument[5] was placed on the 20th anniversary of the Siege, offering to the public an opportunity to see, feel (spatial impression) and relate to the monstrosities of the loss of lives during the war. The installation was accompanied by a concert. It was a very powerful intervention into the public space, an opening up of a huge wound (scale referred to by the number of red chairs), pointing to an absence that has never before been properly acknowledged and mourned. Despite its apparent universality and huge international acclaim (global media covered the event, allowing people with no connection to Bosnia not only to learn about its recent history but also to feel for its victims and with its survivors), the installation was criticized by some as not including different ethnic groups (supported mainly by Bosniak people) who in turn found it impossible to identify with the memorial and even felt excluded or ignored. Pašović himself is an artist and an activist (public intellectual) engaged in multiple art projects (of various media) who was active both during the war (as the director of the MES International Theatre Festival) and after, involved in numerous projects and

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[5] See: J. E. Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today" _Critical Inquiry_, Vol. 18, No. 2. (Winter, 1992), pp. 267-296.

activities concentrated on responding to the conflict and on collective working through[6]. [**Body and conflict**]

Another Bosniak intervention of a similar kind is Aida Šehović *Što Te Nema* (Why aren't you here?) (2006 – ongoing) installed for the first time at Baščaršija square in Sarajevo on July 11th, 2006 to commemorate (by marking the anniversary of) the Srebrenica genocide. Hers was a "moving counter-monument" which consisted of hundreds of *fildžani* (Bosnian coffee cups) filled with black coffee standing on the ground. By drawing on the Bosnian tradition of coming together for coffee, each cup was on the one hand corresponding to one Bosnian Muslim man or boy killed in Srebrenica in July 1995, on the other hand, however, it offered a common space to come together and drink, and talk, and – potentially – remember, recollect, empathise with those who lost their loved ones and mourn with others. The project was described as unique and elegantly simple. "The installation does not engage in the historical or political intricacies, or to permanently re-fashion Srebrenica unto a public landscape. It is modest, and the more moving for being so."[7]. Its aim was seen as to evoke conversations among not only the Bosniak people but also among strangers who – again as in the above case – would learn about what happened and its impact on the community via art-related experience. Šehović's project was interpreted as an example of how culturally oriented art among diasporic communities "aims to move beyond ethnonationalist public political debates evidenced in Bosnia and Herzegovina's post-conflict political environment."[8] [**Body and conflict**]

And yet artistic practices also work for strengthening the separation of conflicting narratives and people. The unveiling of Gavrilo Princip's statue in East Sarajevo (2014) (an act of resistance and boycott on the part of the Bosnian Serbs towards official state celebrations of the state of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo to commemorate the outbreak of World War I), was accompanied by a happening by controversial artist Emir Kusturica whose performance entitled *The Rebelled Angels* staging the assassination of Duke Ferdinand (1914) was presenting Princip and his collaborators as "romantic revolutionaries" and "angels." As one of the critics observed, the performance used the notion of Austria-Hungary and the European Union, both of which were considered "supranational entities, reminding on the prosperity the Bosnian and Herzegovinian province had under the Austro-Hungarian rule and on the country's aspirations to enter the European Union."[9] The idea of Gavrilo Princip's historical role in changing the scenery of the international political order is understood differently in different parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, both state celebrations and the artistic event further broadened the gap. A large number of people however seem to have been in favour of sharing the Serbian narrative of Gavrilo

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[6] See D. LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Baltimore, Johns. Hopkins University Press, 2001.

[7] https://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2016/07/27/on-memory-coffee-and-an-imperfect-circle/.

[8] D. Karabegović, "Što Te Nema?: Transnational Cultural Production in the Diaspora in Response to the Srebrenica Genocide". *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, (2014) 20(4), pp. 455–475.

[9] A. Sokol, (n.d.). The Contested Memory of the Sarajevo Assassination. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/26757143/The_Contested_Memory_of_the_Sarajevo_Assassination.

Princip and the infamous assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. The two ethnic groups – Bosniaks and Bosnian Serbs – have decided to celebrate different narratives of the same event. While Bosnian Serbs have promoted Gavrilo Princip as the hero of his people, "/t/he Bosniak-dominated Sarajevo imaginary is of a cosmopolitan city embedded in the cultural, political and administrative circuits of contemporary Europe. The ironies of Hapsburg Imperial nostalgia manifesting at both a popular level and in the formal celebrations can be understood through this lens of the social imaginary"[10].

In Northern Ireland three muralist artists from Derry created The People's Gallery (1994 onwards), a series of 12 wall-paintings _Bogside Murals_ which "tell" the story of the "Troubles" situated on Rossville Street, in the Bogside district of Derry. The murals both tell the story as well as commemorate. They respond to the site of historical events, provide the visual record of these events as well as space for the public to come together and reflect (also on current political issues). The critics and the public almost unanimously have praised the undertaking: "The works are a moving testament to the power of art as historical document; the importance of documentation within the history of art, and the power of art within society; a creative process that situates the past as something we must acknowledge within the present, and from which we can draw strength."[11] "People's Gallery", an institution without walls, is like the monument without an object, it is a gesture marking public space and introducing art which is by people and for the people, both implicated by the events of the Troubles and their aftermath (memory and political instrumentalization).

The tradition to consider such gestures as memorial or rather counter-memorial originated in Germany in the late 1980s with the artists' resistance towards dominant forms of dealing with the country's dark (Nazi) past in public spaces. A simple and straightforward conviction, that the traditional forms of commemoration do not "work," i.e. do not raise social awareness and do not keep the memory alive, and new ones have to be made, stood behind the idea of the counter-monument. In the RePAST project we concentrate on one of a few German examples, namely on Esther Shalev-Gerz's and Johan Gerz's _The Monument against Fascism_ which upon its construction was a 12-meter lead column. Members of the public were invited to write on the monument and as soon as a subsequent part was covered with inscriptions the column was lowered underground. After seven years it disappeared: all that remains visible are the top of the monument now level with the ground and the text panel which reads: "We invite the citizens of Harburg, and visitors to the town, to add their names here to ours. In doing so we commit ourselves to remain vigilant. (…) In the long run, it is only we ourselves who can stand up against injustice."[12] This counter-

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[10] P. Phipps, H. Halilovich, (n.d.). Atentat! Contested histories at the one hundredth anniversary of the Sarajevo assassination. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/15993331/Atentat_Contested_histories_at_the_one_hundredth_anniversary_of_the_Sarajevo_assassination.

[11] http://www.bogsideartists.com/testimonials/.

[12] http://www.shalev-gerz.net/?portfolio=monument-against-fascism.

monument gets much more than it offers, it demands engagement and participation and relationality[13]; it is processual, never fixed. As the artists claimed: Nothing can rise in the place of the public, not even a work of art; it will bring neither relief nor redemption. The artists also perceive their work in Harburg as a "mirror image of society" that not only "reminds us of the past, but also of our own reaction to it."[14] And yet the Gerzs' counter-monument was also severely criticized for being "a symbol of German self-denial" as a sculpture that "degrades itself". However, internationally renowned and commented upon by multiple respondents, it remains one of the most thought-provoking and moving artistic interventions into public space and memory (which is also critical of the monument as a medium).

Ever since the unification of Germany, the question of public and state commemorations has been one of the most intensely and even fiercely debated (often with participation of international experts). Although what was supposed to be commemorated and what kind of message was supposed to be formulated (German guilt during World War II, the scale and horror of the Nazi Genocide, the need for post 1989 unification) was quite obvious, most problems concerned the question of the "how": in what form, with which media, etc. Many German artists, both male and female, have been involved in these numerous discussions and processes. Artistic interventions were invited at times, even commissioned by state institutions such as Bundestag – the Reichstag building includes works by one of the most internationally recognized artists, Gerhard Richter. It hosts a temporary exhibition of the _Birkenau_ painterly cycle – based on four photographs from Auschwitz-Birkenau taken most probably by a member of the Sonderkomando, which were transferred onto canvas in what begun as realistic paintings, then overpainted with several layers of paint, reworked again and again, thus covering yet at the same time preserving the darkest images and chapters of German history – and a permanent display of the glass painting _Schwarz, Rot, Gold_. With the two works presented there is a specific tension at play that reveals the historical dimension of German self-understanding and the nation confronting its history, which has been crucial to German post-1989 democracy. The gesture to include such powerful examples of artistic production into public, political institutions testifies to the German culture of remembrance, which is all the more important the fewer contemporary witnesses still live and bore witness to the events themselves.

Female German choreographer and dancer Sasha Waltz was involved in two important "conversations" about German memory sites. The first was the Jewish Museum Berlin, where in 1999 inviting a group of 17 international dancers she performed a set of choreographic sketches inside the newly built yet uninhabited by its permanent collection Jewish Museum in Berlin. The architectural poetics of Daniel Libeskind were thus interpreted and translated into a bodily performance, with the body at the core of the delicate and fugitive memory of the Holocaust. Over a decade later she joined Johannes Milla und Partner (Stuttgart) in creating the concept of the

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[13] N. Bourriaud, Relational Aesthetics, Les Presses du réel, Paris 2000.

[14] C. Tomberger, _Das Gegendenkmal: Avantgardekunst, Geschichtspolitik und Geschlect in der Bundesdeutchen Erinnerungskultur,_ Transcript, Bielefeld 2007.

Freiheits- und Einheitsdenkmal [Monument to Freedom and Unity] in Berlin: a huge walk-in bowl entitled *Citizens in Motion*. The monument is part of an ongoing discussion on how to remember the GDR. It started with an open letter in 1998 by different public intellectuals demanding a form of commemoration of such a great national, European and international historical event – the unification of Germany. The problem at the core of the discussion of the monument was phrased by one of the critics: "The [German] inability to celebrate and the inability to mourn belong together!" Both its initiators and its supporters agreed that the new monument should address the idea of the German nation – its pictorial programmes, symbolic figures and narratives: all this should be publicly discussed. One of the commentators pointed out that there would be no consensus and public satisfaction over this matter as such a historical-cultural symbol and any kind of historic didactics, an attempt at creating a certain "historical consciousness" and common sense of memory and identity will and must be disappointing and contested. The public debate surrounding the project and the very idea of building such a memorial testifies to attempted shifts in public and collective German memory. This debate would not be possible without the participation and involvement of the artist and cultural workers. [***Body and conflict***]

The processual (sometimes even short-temporal, even fugitive) character as well as relationality and participatory element have been features of many of the interventions into the public sphere gathered and documented by the RePAST researchers. Joanna Rajkowska's *Greetings from the Jerusalem Avenue* and her *Oxygenator* (Poland) both responding to the presence of the Jewish absence in Warsaw, the capital city of Poland. The first is an artificial real-size palm tree placed in 2002 on a central square in the city, thus highlighting the sense of the street's name (Jerusalem Avenue) and pointing towards the genealogy of this name and the history of the Jewish district in 18th century Warsaw and after. Since its installation, the palm tree has sparked extreme emotions and related to or became a symbol of numerous causes, strikes, problems that trouble society yet do not have an adequate representation in the public visual sphere. Interestingly enough, in 2019 the palm's top turned ash-grey, as the leaves have dried out and are falling. "The transformation of the palm tree aims to draw attention to air pollution and global climate change as part of the actions taken during the World Environment Day. It calls for changes in everyday activities to prevent environmental degradation in order to Beat Air Pollution."[15] This intervention, which has lasted in Warsaw's city space for nearly two decades, is now an active participant in the public debate, changing the palm's roles, functions and positions in it, and thus supporting the conviction that the memory of one trauma (or perpetration) can offer a language, form or simply space for other traumas. *Oxygenator*, on the other hand, like the palm tree, did not have any direct or indexical meaning; instead, the artist sought to point to the oblivion in the urban space and to repression of particular historical stories in the public realm, and offer a space for the return of the repressed but also for relaxation: an enclave of fresh air in the centre of the postmodern city (historical Jewish ghetto) whose temporariness, ordinariness and lack of a pre-adopted script create a space that only the public can fill. [***Body and conflict***]

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[15] http://www.rajkowska.com/en/najslynniejsza-palma-w-polsce-usycha/.

