

(NATIONLESS)



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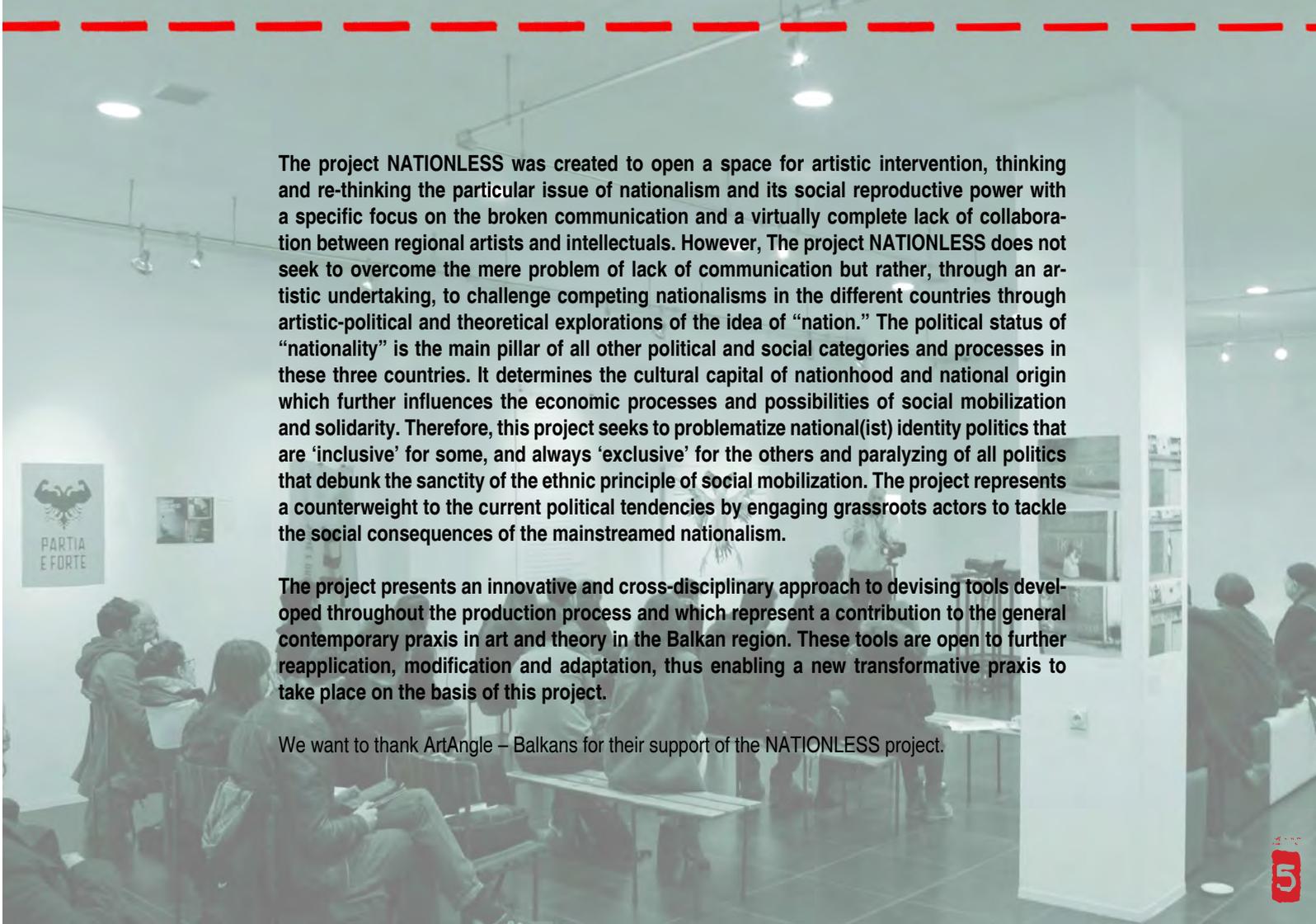
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The project NATIONLESS was created to open a space for artistic intervention, thinking and re-thinking the particular issue of nationalism and its social reproductive power with a specific focus on the broken communication and a virtually complete lack of collaboration between regional artists and intellectuals. However, The project NATIONLESS does not seek to overcome the mere problem of lack of communication but rather, through an artistic undertaking, to challenge competing nationalisms in the different countries through artistic-political and theoretical explorations of the idea of “nation.” The political status of “nationality” is the main pillar of all other political and social categories and processes in these three countries. It determines the cultural capital of nationhood and national origin which further influences the economic processes and possibilities of social mobilization and solidarity. Therefore, this project seeks to problematize national(ist) identity politics that are ‘inclusive’ for some, and always ‘exclusive’ for the others and paralyzing of all politics that debunk the sanctity of the ethnic principle of social mobilization. The project represents a counterweight to the current political tendencies by engaging grassroots actors to tackle the social consequences of the mainstreamed nationalism.

The project presents an innovative and cross-disciplinary approach to devising tools developed throughout the production process and which represent a contribution to the general contemporary praxis in art and theory in the Balkan region. These tools are open to further reapplication, modification and adaptation, thus enabling a new transformative praxis to take place on the basis of this project.

We want to thank ArtAngle – Balkans for their support of the NATIONLESS project.

Introduction to the NATIONless

Artan Sadiku

The collaborative initiative between the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities – Skopje, the organization Dam Dash- Belgrade and the University of Thessaloniki - Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies brought together around 100 artists, theoreticians and activists in a series of exciting events in the three cities. Some of the materials produced during these are presented in this publication. The goal of the project was to explore the potential of art for political critique and to produce a relevant material praxis in challenging and struggling with the different modes of recurring nationalisms in the Balkan region, through the innovative alliance of art and theory.

The first event *Autonomy / Releasing* was held in April 2015 in Skopje at the Youth Cultural Center, the second one *Nation / emanations* was held in June 2015 in Belgrade at the Museum of the History of Yugoslavia and the event *Reflective nostalgia and its everyday aesthetic* was held in October 2015 at the Museum of Contemporary art in Thessaloniki. *Actualization* was the last and closing event of the project Nationless held in December 2015 in Skopje. It aimed at actualizing the results of the whole process of production, upgrading, combining, adapting and reshaping through presenting several theoretical/artistic/activist models for intervention in the nationalist (re)production cycles in the society.

This project enabled a serious attempt for a common innovative approach to nationalism from all the sides of the borders. It marked an initial introduction to the local artist and activist scenes with the contexts in the three countries in the field of art and activism in the struggle to resist the harmful consequences of mutually contributing nationalism. It is our pleasure to have worked towards this with all the participating artists, theorists and activists from Macedonia, Serbia, Greece, Kosovo and Albania, and we wish to thank all of them for their collaborative effort in generating the innovative content of the project.

The aim of this publication is to enable a continuous dissemination of the anti-nationalist discourse within wider social sectors and to serve as a basis for new initiatives and actions that will create local centers of resistance to nationalist tendencies. We hope that it will serve as a motivating tool as well as a resource for replication of the content produced in the cycle of the Nationless project.

Looking ahead, the picture of the future of Europe and also of the Balkans can resemble two possible scenarios: (1) one of the domination of xenophobic nationalisms and cultural closing within national borders and (2) that of a free exploration of ideas, exchange among cultures and inventing common paths of progress. Of course there will not be a final result of one of the two scenarios, but a constant process of competition of forces of reaction and those of progress. That is why we attempted to contribute to the enriching and opening of new spaces of contestation of nationalisms but also of creation of new content and common knowledge on potential for a non-national reference points to artistic and theoretical production as well as activist action.

Nationless is a call and a promise of a better future, a future that in the course of the year 2015 was practiced by dozens of participants in this project. Providing a model of a possibility of an emancipatory social practice, invites for more utopianism, for dreaming more and daring to get more from the future.



(THEORY)
TEXTS



MACEDONICITY AS AN ART OF NOT BEING GOVERNED

Akis Gavriilidis

Having lived in Thessaloniki around 1990, I personally witnessed the “our-name-is-our-soul” frenzy that emerged out of the blue in that city and its surroundings and became the starting point for the series of tragicomic events we all know. As most people, I was surprised by this eruption of heated interest for history, geopolitics, ethnology, and a number of other disciplines, for which I was totally unprepared. Listening to all these people who, with the air and the conviction of a specialist, repeated incessantly a set of newly discovered “scientific truths,” I felt uneasy, but also puzzled, because these “truths” concerned a period and a topic I had no deep knowledge about. Instinctively, I felt there was something wrong with these discourses, but was not quite sure what a valid counter-argument would be.