The *Palm* at the centre of the Central-European city keeps being treated as an oddity, a foreign element both in the urban landscape and in the people's mental landscape. Something that bothers, causes discomfort as one can never be completely sure what it actually refers to, what its message could be, and last but not least, against whom. In public spaces so charged with conflicting memories and competing stakes in the present, an artistic (rebellious) act of introducing of a troubling visual (and material) element often leads to confusion and then resurfacing of many conflicting public feelings. Such seems to also be the case with *Ideologías Oscilatorias* (Oscillatory Ideologies) (2015), an installation / performance by the Spanish female artist Núria Güell (with Levi Orta). The idea of the project was to parade a car decorated with fascists and Francoist motifs around the Rambla (main street) of the city of Figueres in northern Catalonia and then park it in a private car park near the central square. The project was censored by the mayor before it was unveiled. The event was followed by the national press and provoked a strong debate on social media about the use of fascist symbols, art, public space, censorship and the endurance of Franco in Spain. As the artist herself stated: "The project aimed at rethinking Franco's ideology and fascist attitudes today, which – like a ghost – haunt this country without memory. We consider it is timely and necessary to reflect upon the rise of fascism that manifests itself in different forms – from institutional policies that segregate and kill, to the multiple attacks by neo-Nazi groups, both in 'Fortress Europe' and in our own home." Ironically enough, as one of the critics noticed, the artist was denied the right to reflect on the Francoist / fascist residues in society, while pro-Franco / pro-fascist groups were allowed to march the streets of Barcelona carrying the very same fascist symbols.[16]

The majority of counter-memorial interventions into the public space respond to the many tensions and conflicts already present in it, both in material (practices of commemoration in the form of monuments, street names, state celebrations and rituals) and immaterial way (the way people feel in and about the urban space). As such they produce a productive confusion related to the function of memory in the topography of the cities where the past and present meet and interact, and to the belonging of different groups with their identities into the urban structure and to the relationship between these groups. *Spring in Warsaw* (2008) was produced by the Israeli group of performers *Public Movement*, who together with representatives of Polish cultural institutions organized a "mocked" version of the ghetto tour, an event formative for many Israeli Jews coming to Poland at an early age. The event gathered people who "normally" remain separated. It connected narratives about the past and the political present which very often remain at odds. It uncovered the dynamic between the competition of memory cultures and victim cultures as well as current tensions in historical politics and individual images of the Other's identity. Dozens of people participated, the city space was both visually and emotionally transformed for this one afternoon, but its aftermath provided an occasion for multiple productive discussions concerning the production of memory cultures. [**Body and conflict**]

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[16] J.M Minguet, "Els ineptes i els covards," *Núvol*, October 19, 2015, https://www.nuvol.com/opinio/els-ineptes-i-els-covards/.

In the framework of <u>Documenta 14 in Athens</u> (2017, Greece) a series 34 "exercises of freedom" took place as part of "The Parliament of Bodies" in Parko Eleftherias (Freedom Park). Among numerous activities, exercise number 111 was a collective walk through the city of Athens, exploring the historical traces of oppression, violence, and the quest for freedom during the military dictatorship of 1967–74. Strong resistance and criticism followed on the part of Greek critics. They accused the curator, Paul Preciado, of patronizing, coming to teach the Greeks about the junta (that was their "own" History), which, as they claimed, they know much better. For some it was hard to understand why 1967 was more interesting for the Documenta team rather than Nazi occupation and Greek heroic resistance. One of the critics (Iliana Fokianaki, *Frieze*) wrote: "Exercises of Freedom was an ambitious participatory call that attracted just as many visitors as it did criticism, particularly from the national press who accused Preciado of resurrecting the 'Zombie of the Left', as one headline put it. From this reaction, actually what Preciado highlighted was Greek right-wing puritanism at play."[17] Preciado's aim was to provide stimuli for viewers to make their own connections – between the disparate and common threads of theory and history that the speakers were tapping into. Many claimed that they found productive links between different, dissident areas of knowledge and perspectives. With multiple arguments against the "German art festival", the Greek art world and public sphere debated numerous aspects of the Greek collective memory and its current relevance in a broader European context (including that of the recent economic crisis). It has been a long tradition of the Documenta art exhibition (which takes place every five years since 1955 mostly in Kassel, Germany). [**Body and conflict**]

Controversies in the Greek public sphere of commemoration can be best observed on the example of the <u>Thessaloniki Holocaust Memorial</u> whose erecting as well as numerous acts of contestation and vandalism directed against it provide a rich case for the study of past and recent conflicts. The monument seems to be of importance for different public actors as "first and foremost a discursive space inhabited by multiple meanings": for the Jewish Community it commemorates the deportation and death of the 50,000 Jews of Thessaloniki during the Holocaust; for Greek Christian foreign minister, Theodoros Pangalos, its unveiling in 1997 offered a chance to condemn all genocides including that of the Kurds by Turkey; for those defacing it (neo-Nazis and the anti-Zionist communist left) it is a sign of dominance of one group of victims in the public sphere. Many critics consider this memorial site as a site of productive contemporary conflict whereby the memory-work meets contestation and the struggle for recognition: it invites visitors into an exchange and a struggle for dialogue between themselves and their past, as well as political and social concerns of the present. As such the memorial testifies to the multidirectionality[18] of Greek memory (M. Rothberg) and as one of the commentators noticed: it "will carry a burden much heavier to that it deserves – that of the memory of future victims."[19]

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[17] https://frieze.com/article/missing-bodies.

[18] See: M. Rothberg. *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2009.

[19] P. Μπικας, 'Μνημεία του Ολοκαυτώματος: Το μνημείο των Ελλήνων Εβραίων της Θεσσαλονίκης', *The Holocaust in the Balkans*, Epikentro, Thessaloniki 2011, pp. 517-537.

In many post-conflict zones, in the public sphere filled with discord and contestation, existing monuments turn into battlegrounds where various agents claim their right to a particular vision of the past, to a specific form of memory (its communication and transmission) and to markers of identity. In Kosovo *Monument to Brotherhood & Unity* in Prishtina (placed strategically in the vicinity of the Parliament Building) has been dividing the public for a long time. On the one hand, the monument is located in an important area and it replaced the heart of the old city demolishing about 200 artisanal shops. It tends to promote what Yugoslavia and Serbia stood for and, as many Kosovar Albanians suffered under Yugoslavia, the symbol of Brotherhood and Unity was never really welcomed. On the other hand, the community of some of the scholars and civil society activists seek to preserve the monument as a reminder of Yugoslav joint history (the monument was renovated and conserved). The monument is located on the square of Adem Jashari, which seems to be absurd in its own right, because Jashari was the founding father and the commander of Kosovo Liberation Army (i.e. an anti-unity supporter). Another dimension in the discussion is that of the artistic merit of the monument, seen as an example of the people's emancipation through modernist architecture, a witness in itself to both political and social as well as artistic utopia.

Besides the contested memorial efforts there are those which almost unanimously unite the traumatized collectives in their efforts to face the dark moments, recognize and honour all the victims. This was the case with *Heroinat* memorial, which honours the sacrifice and contribution of Albanian women of all ethnicities during the 1998-1999 Kosovo War. It was found out that nearly 20,000 Kosovar women were raped, and most of these war crimes remaining untried, most of the wounds unhealed. The authors of the monument created 20,000 medals dedicated to each and every woman's suffering and silence, thus making a collective portrait of the female war victim, the heroine-survivor. Before the monument entered the public sphere, the Kosovar society has not been very open in recognizing this crime and speaking about it. The unveiling of this monument created a momentum and recognized all women and their individual fate as well as a collective social phenomenon. After this monument and the "Mendoj Per Ty" campaign that followed, many Kosovar women coming forward to speak about sexual abuse, violence and rape suffered during the war in 1999. Ultimately, after several years of political struggle, victims of sexual war crimes were recognized as war victims by the state.

The presence of the *Heroinat* monument was accompanied by an artistic intervention of relational and participatory character, whereby the citizens were co-producing the memorial structure. Female artist Alketa Xhafa Mripa encouraged Kosovars to join in creating *Mendoj Per Ty* [Thinking of you], an installation made of circa 5000 skirts and dresses donated by the people and hanged at the Pristina Stadium. The aim of the undertaking was to bring people together and increase awareness of sexual violence during the conflict in Kosovo not only to the local but also international public. The president of Kosovo started by donating her own dress and supporting this initiative. Many Kosovars were shocked by the magnitude of the problem and the scale of social repression. The public reaction included a great deal of empathy while women who openly discussed became very well-known public figures with strong popular support. [***Body and conflict***]

Female victims of the conflict have also been recently recognized in Cyprus with the unveiling of the *Mothers of missing persons* (Achilleas Vasileiou) in Makedonitissa's Tomb, Nicosia. The monument

has been discussed in the media as a symbolic representation of the Greek and Cypriot mothers of missing persons, linking once again Cyprus's troubled past with that of Greece. Likewise, it may be suggested that such sculptures, though well-intended to honour the people who have suffered from the war, bring Cyprus' troubled past back to memory, reproducing thus the dominant discourse of Greek-Cypriots as the victims of the war, dismissing thus the impact of the war on the Turkish-Cypriot community.

An interesting research endeavour devoted to monuments in public space and memorial sites has been pursued for a while now by the academic Nico Carpentier, entitled _Iconoclastic Controversies: A Visual Sociology of Statues and Commemoration Sites in the Southern Part of Cyprus_. As a medium for communicating the outcome of his research, Carpentier chose a series of photography exhibitions whose overall aim was to question "the support that the large majority of Greek Cypriot statues and commemoration sites provide for a Greek Cypriot antagonistic nationalism." While discussing his exhibition with Eva Giannoukou, the researcher-curator said that one third of the exhibited photographs depicted statues that told "a different story, that were in some way counter-hegemonic."[20] Yet, these were difficult to find and not well-documented at all. While publicly displayed, they were not found in places that are easy to reach. According to Carpentier, the exhibitions "aimed to trigger societal debate, reflections and further initiatives, empowering the more agonism-oriented parts of society, and offering opportunities for reflection to others, without over-estimating the capacity of one project to achieve social change."[21] The exhibitions allowed to see the public space in a new light and to question the dominant organization of the memorial culture. It is also a very interesting example of how an exhibition format can be employed as means of sharing the outcome of academic research (rather than traditional forms of academic publishing, conference presentations, etc.).