At that time of confusion, when Greek newspapers were sweepingly stormed by a repetitive wave of “experts” providing “evidence” that “the name Macedonia was never used to describe a language and a people before 1944, this use is arbitrary and artificial,” one day, in a small leftist newspaper, Epokhì, an article appeared which contained some other type of evidence. It was an excerpt from the 1924 novel *I zôi en tâfô* [The life in the grave] by Stratis Myrivilis. The book was probably written some years earlier, as it recounts the story of the 1st World War seen through the lens of a Greek soldier as a narrator/ protagonist. The narration is based largely on Myrivilis’s own personal experience.

At one point, the narrator is positioned at a small village near Monastiri/ Bitola, and he describes his interaction with its inhabitants in the following words:

These villagers, whose language is perfectly understood by the Bulgarians and the Serbs, dislike the former because they took their children for the Army. They hate the latter because they abuse them as being Bulgarians. And look with a sympathetic curiosity us Greeks [in the original: Romioi] because we are the genuine spiritual subjects of the Patrik, that is “the Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople”. (...) Nevertheless, they don’t want to be neither “Bulgàr”, nor “Srrp”, nor “Grrch”, only “Makedòn ortodòx” [in the original, the words as pronounced by the villagers are approximatively written in Greek scribe].

This article was for me a beam of light, a great encouragement and a helpful hint which lead me to further searching and reading. In the years that followed I often admired retrospectively the courage and honesty of its author, the philologist Mimis Souliôtis, who served as a director of

the public library at Lerin/ Flôrina and was not of Macedonian ethnic origin as far as I know.

But this is not my main point here. Apart from the role these lines played at the time, I think they can be helpful for us also in 2016, in a new way.

Reading again this description after so many years, I think in it we can find a perfect definition of nationless.

Macedonicity is here presented as a belonging/ non belonging, as a name chosen primarily to denote a willingness not to be part of any of the existing at the time national projects (with a particular mention to the willingness not to be part of the army).

Nevertheless, it is a very clear means of denoting a shared subjectivity. What Myrivilis is talking about here is not an “archaic survival,” a “pre-modern residue” or an “Ottoman nostalgia;” nor is it an “atomization of isolated consumers brought about by modern capitalism.” It is a positive being in common –while at the same time keeping states at a distance.

In this light, I think we could reinterpret today this description and find in it an additional layer of meaning, a new value beyond its use for contradicting the hate speech of Greek nationalists. Indeed, it could even shed new light to this hate speech itself, especially if combined with a reading of the book where the formulation “keeping the state at a distance” –and the title of this presentation- was inspired from: James C. Scott’s *The Art of Not Being Governed*.¹

Let us take as a first example the following passage.

Stateless peoples are typically stigmatized by neighboring cultures as “peoples without history,” as lacking the fundamental characteristic of civilization, namely historicity. The charges are wrong on two counts. First, the stigmatization presupposes that only written history counts as a narrative of identity and a common past. Second, and more important, how much history a people have, far from indicating their low stage of evolution, is always an active choice, one that positions them vis-à-vis their powerful text-based neighbors.²

To these “two counts” we could add a third one: that “history” is not something that belongs to “peoples” as its owners. Unless we follow a naïve, Eurocentric 19th-century conception of history as the development of national essences, as the solitary course of each Volk towards the

¹ James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed. An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009).

² *ibid.*, p. 237.

accomplishment of its destiny. More generally, history is not a thing possessed by anybody, be it a “people” or any other human community. History is a relationship, and is frequently produced in between, when people with diverse origins and identity meet, exchange, interact, even in a conflictual way, beyond the enclosures of national borders and of private property.

This can be illustrated in the case of the former Ottoman Empire as much as anywhere else, as the excerpt from the novel reminds us. Human subjectivities are also informed by, and manifested through, deviating from the course towards the formation of a nation-state –as much as in pursuing it. They are not defined solely by the exclusive inclusion in, and identification with, a predetermined community separated from other national communities by walls; but also by lesser or greater degrees of commonality or separateness, ranging from “sympathetic curiosity” to hostility and distributed unequally to groups or persons belonging both to one’s “own” and to “foreign” populations.

Although I am not a specialist in history, as I already noted, I have the impression that the Macedonian nation presents this characteristic probably in a higher degree than any other in the Balkans. In both its attempts to achieve an independent existence, the failed one in the beginning of the 20th century and the (more or less) successful one towards its end, this dimension was present: Macedonians tried to constitute themselves as a standalone state only after they had realized that it was impossible for them to continue living within a broader structure where they belonged up to then, because everybody else around them were pursuing their respective projects of state building –and, occasionally, trying to absorb also Macedonians in these projects.