It is about learning from the past, and learning ceaselessly, that German art-activist collective Zentrum für politische Schönheit (the Center for Political Beauty) concentrates. Since 2009 the group has organized several events engaging most powerful forms of political performance art- and theatre-related practices to raise awareness, provoke emotions and thinking as well as action on the part of the citizens. The Center's exhibitions and plays were shown at renowned German institutions including Gorki Theatre, the 7th Berlin Biennale, ZKM Karlsruhe, NGBK, among others. Their activities touch upon most sensitive aspects of collective memory and identity as well as artistic freedom, freedom of speech, state memory politics and historical politics. As one of the critics wrote in relations to one of their projects: "Artists who denounce grievances must face up to the harsh reality. Being right in a small circle of like-minded people is no longer enough. Art has influence, it is part of the social debate. But this debate must be conducted with political and

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[20] E. Giannoukou, _An interview with Nico Carpentier about the "Iconoclastic Controversies"_ http://nicocarpentier.net/icontroversies/interview.html#eva.

[21] N. Carpentier, et al. "De-naturalizing Antagonistic Nationalism Through an Academic Intervention: The Reception of Two Photography Exhibitions on the Memorialization of the Cyprus Problem". _Comunicazioni sociali_, (2018) 1, pp. 50-67.

aesthetic arguments, not with those of criminal prosecution."[22] Their initiatives were severely criticized, yet they make invisible structures of oppression and exploitation painfully present and bare.

Another form of "studying" the commemorative practices in the public space is the _Record, Replay, React Show – Re-sculpting Freedom_ (2014 / 2017) project by female Cypriot performance artist, Lia Haraki. It is a solo performance where a soundscape is made visible and a landscape is made audible. In the RRR Show-Treasure Island (2014), Haraki reacted to the sculptural studies for the Liberty monument found in Nicosia Cyprus that were placed inside the museum space. Haraki responds to the sculptural studies for the Liberty Monument in Nicosia, exhibited in the space, plaster models by Greek sculptor Ioannis Notaras, retrieved by Yiannis Toumazis in Larnaca several years before. The artist is thematizing the performative energy of spaces of history, memory and trauma. The artist questioned the official narrative which presents the Greek-Cypriots as the good guys and the Turkish-Cypriots as the bad guys. She remembered the figures of the soldiers and the women dressed in black who mourned their missing/lost ones, which as she said, dominated her thought while younger. Reflecting back on these images from the past, she tried to reinvent these figures, to 'reprogramme' her mind and her identity through this work. Realising that her memories were similar/reflected the memories of a large number of people of her generation, she tried to take the meaning out of the sculptures and reinterpret them as meaningless figures: to take the signified out of the signifier. In doing this she became able to use humour, to (re)create other identities, to bring into this process her present rather than past. [**_Body and conflict_**]

Female memory of the conflict

A few of the above discussed cases involve the female memory of the conflict, work with it, unveil stories which have not been told and recognize female historical characters which have not been adequately represented in the public realm of collective memory. These include such artists as Alketa Xhafa Mripa, Esther Shalev-Gerz, Joanna Rajkowska, Núria Güell, Shasha Waltz, Lia Haraki and Aida Šehović. These female artists were not only bringing into light shadowed historical experiences and protagonists but also offering alternatives to the dominant modes of commemoration, opening up a space for participation and exchange with the audience, operating on the level of non-verbal and non-rational communication, including bodily presence and memory into collective processes of coming to terms with difficult issues from the collectives' pasts. More of these kinds of gestures can be found among cases researched by the RePAST team.

The Bosnian female artist Šejla Kamerić, in her _Bosnian Girl_ (2003) – originally intended as a series of posters for public places – depicted a woman (the artist herself) with an overwritten inscription: "No teeth…? A mustache…? Smell like shit…? Bosnian Girl!", a quotation from a graffiti authored by a Dutch soldier on the wall of the barracks in Potočari, Srebrenica in 1994-95. The power of this

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[22] K. Vahland, "Erfolg für die Freiheit." _Süddeutsche Zeitung_. https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/zentrum-politische-schoenheit-ermittlungen-freiheit-1.4400901.

composition lies – as one of the critics said – in "its brutal directness and the disturbing ambivalence of the image"[23]. The emergence of the work in the public space was met with confusion and instant rejection. The misunderstanding (mostly as to who the author is and the purpose of the insult) was followed by offense. However, at a closer look it turned out to be a rather painful, direct and vivid reminder of the country's recent history and tragedy. As the artist herself said: "in Bosnian society, there was a trend of 'not looking back,' 'not remembering.' But I was surprised to see how quickly the public accepted this work, probably because it was dealing with the subject of prejudice that everyone could relate to."[24] The juxtaposition of the genocide with the sexist and imperialist discourse proved violent, but at the same time revelatory of the mechanisms, both historical and contemporary. One of the critics praised the work for becoming "an iconic representation of the international prejudices that the wars of the 1990s exposed, and it has lost none of its resonance."[25] [**Body and conflict**]

Artists often reveal that there are always stories within stories we tell ourselves about our past experience and the stories we agree to accept as shared and are allowed to identify with. Jasmila Žbanić' s debut feature film *Grbavica* (2006) offered a version of collective story of the past not many wanted to hear. It concentrated on a single female protagonist, a single mother in contemporary Sarajevo in the aftermath of systematic rapes of Bosniak women by Serbian soldiers during the Bosnian War. The film highlights both a historical and a present phenomenon: the lack of protection during, and the lack of care after, the Bosnian War, despite the fact that rapes were well-known facts. Nowadays, the psychological and financial support for women who had been victims of rape is lacking in Bosnia and Herzegovina, due to the ongoing societal stigma regarding rape and war. Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina are, most of the time, forced to endure the mental, physical and other consequences of rape on their own, and *Grbavica* manages to capture the reality of such a struggle. Upon receiving the Golden Bear for her work at the Berlin Film Festival, Žbanić spoke powerfully and directly about the cruel reality of the aftermath of the Bosnian War. She reminded the international audience of the fact that those responsible for the atrocities that had inspired her film, were not put on trial nor punished. She has spoken to the responsibility and empathy of the global public. Some critics pointed to a painful paradox: "the national euphoria posed a paradox: Bosnian citizens celebrated the success of a film that admonished them for a trauma embodied in real victims who lived around them."[26] The film was not screened in Republika Srpska, the Serbian part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, because of the reactions to Žbanić's speech. For Serbian radicals, Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić were, and still are, considered national heroes and not criminals. [**Body and conflict**]

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[23] Š. Kamerić. (n.d.). Art Collection Telekom website: /en/collection/k/.

[24] S. Rizvic, *What Does a Victim Look Like? An Interview with Šejla Kamerić on the Legacy of "Bosnian Girl."* https://balkanist.net/what-does-a-victim-look-like-sejla-kameric/.

[25] T. White, *New order. New Statesman* 19 (902), pp. 44–46.

[26] D. Murtic, *Post-Yugoslav Cinema: Towards a Cosmopolitan Imagining*. Springer 2015.

German film director Margarethe von Trotta's – an artist known for the development of the genre of new feminist historical film in Germany with works such as *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum* (1975, co-directed with Volker Schlöndorff); *The Second Awakening of Christa Klages* (1978), *The German Sisters* (1981) *Rosa Luxemburg* (1986), *Hannah Arendt* (2012) – *Rosenstraße* (2003) is a film narrating the women's uprising in Berlin's Rosenstrasse which took place in 1943, a unique example of civil courage that has fallen into oblivion. The true incident that Margarethe von Trotta's film takes up has been noted by historians only for the last few years: yet the revolt of the "Aryan" women of Jewish men prevented or even reversed the deportation of their husbands. As has been the case with many films based on historical details, the director was accused by some critics of not keeping up with the historical record and introduction too much fictionality. Yet, as Frank Bösch observed, writing on the film, the Nazi past and historical studies: "In recent years there has been an unmistakable boom in feature films about National Socialism. (…) The films have left many historians somewhat perplexed. The claim at authenticity inspired them to examine the films' factuality. However, this must have seemed idle from the outset, since films at best work according to the criterion of probability, but not according to academic paradigms such as 'truth.' And even if the feature films claimed to be based on source materials, they naturally remain an autonomous interpretation that differs from historical analysis, since every facial expression is already an interpretation within cinematic reality. They cannot be 'read' as history books."[27] Von Trotta's film exemplifies an interesting problem art's engagement in the public discussion on historical themes brings.

Polish artist Anna Baumgart, in her video work *Fresh Cherries* (2010), set on a mission into the well protected archive; an archive sealed by shame, both individual and collective, as well as by discrimination within the patriarchal concept of history and historically (as well as academically) relevant matters and protagonists. In this hybrid documentary / mocumentary work she analyses the phenomenon of stigmatisation and hierarchisation of the victims of the World War II, a discourse which has shaped the memory of the war and transmitted it to the younger generation. The tabooisation of prostitution as forced labour at Nazi concentration camps is based primarily on the common conviction concerning the "voluntary" character of the choice of women recruited to Sonderbau (the camp public house, also known as "puff"). The post-war discrimination of women forced to prostitution is met with the discrimination of scholars who wish to study that phenomenon. Baumgart wants to know why and so does a lot to arrive at answers satisfactory for herself as well as for others. As an artist she steps in to do away with the system of reproduced oppression: the suffering of those women did not come to an end the moment the camp was liberated – in many cases they were completely erased from collective memory, their experience was not addressed, historically explained nor worked through. The artist invites a film director, a therapist, female actress and young female historian to collectively disentangle this historical knot. [**Body and conflict**]

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[27] F. Bösch, "Film, NS-Vergangenheit und Geschichtswissenschaft. Von Holocaust zu Der Untergang," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 2009, 55(1), pp. 1-32.

Greek female documentary film maker Alinda Dimitriou made her *The Girls of the Rain* (2011), the last part of the documentary trilogy, devoted to the women in resistance during the Greek civil war and the junta (the other two being *Birds in the Swamp* and *Among the Rocks*). Dimitriou concentrates on the role of women in political struggle: in the film women arrested and tortured during the military dictatorship 1967-1974 confess their true stories. The director decided to concentrate on her protagonists' courage and solidarity rather than victimhood or personal stakes. The critics paid attention to the fact that Dimitriou resists ideology attempting to cover history with the dust of oblivion and beautifying it by talking about national reconciliation. The artist instead keeps the past alive and is faithful to her protagonists. National reconciliation cannot be fulfilled by silencing the crimes committed by those who won the Civil War. Dimitriou also adds some troubling analogies to the present moment and current struggles, suggesting that some aspects of the oppression continue. This dimension of her work was often criticized for being too simplistic or didactic.