Especially the Ilinden uprising, (which is never taught at schools and hardly ever written about in the public space in Greece, unless in order to say that “it was a trick devised by the Bulgarians who wanted to penetrate into Greek Macedonia”), was marked by a non-ethnic definition of the nation it aspired to found, even by proto-socialist and anarchist ideas, however simplistic or confused one would be tempted to consider them, more than any other national movement in the former Ottoman space.

Of course, this creates a paradox, or at least poses complex and difficult challenges, especially if such a move towards nation building succeeds. This paradox could be –paradoxically- paralleled to what Scott, speaking about Southeast Asia (and more precisely about the zone that he, following others, calls “Zomia”), describes as “antistate nationalism.”

Ethnic and ‘tribal’ identity, in the nineteenth century and much of the twentieth, has been associated with nationalism and the aspiration, often thwarted, to statehood. And today, the utter institutional hegemony of the nation-state as a political unit has encouraged

many ethnic groups in Zomia to aspire to their own nation-statehood. But what is novel and noteworthy for most of this long history in the hills is that ethnic and tribal identities have been put to the service not merely of autonomy but of statelessness. The paradox of 'antistate nationalism,' if it might be called that, is typically overlooked. But it must have been a very common, perhaps the most common, basis for identity until, say, the nineteenth century, when, for the first time, a life outside the state came to seem hopelessly utopian. E. J. Hobsbawm, in his perceptive study of nationalism, took note of these important exceptions: 'One might even argue that the peoples with the most powerful and lasting sense of what might be called 'tribal' ethnicity not merely resisted the imposition of the modern state, national or otherwise, but very commonly any state: as witness the Pushtun-speakers in and around Afghanistan, the pre-1745 Scots highlanders, the Atlas Berbers, and others who will come readily to mind.'³

Among these unnamed "others," I think it would be theoretically and politically tempting to examine if we can enlist certain tribes and ethnic groups in Southeast Europe as well, not only Asia.

In spite of these aporias, which sometimes can end up to awkward, if not plainly ridiculous solutions (such as the "antiquisation" urbanistic project for the city of Skopje), I think that the tension between the adjective and the noun, between the tendency for desertion, for non-identity, for escaping the state, and the centripetal tendency towards more state and a hard ethno-national identity, could, and should, be maintained, indeed used as a source of inspiration for us today. And also, as a reminder that, pace Scott, in the 21st century it is still possible to invent, maybe not a life outside the state, but at least lines of flight from it, even when its grasp seems total and absorbing, or rendering "hopelessly utopian" any such aspiration.

The Ilinden slogan "Macedonia to the Macedonians" can be read in (at least) two ways: one essentialist, according to which "Macedonicity" is a pre-existing essence pertaining to an already given set of people as opposed to others; whoever possesses it, is accepted as a legitimate owner and participant in the national project. But it can also be read in another way, probably more conform to the meaning the revolutionaries themselves were conceiving it: these "Macedonians" are an open assemblage of persons who happen to live in a given geographical space and are willing to live according to a set of declared and commonly adhered to principles. Greek nationalists sought in the past for signs of the first kind of belonging, and, as they were unable –also unwilling, of course- to find any, declared that "no Macedonian nation exists or has ever existed." But the second idea is clearly present in the Ilinden texts, where we find a recognition of multiplicity. Indeed, "Macedonians" there can be read as the name of a lack, a residue. Greek nationalists –or possibly even Macedonian, or any other kind of nationalists- may see that as

³ibid., p. 244.

a weakness; but we can see it as a positive value.

But in the light of Scott's analysis, I think we can also revisit these very accusations formulated by Greek nationalists against the "Skopjean [pseudo]nation." Indeed, all of these "accusations" are to be found in the list of techniques for not being governed in Scott's book. Mainstream "science" in Greece, whether in its scholarly or its lay form, rejects the idea of the existence of a Macedonian people on the basis that we cannot find a "hard core" or even a forerunner of such a people in archives, in Ottoman censuses, in written sources relaying a millenary existence and a worldwide mission for it, or epics recounting heroic accomplishments and genealogies, as opposed to Greeks (formerly known as Rum/ Romioi).

In a previous attempt,⁴ I had put forward an interpretation of these accusations as being a projection, through which the Greek society tries to get rid of unpleasant memories from its own past. I think this interpretation still stands, but now we can add a complement to it, which indeed was already implied in the first part: we only need to remember the well-known psychoanalytic principle, according to which we cannot stand in the other what we hate in ourselves, but we also cannot stand the other in so far as we imagine s/he is stealing our enjoyment. Greek intolerance about the idea of a Macedonian people can convey two tendencies at the same time: contempt/ rejection, but also admiration/ envy. If the premise of this intolerant discourse could be formulated as:

you are not a real nation, you have no history and no built or written monuments,

its conclusion, its latent content could be restituted and translated in both of the following ways:

- while we do have, so we are superior to you, that's why we are entitled to be a real state and proud about it, but you aren't.

But also,

- while we do have, so we are condemned to become (or to pretend we have become) a 'normal' nation-state, which we are not particularly happy about.

Indeed: from many different and convergent indices the past years, I have been convinced that the construction of the modern Greek nation state on the basis of the "glorious culture and history" of antiquity constitutes, at times, an unbearable burden to its citizens. In everyday conver-

⁴ «Name Trouble: the "so-called people" and the communism of language», at <http://wp.me/p1eY1R-km>. This text had been published, with a slightly different form (and title), in:

Mircela Dzuvalckovska Casule (ed), The name issue revisited, Macedonian Information Centre, Skopje 2014, pp. 313-343.

sations about the most varied topics (never in connection to the Macedonian issue, though), members of the Greek society end up exclaiming: "Oh well, let's give up; ours is not a proper state and it will never become one." This phrase is second only to "What a nice weather today" in producing universal consensus. I am not certain if all of the participants would agree to this too, but I am convinced that an implied meaning/ follow-up to this exclamation is: "But who cares? Fortunately so! Who wants to be a proper state anyway?"

I don't know if this makes things simpler or it complicates them, but it seems that the constantly reiterated performance of hate speech against the Macedonian nation is fueled from two different, indeed antithetical, sources: from a feeling of superiority against nationless peoples as much as from jealousy for them.

If this is so, I think it shows that the nationless idea is not a utopia for the future, but, as Marx used to say about communism, a material tendency already present in the existing order of things. Furthermore, it makes one think that it would be interesting, theoretically and politically, to try and work on this subtext, bring it to the fore and remove the shame and self-censorship which accompanies it. Macedonians may be a nation/ non nation, but that is true about everybody else among us; let us admit, assume and enjoy it.



NATIONLESS [AUTONOMY/LIBERATION] Exhibitio preparations, Branko Tesević and Dragan Protić,
4 April 2015, Youth cultural center (MKC), Skopje

MACEDONIAN 'ANTIQUISATION' AND GERMAN 'CRITICAL RECONSTRUCTION': TWO CULTURES OF THE PAST'

Elena Veljanovska

Some forty years ago, in a remote corner of the gardens of the Charlottenburg Palace in Berlin, the then Yugoslavian conceptual artist Braco Dimitrijevic erected a sculpture named "Obelisk, 11 March, This could be a day of historical importance" (1976). Because of its timeless shape and the layer of patina it has gained over the years, the 10-meter high marble object could be easily mistaken today for an original artefact. Perhaps one brought from some expedition to decorate Friedrich the III's summer Palace, and put up there to remind onlookers of the king's and former emperors' glory, an idea that would not be so foreign to the 17th century when this palace was originally built.

But this contemporary sculpture stands here as a rather different reminder. In the same year when it was built, Dimitrijevic published his theoretical work "Tractatus Post Historicus," introducing the term 'post-history,' which would mark his interest in the creation of micro-histories as an opposition to the currently dominant Western historical narrative.² Through his artworks, Dimitrijevic was voicing the deconstructionists' approach that would enrich historians' discourses of the late 20th century. Thus empowering the field of historiography through raised awareness about the societal power relations in the creation of the dominant historical narrative. Furthermore, he was only sensing and announcing the acceleration of the memory discourse in the 1980's, an academic current that underlines the importance of personal and collective memories as opposed to the historical discourse.

Inspired by this work this paper will try to take Dimitrijevic perspective on history out of the gardens of Charlottenburg Palace and bring them right to the city centres of contemporary Berlin and Skopje. I will look at the way monuments are created today in the centres of the two centres comparing the two most important phenomena of contemporary architecture and ideology currently shaping public space in Berlin and Skopje. While stressing their shared historical and political circumstances I will show that the two ideological underpinnings, the German discourse of 'Critical Reconstruction' and the Macedonian discourse of 'Antiquisation,' however different they may seem, are two 'cultures of the past,' shaping collective remembrance and forgetfulness.