A different filmic narrative can be found in internationally renowned visual artist Angela Melitopoulos' *Passing Drama* (1999), which reflects on the artist's family history, the refugee story of her Greek family that came to her across three generations as a fragmentary and unreal image. This was a story of several displacements: of people and narratives. The work is a very sophisticated visual reflection on intermingling of remembrance and forgetting, collective memory, individual subjectivity, and different temporalities of experience. Despite lack of direct reference to the issues of gender, Melitopoulos's approach to history through the microcosm of her family and her insistence on not totalizing form of storytelling (where elements do not necessarily form a coherent or rigorous structure but rather disintegrate into nearly abstract sequences) offers a unique approach to both past and present, the transmitted experience of migration and the migrant identity of the artist. This work was included in the program of Documenta 14 in Athens and as such joined in the multivocal conversation of interconnected historical experiences and possible ways of their artistic mediation.

Andromache Dimitriadou-Lindalh, a Cypriot choreographer and dancer, has created numerous works, mostly performances devoted to the experience of Cyprus as a troubled place (of memory, trauma, conflict). She was concerned with migration and violence against women, loss and the missing people, silent voices and abused bodies, dramas of separation and abandonment of people and material objects alike. The nondiscursive character of her projects on the one hand responded to the often traumatic character of the events she was referring to, on the other hand made her works accessible and shareable by people on different sides of the conflict and with different experience thereof. [***Body and conflict***]

Arianna Economou, sometimes referred to as the "mother-figure" of contemporary dance in Cyprus, has been creating work concerned with the divide of the island since 1997 and remains one of the best-known artists working on the divide and reconciliation in Cyprus. Her performances responded to the war and the memory of war, the trauma it left to both communities and the wish to move forward, to reach peace and reconciliation. Oftentimes, she has worked with Turkish-Cypriot artists (dancers, poets, musicians, performance artists, actors etc.) and has been active in organising bi-communal initiatives. In works such as *Shared Echoes* I and II (2003), *Walking the Line*

(1997), *The still small voice of the people* (2007) (part of the *One Square Foot Project*); *Collateral Damage* (2011-2012) and *Far off Land* (2016) Economou was creating shared spaces and communal body-based experience of revisiting and questioning the divide between two communities, possible ritual exchanges which could undo the state of affairs. Although her performances have never gathered mass audiences, they have always been received very well. [**Body and conflict**]

Born in Sarajevo and living in England, female photographer <u>Lala Meredith Vula</u> has spent the last most of her career photographing life in Kosovo's rural landscapes. It was in the pursuit of her father's Albanian roots that she made it to Kosovo and begun experiencing and understanding its history by photographically documenting it, with the people who lived there, or the haystacks that dominated Kosovo's rural landscapes. She also paid close attention to the blood feud reconciliation movement in Kosovo in her series <u>*Blood Memory*</u>. The movement began with students and human rights activists imprisoned for protesting Yugoslav abuses against Kosovar Albanians who met Albanians – inmates held for revenge killings that were established in the ancient Albanian social code, a form of "self-administered justice." Some of the photographs in the series were found very powerful as they managed to catch a moment of people coming together to witness the reconciliation, a fugitive moment of common desire for change, and a collective feeling of hope. Also, as the artist herself stated, "there was a feeling of history being made and of everyone sharing a great moment."

In Spain's capital, Madrid, two days before the anniversary of the death of Franco, a demonstration calling for the repeal of Spain's Law of Historical Memory has been held. Marchers passed through the streets of the Spanish capital openly chanting "Franco, Franco" and giving fascist salutes. This was countered by three female members of the international collective <u>Femen</u> who staged a counter-protest action half-naked, with the slogan "legal fascism, national shame" written across their vulnerable breasts. Femen describes itself as an international women's movement of brave topless female activists painted with the slogans and crowned with flowers: "Our Mission is Protest! Our Weapon are bare breasts!" In Madrid, their message was straightforward: the right-wing extremists' presence is a "national disgrace". Yet, Spanish National police responded by intervening and arresting the half-naked women. As one of the critics noted: "The three women were greeted with spits, insults ('whores'), shoves, blows and kicks. And those attacks on their naked skin are the perfect metaphor for the contempt for freedom that some want to recover. Their courage became news and a denunciation. At least, they snatched from those faithful of horror the possibility of celebrating in peace a commemoration that only smells of pain, hatred, fear, and sadness."[28] [**Body and conflict**]

Irish artist's <u>Marie Barnett's *Border Letters*</u> (1994) can be seen as an encounter of visual with community arts. The artist worked with 20 women from North and South of the Irish border and of various religious backgrounds. She encouraged them to create a network of solidarity and empathy to exchange messages of hope in the aftermath of the recent ceasefire. The women exchanged

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[28] E. Riverola, *Tetas. El Periódico*, https://www.elperiodico.com/es/opinion/20181119/femen-franco-tetas-articulo-opinion-emma-riverola-7156243.

visual (photography) and written messages (letters). The project took several forms of presentation to the wider audience, including an exhibition of photographic documentation in at Irish Museum of Modern Art. It was significant for a number of reasons, including women's voice, often excluded by the militarist narrative of combat in the conflict and offering a platform for communication of ordinary people otherwise separated by both symbolic and real borderlines.

Leila Doolen's _Bernadette Notes on a Political Journey_ (2008), on the other hand, is a documentary film exploring the life and politics of socialist, republican, feminist and anti-racist campaigner Bernadette Devlin, the youngest ever Member of British Parliament, "Irish Joan of Arc". The film includes both archival footage and intimate interviews conducted in the course of over 10 years. It combines the reflection on the past with that concerning the present. The protagonist is very much involved in community work and shares her many views on the peace process and the direction that republican politics has taken. The film's role is that of an episode in the now "written" (in various) media history of women. Another Irish female artist, Amanda Dunsmore, in her _Keeper_ (2014) offers a personal archive of Irish history: constellation of social and political portraits that reflect specific points in history from the late 19th century to the present day, while an acclaimed Irish writer, Lisa McGee, in her comedy TV series reaches huge audiences (first episode drew in 2.5 million viewers and prompted a commission for the second series that is currently airing on Channel 4) with her _Derry Girls_ (2018-ongoing). The first series concentrated on a group of teenage women navigating their lives in 1990's Derry against a backdrop of The Troubles, while the second series showed them struggling with their parents, parties, love affairs and school against the backdrop of a precarious peace process.

The Israeli female artist living and working in Berlin, Yael Bartana, chose Poland and the shared history of Poles and Jews for her multimedia project based on a video trilogy entitled _And Europe Will be Stunned_ (2007-2011). Bartana was the first non-Polish artist to be exhibited in Polish national pavilion during the Venice Biennial in 2011. The work touches upon Polish-Jewish relations, questions of anti-Semitism, Zionism, and Israeli violence against the Palestinians. It has caused a lot of controversies and misunderstandings which proved to be fruitful for the public discussion concerning both historical and political issues as well as the role of art and the artist in bringing forth change and reconciliation. Bartana stressed the need for imagination both in thinking about history and in unlearning from it, in searching for alternative scenarios for the future which according to her artistic and political vision is never one's own, but always already shared, implicating many different subjects. The work was a multidimensional and collaborative project which invited many people, institutions and discourses. It reached towards academics, activists, cultural workers, politicians, etc. encouraging them to transgress professional, disciplinary boundaries and question them for the sake of expanding possible means of communication and collaboration.

To conclude this section it is necessary to mention quite a unique case in the RePAST collection of art's engagement with the conflict, namely Susan Sontag's (in collaboration with Haris Pašović) production of Samuel Beckett's _Waiting on Godot_ in the Sarajevo War Theatre during the siege of the city during the Bosnian War (1993). American writer, Susan Sontag has always expressed love for Sarajevo and thus her return to stage _Waiting for Godot_ was an act of care for the city, its

people and its heritage at the time under threat. The role of this production and collaboration with local actors and importance of this play lays in the fact that it was performed during the Sarajevo Siege, with the native actors and Pašović was also an act of support and solidarity, revolt against the West's passivity. For her it was an ethical obligation of the public intellectual she considered herself. The artists wanted to bring consolation through art as well as "preserve normality"[29] for the people trapped within the city. Despite some criticism of the production (choice of text, choice of mood), Sontag was praised for promoting "secular, multicultural image of Sarajevo and Bosnia that was intrinsic to the city's historical identity rather than a manufactured construct of Tito's Yugoslavia."[30]

The female artists referred to above and the role of their working with past and present conflicts in local and translocal perspectives as well as specific role they play in the art world as well as public figures co-shaping the public debate, collective imagination and collective memory have been of particular interest in the light of RePAST project's recognition of and devotion to gender importance in creating discourses about past conflicts, traumas, historical experience more generally and ways of transmitting memory. Below is a comparative take at artistic practices and particular projects both growing out of conflict and bringing it back to the public in order to address the structures of public knowledge and public feelings about the past as well as their political uses.

Biographies in the aftermath of conflict

Many of the artists were discussed above. Some of them like Gerhard Richter (Germany) or Haris Pašović (Bosnia and Herzegovina) have by now been canonical for their countries artistic traditions, respectively visual arts and theatre/performative arts but also internationally acclaimed. The below analysis concentrates to a large extent on specific projects relevant to RePAST research in the field of arts and culture. However, many of the artists returned to the problem of past conflict on more than one occasion, exploring various forms of representation, media, genres or means of presentation. Artistic work with the past conflict seems never to be completed in the sense that there might never be one total image or narrative of it, but rather a heterogeneous archive of multiple attempts, takes, perspectives. By returning to historical conflict, artists often speak about the contemporary conditions of political organization as well as the aesthetic politics in relation to the memory of conflict. Many of the works and practices are simultaneously self-referential, involving a critique of the medium or representation itself. As such their intervention into the visual field is complex and operates on various levels of its organization.

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[29] G. Knezevic (n.d.) *Balkans Blog: Susan Sontag's Lasting Gift To Sarajevans Under Siege*. https://www.rferl.org/a/susan-sontag-siege-sarajevo-waiting-for-godot/28412155.html.

[30] S. Jestrovic, *Waiting for Godot: Sarajevo and its Interpretations* in S. Jestrovic (ed.), *Performance, Space, Utopia: Cities of War, Cities of Exile, Studies in International Performance,* Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, New York 2009, pp. 115–128.

Contemporary Bosnian painter's, <u>Radenko Milak's</u> *And What Else Did You see? – I Couldn't See Everything!* (2008-2010) is a series of 24 painterly reproductions of a photograph taken by Ron Haviv, an American photo-journalist, during the Bijeljina massacre (1991) with the Serb Volunteer Guard killing between 48 and 78 predominantly Bosniak civilians. The image reproduced depicts a soldier about to kick a woman lying on the ground. The role of his painting is to provide critical visual reflection on the images stored in collective memory, images which can be rendered speechless or manipulated. He is also working with temporality of photography and painting and with the question of referentiality. <u>Mladen Miljanović's</u> project for the 55th Biennale di Venezia is yet another attempt on his part to deconstruct ever-present ethnic and identity-based debates in Bosnia and Herzegovina[31]. His *Garden of Delights* (2013), an installation made of three panels, referring to the idiosyncrasy of contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina, where three different memories live separately – Bosnian Croat, Bosnian Serb, and Bosniak. His work was praised for resisting the dominant symbols of martyrdom or victimhood prevalent in identity narrative of the country[32]. It was also at this Biennale that Kosovar artist, <u>Petrit Halilaj,</u> was the first one to represent his country. Despite his work as an artist Halilaj also established Hajde!, a foundation dedicated to support and promotion of new generations of artists from Kosovo. In his recent performance, *Shkrepëtima* (2019) – title referring to multiethnic illustrated magazine published in 1970s and 80s by teachers and students of Runik. Based on extensive archival research and inspired by the collective memory of Runik citizens, Halilaj's work staged in the actual ruins of the school building, brings back fragments from some of the most prominent Albanian plays that were performed by amateur actors during the 80s, elements of heritage and episodes of history obscured and dissociated. By working outside of the art-context and with local community the artists includes and implicates new audiences, on the other hand, his "archaeology" of local community culture could become familiar to international art audience.

Cypriot artist, Christodoulos Panayiotou's trilogy *Wonder Land, Never Land, I Land* (2010) includes images, photographs and material form the Press and Information Office of Cyprus's (PIO) archives to comment on the official construction of national identity through collective storytelling in Cyprus. As one of the critics pointed out, it is precisely through his art that he engages in "political dialogue with the mechanisms and rationality that have shaped Cyprus [and] the island's memory and national character."[33] Panayiotou focuses specifically on material that has escaped the attention of the public sphere and/or the PIO. He does this by selecting photographic material that has not been published or photographic negatives that have been deemed faulty and never developed or printed. While working with archives and archival material, "he is not interested in

[31] J. Riding, "Representing a divided place: the artistic-military practice of Mladen Miljanović," *Cultural Geographies*, 2017, 24 (1), pp. 171–180.

[32] P. Naef, "Tourism and 'martyred city': memorializing war in the former Yugoslavia," *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 2016, 14 (3), pp. 1–30.

[33] E. Stylianou, *The Archive as a Space for Negotiating Identities: Defying 'Cypriotness' in the Work of Haris Epaminonda and Christodoulos Panayiotou*, in: Wells, L., Stylianou-Lambert, T. and Philippou, N., (eds.). *Photography and Cyprus: Time, Place and Identity*. Bloomsbury Publishing 2014.

the process of archiving per se, but rather in revealing those ideologies that become apparent because of the archive's failure to neutralize them."[34] Socratis Socratous' *Rumours* (2009) presented at the 53rd Biennale di Venezia, was a multimedia work involving installations, performances and other happenings at the Cyprus Pavilion devoted to the tensions between two ethnic communities of Cyprus, Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot, who remain separated, seemingly unable to find a way to coexist. The artist thematized the enduring separation and its consequences for the identity and memory narrative of the self and the other. His work was considered a form of social critique. In itself it was very controversial and caused a lot of misunderstanding and misreading, yet for the larger public it remained obscure. Nevertheless, its history offers an interesting insight into Cypriot cultural and memory politics of the time.

Victor Sloan, Michael Farrell, Willie Doherty and André Stitt are among Irish and Northern Irish visual artists whose works repeatedly mine the visual and affective sphere of the conflict. The rich collection of visual, performative arts, film and works of literature in the Troubles Archives www.troublesarchive.com testifies to crucial role artistic practices have been playing in recording the conflict, resisting it, remembering and transmitting it in independent forms and to different audiences. Some of the artists, like Sloan in his *Explosion* series (1993) offer an immediate response to the events of the Troubles – in this case specific incident of bombing – a major feature of the conflict in Ireland – by Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Portadown, County Armagh on a May day in 1993. As one of the critics observed: "His work – often using a distorted focus and sepia tinting to evoke early photography – embraces media from video to etching. His dominant theme is the sectarian parades he recalls from childhood."[35] Michael Farrell in his turn by making *Bloody Sunday* series (1997-8) brings back to visual memory images of the killed and wounded gruesome scenes of the carnage in Derry. The event of 1972 is revisited on the occasion of British government announcing the establishment of a new enquiry into the killings. It was later in his career (which begun in 1960s) that he turned towards overtly political and engaged works. He is said to have found out that he had been working in an idiom that prevented him commenting, as he wanted to, on what had been going on around him. The outrage at the outside reality and the feeling of disconnectedness between the art he was making and the world he lived in made him reinvent the genres (mixed media on canvas) he worked with anew. Native of Derry, Northern Ireland, Willie Doherty works with photography, video and sound installations to explore memory landscapes: specifically, visually studying locations contaminated with untold stories; some forgotten, some half remembered or unacknowledged. As one of the critics phrased it, he "depicts places not people, sites rather than sights."[36] His eye and camera go where most people chose not to and he makes present these sites for the public to visit during his exhibitions, thus creating space for experiencing through art what has been missed in reality. Among his numerous works, *Remains* (2013) is a film,

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[34] Parpa after E. Stylianou.

[35] J. Morrison, "Battle lines: 30 years of unseen 'Troubles' art" *The Independent* https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/battle-lines-30-years-of-unseen-troubles-art-1702051.html

[36] C. Perry, *Frieze magazine*, https://frieze.com/article/willie-doherty-2?language=de

shot in a few locations in Derry used since the 1970's to carry out kneecappings, a form of punishment shooting used to control drug use and other forms of so called 'anti-social behaviour'. The long life of violence and its spectral character are at the core of his practice. In *Conviction* (2000) the Belfast artist, André Stitt, crawls from his childhood home in Donegall Pass to the Duke of York pub (on the other side of the city). He is covered in tar and feathers (an image – he claims often seen in his childhood) thus identifying with protestant women publicly humiliated and punished in this form – and tied to lamp-posts – for going out with Catholics. The artist eposes his and the victims' vulnerability and the cruelty of those who perpetrated it and painful spectatorship of whose who witnessed. *Conviction* seems to be targeting many subjects involved in the conflict and burdened with its memory. As the artist himself stated: "The work for me became a cathartic act of transformation, redemption and healing." This radical performance in the public space – thus outside of the safe haven of gallery walls –can be seen as a necessary consequence of 'the troubles', a powerful response to political conflict and its remnants still present in the publish sphere. [***Body and conflict***]

As has by now been made quite clear in responding to past and present conflicts artist very often use the body, bodily suffering and bodily memory as well as nonverbal, ambiguous or even unintelligible forms of communication between the bodies of the artists and the bodies of the members of the audience. It is in dance, performance, but also film, video works and interventions in the public space that body is addressed as a site of experience of historical conflict and as a surface of its inscription, as a site of transmission of affects and traumas which do not find their proper representation in traditional genres of storytelling. Bodily experience seems to come before any concept or idea of what has actually happened, and it is the return to this primal inscription of event that many artists find crucial for their working with troubled pasts.

As has been already shown artists very often join forces with other subjects in the publish sphere to work on the historical knowledge and critical memory production. In 2004, Barcelona-based artist Francesc Torres collaborated with a forensic anthropology team uncovering the mass grave in a small village outside of Burgos, in northern Spain, were 46 murdered supporters of Spain's Republican government were buried in 1936. As in many other places in the country, the violent history and legacy of the Spanish Civil War remains deep underground both physically and mentally. With his photographic camera Torres accompanied the forensics team and local townspeople who became involved in the project. He created an installation of black-and-white photographs, entitled *Oscura es la habitación donde dormimos* [Dark is the room where we sleep], which poignantly and forcefully examines the relationships between war, violence, memory, and photography. This is how he spoke about his work: these pictures "(…) document one of the few efforts done, so far, in the attempt of reconstructing the historical memory of an event that still permeates the present of that country like a chronic illness. These pictures can be considered as war photography, taken almost seventy years after the fact." The creation of these poignant images was an ethical and aesthetic necessity – to uncover the hidden trauma, to face the truth.

Spanish artist, Fernando Sánchez Castillo, considers himself to be practicing cultural and social critique. His intellectual responsibility is to ask questions hitherto considered irrelevant or taboo. And by doing so, he believes, he is offering historical catharsis. And yet he stresses, that his work is

purely artistic, and those are his obligations as an artist. In his _Síndrome de Guernica_ [Guernica Syndrome] (2012) he made a sculpture out of Azor, General Franco's leisure boat – itself a site for various historical events. The work dismantles and neutralizes an extremely charged relic of recent Spanish history. An artistic gesture overturns a symbol of power, depriving it of its actual meaning and makes it into an art object. As one of the critics noted: "Castillo (…) has invented implausible memories; alternate histories that provide alternatives to reason; he has raised the voice about silence, imposing memory over oblivion. His last piece, as a point of inflection and reflection, is a crucial step in his work, which justifies the logic and provides meaning to a production almost entirely linked to recent Spanish memory."[37] His gesture was also seen as a "deconstruction of the monumentality of recent History that seems sealed by a consensus based on amnesia."[38]

It was about the icon and the image of power that the controversy concerning Eugenio Merino's _Always Franco_ (2012) sparked. During Feria Internacional de Arte Contemporáneo, ARCO, Madrid, the artist exhibited a sculpted figure of Franco in a fridge decorated with the Coca-Cola-like design. The artist was sued by the Francisco Franco Foundation for "an offence to the former Head of State, an intent of caricaturing him" and ironically enough for undermining "the sense of aesthetics and art."[39] In response to the lawsuit against the artist nearly 30 members of Antifascist Artists platform exhibited their works in a protest-show, most of which included a satiric (or even drastic and sexually explicit) usage of the image of Franco[40]. By refrigerating General Franco, Merino aimed at alluding to the presence of Francoism in Spanish institutions, culture and politics. His gesture provoked precisely what the artist aimed: an attack at artistic freedom of expression and claim at true artistic value – thus deeming his work as non-art. And yet the work and artist met criticism whose core was the claim that it is the politics that rules over art in this case, thus instrumentalizing the latter and depriving it of its artistic power[41].

When it comes to scandals and controversies in Spanish art world and public sphere – as well as elsewhere – Santiago Sierra seems to be holding sway. He keeps questioning the adequate and the proper when it comes to "artistic" interventions in the sphere of history and identity politics, social and economic critique, dominance and oppressing rituals of powers. In his numerous projects including one for the Spanish pavilion at the 50th Biennale di Venezia – which was accessible only to

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[37] L. Mateo, "Síndrome de Guernica," _Nosotros_ http://www.nosotros-art.com/revista/opinion/el-sindrome-de-guernica.

[38] F. Castro Flórez, _Fernando Sánchez Castillo. Más allá_. ABC Cultural, http://linea-e.com/2015/fernando-sanchez-castillo-mas-alla/.

[39] La Fundación Franco demandará al autor de la obra _Always Franco_, expuesta en ARCO. ABC, https://www.abc.es/20120216/cultura-arte/abci-franco-arco-201202161419.html.

[40] Á.L. Sucasas "Arte para reírse de Franco," _El País_, July 13, 2013 https://elpais.com/cultura/2013/07/06/actualidad/1373103073_413610.html.

[41] L. Tortosa Ibáñez, _Nuevos procedimientos artísticos en torno al compromiso ético estético en contextos de conflictividad socio-política_. Arte y Sociedad. Revista de Investigación. 15: 125-136. http://asri.eumed.net/15/conflictividad-socio-politica.pdf.

the Spanish public, and then only upon presentation of an official national identification card – Sierra "increasingly relies on techniques of obstruction and concealment, creating a variety of artificial barriers that point to real, if often unremarked, accessibility issues." These include one's access to public sphere and their history, as well as to a discourse which could express discord or revolt. Sierra always reacts to the present crises and plays on bold analogies which most of his audience rejects and institutions reach for acts of censorship. In his collaborative black and white video made with Jorge Galindo, *Los encargados* [The managers] (2012), the artists depict seven black Mercedes-Benz cars driven along Madrid's Gran Via as if during a funeral procession. On top of each of them there is a huge upside-down painterly portrait of King Juan Carlos and the 6 democratic prime ministers of Spain. The soundtrack for the parade is *Warszawianka,* Polish socialist revolutionary song, adapted in Spanish in 1936 as *A las Barricadas*, which later became a popular hymn of the Spanish anarchists during the Spanish Civil War. On several occasions has Sierra criticized façade Spanish democracy which differs little from the authoritarian rule. This time, the artists' criticism has to do with the political representatives' responsibility for financial crisis and disregard of those who suffered it most.

Sierra's practice can be paralleled with that of Polish video artist, Artur Żmijewski's, whose numerous intervention in how Poles imagine themselves and their historical role as well as the other in and outside of them has caused disturbance and at times even outrage. He has also worked as art curator and critic, as well as artistic editor of the *Krytyka Polityczna* [Political Critique] journal. His works such as 1999 *Game of Tag* or *80064*, *Our Songbook, Zeppelintribune* and many others touching the problem of Polish and Jewish memory, inability and simultaneous necessity to touch trauma, to pick at wounds in order to make it possible for them to heal were found obscene, unbearable or not artistic enough – a combination of reproaches often found in similar cases. And yet returning to visually examine what Polish collective finds offensive, how it defends itself against the painful self-knowledge and what it finds most threatening for the stability of its value system and pride of its history Żmijewski proves not only that he feels part of that collective and has the right to pursue his path of laborious self-examination but also that he cares rather than attacks or offends. He is also openly demanding return to social engagement of the arts – gesture, he claims has been compromised by the socialist propaganda and authoritarian instrumentalization, yet there is something to be recuperated of this tradition and heritage. [***Body and conflict***]

In Wilhelm Sasnal's painterly works as well as in his films (co-directed with his wife, Anka Sasnal) the artist is working with both the darkest episodes of Polish and European history as well as with most abject affects related to them. He admits to being ashamed and to wanting to touch the reality of this feeling. Like Żmijewski he positions himself within the community he portrays with his critical eye: community of memory and of oblivion, of repression and of false identifications. Sansal paints through the study of images, mostly photographs, or as in the case of his *Maus* and *Shoah* paintings through study of other forms of cultural representations and thus offers a broader visual reflection on the role of images in shaping cultural memory and its transmission.

The interest in existing and circulated images which relate to traumatic and troubling past as well as to collective myths has been at the centre of Piotr Uklański's work. His reproduced portraits *The Nazis* (2000) – a series of 164 colour and black-and-white photographs of famous actors – including

four Polish actors – who had played Nazis in films was exhibited in a grid. The artist demonstrated the "fascinating fascism", as Susan Sontag coined it, through glamour portraits of charming and elegant men in uniforms. The audience was to confront their own gaze as a part of the collective imaginary that aestheticizes memory of atrocities. The exhibition in a contemporary art institution in Warsaw provoked public debate on several levels but mostly it was referred to as an accusation of actors for impersonating the Nazis. At the centre of this heated conflict there was a misunderstanding of the very meaning and role of the image, and despite the fact that the "naïve" views and arguments prevailed in public opinion – the underlying sentiment was the discomfort with displaying Poles as implicated in or even collaborating with Nazism. One of the actors depicted came to the gallery and destroyed the work with his sabre thus referring to his other role – famous Polish knight. By this yet another "artistic" intervention, the notion of national purity and dignity was temporarily saved. The event, however, ultimately led to the dismissal of Anda Rottenberg, the director of the gallery who had to face brutal antisemitic attacks.

Uklański's archive of popular culture representations can be seen next to <u>Zbigniew Libera's *LEGO. Concentration Camp*</u> (1996) is one of the most important Polish art-works of the 1990s. It comprises 7 boxes of bricks, uncanny imitations of Lego products, which the artist used to build a concentration camp. The work was made entirely of pieces "borrowed" from real Lego sets: a police station, pirates, and others with some additions commission by the artist from the company. The boxes are marked „This work of Zbigniew Libera has been sponsored by Lego". The work is in the collection of the Jewish Museum in New York as well as of Modern Art Museum, Warsaw. The first public display sparked huge controversy and large public debate which actually recurs every time the work is about to be presented, be it locally or internationally. Libera was attacked first of all for banalization and trivialization of the Holocaust; he was accused of lack of respect for the victims as well as for hurting the children for whom Lego blocks are the epitome of innocent education and joyous play. The work was initially considered an inappropriate rendition of historical horror – in some conversations Libera was pointing to the fact that what triggered the work and served as an echo of Nazi concentration camps was news of mass killings and genocidal actions during the war in the Balkans (fought from 1991 onwards). Libera withdrew from representing Poland at the Biennale di Venezia in 1997, when the curator of the Polish Pavilion refused to include LEGO in the show.

Exhibitions and artistic events as sites for and of conflict

All the above-mentioned works of the Polish artists have reached wide international audiences, by being included in large group shows, including such by now classics such as *Mirroring Evil. Nazi Imagery, Recent Art* (New York, 2002), or *History Will Repeat Itself* (Germany, 2007). It is through the exhibition format that certain artistic as well as social and political phenomena are being addressed and analysed in public and with the public. During the RePAST research in the field of arts and culture we have come across several examples which testify to crucial role exhibition as a discursive form but also as a site for people to come together to experience art, to re-experience past events and to learn (or unlearn) how to perceive the world around them: world which is often seen as a palimpsest of sorts: where multiple and conflicting histories overlap, some narratives

erase the others, new layers of memory replace the older ones, etc. The role of the art exhibition is often to unearth what lies beneath as in the case of *Von Mäusen und Menschen*, Berlin Biennial 2006 curated by Maurizio Cattelan, Massimiliano Gioni and Ali Subotnick, or to offer a platform for numerous often disparate and competing narratives of collective memories and identities, of current struggles for recognition and intense sentiments attached to the wounds of the past: both documenta 10 (Germany, 1997) curated by Catherine David and documenta 14 (Germany / Greece, 2017) curated by Adam Szymczyk acted in this way (in line with the famous documenta 11 (Germany 2002 curated by Okwi Enwezor). Being immense international group exhibitions preceded by several years of curatorial research they famously addressed multiplicity of issues, yet some of these issues were tackled in a way that moved forward both the discussion within the art world itself and the public discussion at large.

Exhibition entitled *Divided Memories 1940-1950. The distance between history and experience* (Greece) curated by Peter Panes, produced by Goethe-Institut Thessaloniki (in collaboration with the Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki and the German Historical Museum in Berlin). The exhibition focused on the cultural and artistic realities and their different expressions during the periods of Occupation (1941-1944) and Civil War (1946-1949) in Greece, and specifically in Thessaloniki, given the particularity of its geopolitical position, its pre-war cosmopolitan society, its industrialized economy, and the Holocaust of its Jews. The exhibition showcased the complexity of the historical past and the different ways it has been experienced and remembered through cultural and artistic discourses. It included the emotional dimension of experience and with the hard-headed standardizing of ideologies, attempting to establish a dialogue between artistic and cultural artifacts on the one hand and public and private archival documents on the other. The German-Greek reception of the exhibition reflects different memory cultures and memory work done towards facing one's historical complicity. The exhibition was generally received well: German commentators focused mostly on the ways the exhibition breaks a long post-war silence and reveals Salonica' repressed Jewish past as well as Greek Christian complicity in the Holocaust with shame and guilt dominating. Greek Christian commentators on the other hand rather stressed the Occupation and the Civil War.

Miquel Risques' exhibition *Franco, Victoria, República, Impunidad y espacio* (Spain 2017) deals with the display and management of collective memory in public space in Catalonia. It reviews trials and tribulations of three particular monuments – The Republic; Victory; and the equestrian statue of Franco–, how they are related and the mindset of their creators. The monuments dedicated to the Fascist Victory and the dictator, Franco, remained on display in Barcelona's public space well after democracy was restored, for more than thirty-five years, to be removed in 2011 and 2008 respectively. The exhibition included two original sculptures from the dictatorship and the image of The Republic, which projected onto the wall of El Born Centre de Cultura y Memòria. This exhibition generated debate and an outrage a public debate at the impunity that existed during democracy with Franco's symbols in urban space. The exhibition generated a bitter controversy that confronted the municipal groups of the government, those of the opposition, as well as associations of victims of Francoism and of Nazism. The exterior part of the exhibition was defaced several times. People threw eggs at the Franco statue and painted it on the first night of the

exhibition. Later it was pushed to the ground. Even before the exhibition opened political controversy surrounded it, because according to the nationalistic parties, and especially the Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya, placing the statutes on a public square in front of the art center was "offensive" to the victims, and that such an exhibition would be viable in a country where "the executioners were tried and the victims were buried."[42] Moreover, the square in front of the art center is considered to be a "sanctuary" for Catalan national identity. Thus, the controversy is related to the conflict between Madrid and Barcelona over the independence of the region.

Exhibition *Art of the Troubles* (Northern Ireland, 2014) at the Ulster Museum in Belfast was a major retrospective putting on display over sixty works by nearly 50 artists from Northern Ireland – including, Joe McWilliams, Willie Doherty, FE McWilliam, Rita Duffy, Paul Seawright, Jack Pakenham, Michael Farrell and Richard Hamilton. It gives a sense of what it means for art to accompany the conflict, record it and respond to it in all kinds of media including paintings, drawings, photographs, videos and sculpture, and genres. The exhibition explored a broad range of themes, including violence and destruction, suffering and loss, traditions and life in the midst of turmoil while the artists portrayed numerous different historical protagonists. Critics praised the scale and the comprehensiveness of the exhibition. The artists' voice and vision came together to offer an interpretation of collective history and a reflection on the present.

Polish curator and critic, Anda Rottenberg already in 1995, 6 years after the political and social transformation in the light of an ongoing war in the Balkans saw the need to open up public debate on neighbourly violence and the memory thereof. Thus, she asked several artists the question: *Gdzie jest brat Twój, Abel?* (Where is Thy Brother Abel) and the outcome was shown on display addressing the memory of World War II camps and genocides, predominantly the Holocaust, human cruelty, mass violence and suffering. This exhibition as well as its catalogue is an ultimate point of reference for any discussion on visual arts in Poland and the conversation about the Holocaust and Polish guilt. In Zachęta Gallery as well as elsewhere Rottenberg continued to curate numerous shows touching upon the most difficult and troubled past and human anxieties, attitudes and ambiguities in relation to it. She has become a target of massive anti-Semitic campaign in 2000-2001 which lead to her losing the job as the Director of the gallery. This incident in turn became a subject of Goshka Macuga's artistic intervention Untitled (2011-2012).

Moving images / moved audiences

The last group of works in the RePAST collection of art-practices responding to conflict and instigating conflict in order to reshape its memory is the cinematic production. Some conflicts such as the Troubles in Ireland found their portrayal in numerous films over the timespan of thirty years. Various aspects of this painful history are revisited today in reference to current echoes or

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[42] T. Sust, "El conflicto de la estatua de Franco en el Born, último episodio del mal clima entre ERC y Colau," *El Periódico*, August 5, 2016 https://www.elperiodico.com/es/barcelona/20160805/el-conflicto-de-la-estatua-de-franco-frente-al-born-ultimo-episodio-de-la-mala-relacion-entre-erc-y-colau-5309349.

resonances (as was the case of Steve McQueen's *Hunger* 2005). Some artists, as already discussed Margarethe von Trotta worked with historical issues throughout her carrier (with her partner Volker Schlöndorff she co-directed and immediate filmic response to the conflict in German society over RAF activities in late 1960s and 1970s.). In Poland for many filmmakers after 1989 the ability of the medium to reach large audience with a story of even the darkest and most traumatizing or contested aspects of Polish history. Władysław Pasikowski's *Psy* [Pigs] 1992 and his *Pokłosie* [Aftermath] 2012 are two very prominent examples of the painful analytical and critical operations of the social body that cinema can perform. It's hard to overestimate the shock provoked by *Psy*. It told the story of a good bad guy (former member of Communist Secuirty), as a new incarnation of main Polish figure of the intelligentsia. It equated the former, Communist and the present, Solidarity governments (the red ones and black ones). It anticipated the secret files or lustration discussion (or hysteria). It defamed iconic images of the anti-Communist struggle, depicted the brave new world of gangsters and mafia, and portrayed women as male trophies. 20 years later Pasikowski directed thriller and drama on the Holocaust memory and oblivion in Poland, inspired by the case of historical pogrom 1941. The event is at the very centre of Polish historical discussion since 2000 book *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne* by Jan Tomasz Gross. Pasikowski touched the painful repression and the complicity, collective violence of stigmatization and cruelty against the other. The immediate public reaction to the film was denial – the discussion engaged many individuals but also organisations, acting either for research and recognizing the truth or for the defense of Polish dignity and pride. The movie became a vivid spot of the debate, and both the director and actors got a lot of criticism and hatred as well as support and respect from the public.

Cinema very often "fights" for social justice by telling stories people can identify with. This is true of both documentary and feature films. Spanish *El silencio de otros* (2018) by Almudena Carracedo, Robert Bahar in a documentary form reveals the ongoing struggle for justice of victims of Franco's dictatorship. Filmed in the timespan of over six years, the film follows victims and survivors as they organize the groundbreaking "Argentine Lawsuit" and fight a state-imposed amnesia of crimes against humanity, in a country still divided four decades into democracy. Through the stories of individual protagonists, the public participates in the struggle of a community that wants to reconcile with its past, find and face truth and reach reconciliation. The directors follow the debate which begun in 2010, with public revealing of the story of "stolen children". Uncovering these state crimes reaching back to early days of Franco's regime, led to uncovering more marginalisation and silencing of victims of many other Franco-era crimes, including mass killings from the end of the Spanish Civil War or incidents of torture as recent as 1975.

Shok (2015) a Kosovar short drama film by Jamie Donoughue is returning to the events of the 1990s war in Kosovo and centers on two young protagonists, boys whose lives after the conflict were shaped by the traumatic experience and who revisit the wound through the cinematic form. The film was found to have transmitted very strong sense of friendship, loss and empathy. It communicated very well with international audience despite the fact that it touched upon the implicatedness of the global audience in the wars in former Yugoslavia.

Greek director, Fotos Lambrinos, in his documentary television series *Panorama mias eptaetias: Hounta einai. Tha perasei?* (It's just a junta, will it pass?) (2011) and a book accompanying the project (2014) offers a highly edited version (found-footage) the *Epikaira*, the official weekly junta newsreel. It was deemed an interesting and ambivalent perspective on the historical and political events. One of the critics observed: "Fotos Lambrinos re-stages the already staged propaganda, since every single frame has an element of fiction. The director's gaze is selective, "subjective": it selects, through direction, edition, and sound, what will be shown and what not. (…) He exposes the stupidity of the junta, the surrounding kitsch and the immeasurable emptiness of the Helleno-Christian ideology"[43]. The director was criticized for overusing humour and grotesque, for anachronism of the images and too fast a pace of editing, last but not least lack of contextualization of the images. Yet by consciously editing the found-footage, Lambrinos offered an insight into radical change of Greek society: the emergence of new social class of the *nouveau riches*, whose longing for good enough life legitimized the authoritarian regime to a large extent.

Syllas Tzoumerkas' *Hòra proèlefsis* (Homeland) 2010 examines 30 years of turbulent history of modern Greece through the story of a family. The director penetrates the social structure demonstrating that "homeland," family, often leaves scares and heritage that one struggles with forever. Thus, the film praises freedom (earned through ceaseless struggle), protest and dissidence against dictatorship and oppression, truth and transparency, sincerity in every kind of relationships. Tzoumerkas' film gives a glimpse into mass movements from the 1950s to 1980s and present-day clashes between policemen and protesters. Thus, past and present are conflated, as contemporary concerns are superimposed on earlier historical periods in the process of reconstruction. Remarkable editing succeeds in creating a powerful and convincing visual narrative which Greeks can identify with.

6. Concluding remarks

The cases gathered and further researched prove that there exists a multi-layered and intimate connection between art and collective memory of conflict; this relationship depends on:

- historical context (what was the conflict, who was involved)
- current political situation (especially, who is responsible for the creation of the so-called memory politics)
- time that passed from the conflict (whether it is a recent event whose survivors, witnesses are alive and participate in cultural events)
- tradition of artists' involvement with matters of politics and history
- history of art / culture of the region, as well as the role of artistic / cultural institutions.

These works offer sites and occasions for:

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[43] S. Triantafyllou, *Χούντα είναι, θα περάσει*, Book Press https://www.bookpress.gr/stiles/soti-triantafillou/labrinos-hounta.

- remembrance and commemoration;
- counter-remembrance (reaching for what has been omitted in state or public memory)
- voicing the right to acquire a place in history on behalf of subjects who have been disregarded and unrepresented;
- representing historical experience hitherto absent from public sphere; making it visible and heard, and thus making it recognized;
- introducing emotions and non-verbal, non-intellectual means of communication as well as "sources" providing insight into historical experience and the memory of conflict;
- resisting dominant modes of narrating past events, sharing them and transmitting to younger generations;
- exposing power structures involved in shaping memory discourse about the past conflict;
- demanding social change and reshaping of collective identities;
- introducing analogies and hypotheses concerning various aspects of past conflicts which would be impossible to find in any other discourses (such as journalistic, political, historiographical, etc.;
- while addressing elements from the past, it offers possible points of reference for common and collective experience in the present and of the present.

Artistic interventions into the structures of feeling and remembering allow for uncovering and affirmation of that which has been absent, forgotten, diminished, discriminated, downplayed, silenced, found unworthy of public recognition or repressed from collective memory. It is memory work, political action and a statement on the condition of arts and culture at the same time.

These practices and interventions draw on the **archive of collective conventions, images, actions, gestures**, etc. thus putting together a statement that would be to some extent at least familiar to the audience. (This will be further documented and analysed in the Deliverable 4.3). Very often the reception concentrates not on "understanding the message"– the message itself may be obscure – but rather on providing an experience of something which would "shock to think" or **provoke to think and feel about both past and present**. Different media and genres do it in different ways and with various intensities.

These interventions doubtless have power (even if not on their own, but combined with other kinds of interventions into the public sphere and the sphere of collective imagery) to influence and shape the narrative about the conflict, to **let the conflict be seen in a different light and from a different perspective**.

Art creates a sense of **collective potential**, it might – though does not necessarily have to – be activated in the future. Each new encounter with a work of art, intervention in the visual culture adds up to the experience of the community recognizing itself as a historical and political subject, the experience of being formed and interpellated as a community.

As difficult to grasp and measure with tools of social sciences, these experiences need not be overlooked or their meaning diminished – they provide a testimony of a kind of collective's character and its development, in its ability to pursue self-critical (potentially destabilizing or

threatening) undertakings, to grow stronger and more immune to political propaganda, fake news, emotional manipulation, etc. Constituting an identity which is not too easily threatened by criticism, which is not pathologically attached to the dependence on authority, which does not seek consolation or comfort at the expense of truth (at times unwelcome and painful) can be an outcome of the practices described above.

Visual culture is about seeing, the practices of critical looking or of claiming one's "right to look" (Nicholas Mirzoeff[44]); art often teaches us to *unsee* and *unlearn*, to be able to see in the familiar the new and often traumatising aspects of reality; the will to *unsee* is powerful but so is art, and when it concentrates on that which lies behind the familiar, it reaches to the very core of what goes without saying in the organisation of the visual field, or the field of visibility: who gets attention, who is out of sight, who is allowed to see and what, etc. The protocols of seeing are followed by the protocols of knowledge production and transmission, therefore it is crucial to let art and culture do their job.

And what is this job really? Many would agree that these artistic practices **awaken awareness** in individuals and group audiences. This awareness ideally would then **lead to mobilization and action** against wrongdoings. On the other hand, however, Jacques Rancière observed some time ago already that "there is **no straightforward road from the fact of looking at a spectacle to the fact of understanding the state of the world**; no direct road from intellectual awareness to political action."[45] What is there then, one might ask, and rightly so. What these practices touch upon are first of all our bodies, imaginations and feelings, and this – as so many progressive political theorists have been convincing us recently – is the crux of politics. Not the politics written in manifestos of political parties, nor the politics of the governments, but rather the very way of managing people, of mobilizing communities, of forming identities, of making memory work, etc.

As many critics have already pointed out, the insights of artists, and forms of their engagement as well as their responses demand more from critics and scholars than they have already received. Hence, the urgency and necessity to keep researching and analysing; to offer as many as possible intersectional analysis, multidirectional readings, cross-country comparative interpretations, multi-media and multi-genre clusters. One of the aims of this project is to **overcome the apparent isolation of arts and cultural practices from the actual social and political life**, and prove that arts play a crucial role among complex, oftentimes competing narratives about past conflicts, and a very specific role; a role whose many aspects and many zones of impact we have pointed out and discussed more specifically above, and shall continue in the subsequent steps of the research in Work Package 4. There seems to be a strong case to be made for allowing space in reflection of the past for what we call here "**artistic reflection" and "intervention" in** *the structures of feeling* (Ben Anderson[46]) and **in** *distribution of the sensible* (Jacques Ranciere[47]). The significance of their

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[44] N. Mirzoeff, "The Right to Look," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Spring 2011), pp. 473-496.

[45] J. Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. G. Elliott, Verso, London 2009, p.75.

[46] B. Anderson, *Encountering Affect: Capacities, Apparatuses, Conditions*. Farnham, Ashgate Surrey Burlington, VT 2014.

numerous and diverse practices should be recognized and granted an adequate status. Moreover, **education** should be aimed at preparing social actors of different age, class, gender and race to participate in and benefit from artistic and cultural production.

The range of visual and performative (aesthetic) techniques which serve among others to highlight meaningful omissions, repressions, contagious heritage, competing interests and stakes, different politics of memory, etc. have been appropriated by actors from outside of the artistic field, and employed to state, communicate and put forth concerns vital for the relationship to the past conflicts and for determining their role in the present. Sometimes critics would talk about art that made it onto the streets (used on and as posters, signs, slogans, etc.). But at the same time, we have to bear in mind that there is art of the streets and a range of gestures performed in the public sphere (on streets) such as graffiti works and various iconophilic and iconoclastic interventions. Such interventions omit the institutional, professional circuit and are often directed against it. It is an art of discord and protest *per se*.

As many critics have pointed out, contemporary art, with its interest and explicit involvement in social and political matters, is driven by tremendous **passion**: a passion to uncover and reveal, to make visible and present, a passion to retrieve, a passion to criticise, a passion to mourn, to remember, a passion to feel with and empathize. These artistic undertakings and such explicit interventions into public, visual sphere often meet equally passionate responses, even if the audiences reached are not huge. Visibility granted to various problems, people and emotions has its downside in that they can become targeted by acts of hatred, humiliation, shaming, etc. Moreover, this art can be also dismissed as threatening, obscene, vulgar, or even blasphemous. When established values and narratives have been questioned or even compromised (as supportive of oppressive regimes), an **impulse for censorship** (guised as "protection") emerges. This has been seen in some of the cases discussed above. The arguments employed on the one hand refer to protection of the values and people attached to them, social stability, tradition and morale; on the other hand, they safeguard particular types of cultural and artistic expression as well as the artistic canon. Yet it seems, based on the case studies, that in order for a controversy to take place, there has to be a sense that some crucial values, figures, notions have been threatened and that it might be followed by certain political or social mobilization – agency to make a shift from the symbolic realm into the real one. It seems that **the potential for controversy** is bigger when the two come together, and when the collective is faced with a long and laborious task of re-thinking the very foundations of its identity (a construct which in all countries under research is inseparable from memory). Censorship is also a social process and it can be initiated not only by political decisions; it has a lot to do with control and attachment to what we know about the past and how we agreed to feel about it. **Protest**, on the other hand, seems to be an accepted, adequate response in public space where the art events one encounters demand one's strong and decisive reaction. These protests against works of art / artefacts very often employ similar means of visual communication to what they respond to.

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[47] J. Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics. The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. G. Rockhill, Continuum, London 2004.

It is precisely in the last three decades that so many battles have taken place over the role of art and its place in societies. The art world is regulated by rules internal to it, but it more and more often claims its right to public debate, not as a voice identical with other already present voices, but precisely as a unique form of communication, a form which still proves difficult to comprehend and embrace. Conflict instigated by works of arts or artistic interventions seems to be a necessary stage in the process of reshaping collective memory, questioning its premises, rewriting history (both individual and collective) so that it becomes more inclusive, respectful of difference, and self-aware.

As has been stated in the report *Conflict Transformation through Culture: Peace-Building and the Arts* from one of Salzburg Global Seminars[48]:

> *Since cultural differences are so often at the heart of conflict, cultural practice needs to be at the heart of conflict resolution as well. Cultural engagement helps in transforming conflict by transforming perceptions, how we look at the 'other' and the whole process of 'otherization'. As part of that process, there is a continual sense of unlearning what we have learnt before and then the process of relearning anew about culture in different perspectives. This provides a framework for rehumanization of societies and is a corner stone of conflict transformation.*

One of the participants stressed that:

> *The role of culture in politics is something that can't be taught as a discourse, but only learnt as an experience. Arts humanize ideology. Performing arts such as dance, drama and music are the most symbolic as they represent the most fundamental aspects of individuality.*

As is by now clear in the report, the RePAST teams have not limited their research to the countries under investigation, but also looked more broadly finding inspiration and correspondences in similar research projects in other countries, in context of other conflicts and procedures of conflict instigation / resolution, as well as other troubled pasts. As much as the scopes, attitudes and methodologies may differ, all these initiatives seem to be complementing one another and expanding the field of reflection on the role of arts and culture in coming to terms with troubled pasts and in shaping individual and collective memory. It is becoming a very productive and interesting field. There seems to be growing and global interest in approaching troubles pasts / past and present conflicts through artistic discourses which seem to provide a very specific kind of laboratory which offers room for expression of emotions and stating of concerns, staging of anxieties, etc. which would not be welcome in the mainstream, traditional channels of social / collective communication, nor in expert discourses such as media / political discourse. What is it then that art / culture provides? And how best to use it to benefit from it, to manage its resources,

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[48]   https://www.salzburgglobal.org/news/latest-news/article/conflict-transformation-through-culture-peace-building-and-the-arts-1.html

to support its flourishing so that in return it supports our collective dwelling and managing the conflict situations, past traumas, present crises and anxieties regarding the future?

Appendix: correspondences and synergies

In the course of RePAST research, we have been paying attention and following the developments of the below projects (the short descriptions come from the project's websites). Some of them provided source of inspiration and allowed us to precisely design our workplan and choice of methodology as well as proved that the research done in the "arts and culture" work package creatively and productively corresponds with an international tendency (both academic and artistic) to strongly rely on arts and cultural production in approaching knowledge of the past and in designing possible scenarios for the future.

- Art & Reconciliation https://artreconciliation.org/

  Art&Reconciliation is an innovative and interdisciplinary research initiative, funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, and led by King's College London and partners at the University of the Arts London and London School of Economics and Political Science, that seeks to find answers to these critical questions.

- Culture+Conflic http://www.cultureandconflict.org.uk/

  Culture+Conflict is a not-for-profit agency focusing on art produced in, or in response to, conflict and post-conflict situations across the world.

- Salzburg Global Seminar. Culture, Arts and Society

  https://www.salzburgglobal.org/multi-year-series/culture.html

  The Culture, Arts and Society series harnesses the transformative power of the arts to shape a better world. Through future-focused programs and projects, it raises the profile of culture and the arts in policy agendas, catalyzes exchange across disciplines and sectors, and sustains a unique creative community across continents.

- Internationale https://www.internationaleonline.org/research/ (Slovenia, Spain, Belgium, Poland, Turkey, the Netherlands, Sweden, Ireland) along with associate organizations from the academic and artistic fields. *L'Internationale is a confederation of modern and contemporary art institutions offering a space for art within a non-hierarchical and decentralized internationalism, based on the values of difference and horizontal exchange among a constellation of cultural agents, locally rooted and globally connected.*

- Contemporary Art in Times of Social Crisis http://curatorsintl.org/research/contemporary-art-in-times-of-social-crisis a project within *Independent Curators International (ICI) is a unique arts organization that focuses on the role of the curator in contemporary art. We believe that curators create more than exhibitions — they are arts community leaders and organizers who champion artistic practice; build essential infrastructures, such as art spaces and institutions; and generate public engagement with art. Curators are, therefore, uniquely*

positioned to have an important impact on the artistic field, and on the communities they serve.

- Journal, *South as a State of Mind* http://southasastateofmind.com/issue/

South as a State of Mind is a bi-annual arts and culture journal published in Greece and distributed internationally. Possessed by a spirit of absurd authority, we try to contaminate the prevailing culture with ideas that derive from southern mythologies such as the 'perfect climate', 'easy living', 'chaos', 'corruption', and the 'dramatic temperament', among others.

- The Archive of Modern Conflict https://archiveofmodernconflict.com

The Archive of Modern Conflict is an organization dedicated to the collection and preservation of vernacular photographs, objects, artefacts, curiosities, and ephemera. Founded in 1991, the archive began as a collection of photographs relating to war and conflict but has since expanded its remit to become the vast and thematically diverse repository it is today.

- Thinking through the Museum http://thinkingthroughthemuseum.org/

Thinking through the Museum: Difficult Knowledge in Public brings together researchers, curators, artists, and community members seeking new terms of engagement for learning from histories of violence and conflict. The project addressed the following questions:

How can museums deepen public debate on difficult historical and cultural issues?

How can museums increase public access to knowledge?

How can museums help democratize society?

How can museums contribute to positive social change?

- All Monuments Must Fall

https://archive.nyu.edu/bitstream/2451/40071/2/All%20Monuments%20Must%20Fall%20A%20Syllabus.pdf *is a crowd-sourced assemblage of materials relating to Confederate and other racist monuments to white supremacy; the history and theory of these monuments and*

monuments in general; and monument struggles worldwide.

- De/construction of Monument

http://scca.ba/scca-projects/deconstruction-of-monument/

multidisciplinary project, 2004 – 2007, composed as a series of panel discussions, lectures and seminars, artistic presentations, exhibitions and interventions in public space. This project involved particularly important examples of the post-Yugoslav counter-monument– works that re-thought the forms, objects and stakes of public memory

- Conflict Transformation through Culture Peace-Building and the Arts

https://www.salzburgglobal.org/news/latest-news/article/conflict-transformation-through-culture-peace-building-and-the-arts-1.html

Bringing together 60 artists, activists, policymakers, educators, and cultural actors from 27 countries, the session aimed to consider the role of cultural institutions, from museums and art galleries to film studios, can play in post-conflict reconciliation and forgiveness.

- Monument to Transformation http://monumenttotransformation.org/

The question we put to ourselves in the autumn of 2006 was a relatively simple one: What has happened in the twenty years since the fall of the "Iron Curtain" to us, to the artistic imagination, to society? How are we to relate today to the twenty-year period of transformation that we were, and still are, part of?

- TRACES. Transmitting Contentious Cultural Heritages with the Arts

http://www.traces.polimi.it/

European cultural heritage is inherently complex and layered. In the past, conflicting or controversial perspectives on different historical memories and experiences have been colliding in the rich cultural landscape of Europe and continue to do so in the present. These contentious heritages are often particularly difficult to convey to a wide public and can impede inclusivity as well as prevent the development of convivial relations. Nevertheless, if transmitted sensitively, they can contribute to a process of reflexive Europeanisation, in which the European imagination is shaped by self-awareness, on-going critical reflection, and dialogue across different positions.

- MNEMONICS https://www.mnemonics.ugent.be/about/ *Network for Memory Studies is a collaborative initiative for graduate education in memory studies between the Danish Network for Cultural Memory Studies, the Flemish Memory Studies Network, the London Cultural Memory Consortium, the Swedish Memory Studies Network, and programs at Goethe University Frankfurt, UC Irvine, UCLA, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Utrecht University, and Columbia University (associate partner).*

- Women in Black http://womeninblack.org/about-women-in-black/

Women in Black is a world-wide network of women committed to peace with justice and actively opposed to injustice, war, militarism and other forms of violence. As women experiencing these things in different ways in different regions of the world, we support each other's movements. An important focus is challenging the militarist policies of our own governments. We are not an organization, but a means of communicating and a formula for action.

- https://www.kvinnohistoriska.se/eng aimed at *Showing respect for women's lives and their work; Actively challenging the marginalization of women in the creation and use of history; Highlighting how women influence the progress of society.*

www.repast.eu