¹ This paper was presented in 2015, at the event "Reflective nostalgia and it's everyday aesthetics" as part of the project "Nationless: Exploring the political and artistic possibilities for an autonomous subjectivity," 9-11 October, Thessaloniki Museum of Photography

² Braco Dimitrijevic, "Tractatus Post Historicus," Edited by Aaron Levy, Produced with the 2008-2009 Seminar in Contemporary Culture, University of Pennsylvania, 1976

As will be shown, both 'Critical Reconstruction' and 'Antiquisation' are not only inserting themselves into public space, but "into the mnemonic space between texts" which "inevitably create a transformed mnemonic space,"³ as Renate Lahman puts it in her description of the mnemonic act. Lahman draws the parallel between 'imagination' (fantasy) and 'memory,' both "representing absent objects with images."⁴ I will argue that it is through these two acts of 'imaging' absent objects, both 'Critical reconstruction' and 'Antiquisation' are adding new content to the public space. Also, I will argue that by being distant from the 'living' memory, they are in fact creating new memory.

Historical and architectural revision in Germany and Macedonia

The 'Critical reconstruction' of Berlin

In 2007, the German Parliament took a decision to start with the reconstruction of the Humboldtforum. It is to be placed in a building – a reconstruction of the façade of the Berlin city palace. The Palace was originally built in phases from 15th to 18th century, bearing various features of the Baroque style, and taking its final shape under the guidance of the German architect Andreas Schlüter. It served as a winter residence of the kings of Prussia, and later of the German emperors after the unification of Bismarck's Germany in 1871. The palace was heavily damaged by allied bombing of Berlin in WWII. After the war the palace lay in East Berlin, and was demolished in 1952 by the GDR authorities. In its place they built the 'Palace of the Republic' - the seat of the East German parliament, one of the renowned symbols of the GDR. It served both political and cultural purposes. Several years after reunification in 2006 the Palace of the Republic was demolished on the grounds that it contained asbestos.

The decision to move the capital from Bonn to Berlin in 1991 triggered a massive urban renewal in Berlin right after the reunification. What used to be architecturally two cities had to be incorporated somehow into one narrative representing the new, unified, democratic and affluent Germany. Having in mind Berlin's own history this meant that all its layers dating back to the 17th century now had to be coordinated into a unison story: empire, war and revolution, democracy, fascism, socialism and the cold war.⁵ Thus granting success to the re-unification project. The reconstruction of the palace will put a crown to this revitalization process. But it has also grown into a crucial landmark for observing the urban politics of the city of Berlin. As well as the critical discourse and strong criticism that they provoked among the architects, journalists

³ Lachmann, Renate, *Mnemonic and Intertextual Aspects of Literature*, Cultural memory studies: an international and interdisciplinary handbook, edited by Astrid Eril, Ansgar Nünning, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., 2008), p.303

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Andreas Huyssen, *Present pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 53



and social activists.

Until 1990, the wall was cutting the city through its vital central and architecturally characteristic part, the old Friedrichstadt. What was left after the war of the cities former focal point of commercial and public life came to an end with the building of the wall in 1961. After re-unification the central part of the city became the main point of interest for the city planners and the commercial investors again. In this frenzy over the reunification process fast estimations and the unrealistic expectancy of the city growth were made. Here massive building and real-estate investments were supposed to take place.⁶

Due to the speed of this development, and lack of time for planning, conservationist ideas that had been present in the architectural discourse for decades were now gaining currency, voicing the needs of new politics. Earlier in 1968 in West Berlin the group of architects named "Campaign 507" was the first to articulate its stance against the functionalist modernism in favour of a more traditional approach to architecture. This group of young architects was voicing an already growing disappointment from the modernist urban planning which dominated the architectural discourse of the late 1960's. Their criticism towards a modernist approach to Berlin's city planning was strongly influenced by Aldo Rossi's work "Architecture of the city" (1966). Here he points to the importance of preserving the memory of the city through monuments.

One of the members of this movement, Joseph Paul Kleihues, in the 1970's developed his own architectural theory called 'Critical reconstruction.' This was a result of the growing anti-modernist sentiment, consisting of incorporation of "traditional concepts of city planning and building with the useful technological and theoretical innovations of Modernism."⁷ 'Critical reconstruction' advocated for a critical approach to tradition and re-creation of the traditional "European city" with small streets and squares opposed to the desolated spaces created by modernism, which, the proponents of this movement claim, lost contact with its inhabitants. The plan envisioned for Berlin by Kleihues was a reconstruction of the old Friedrichstadt.

As Kleihues climbed the power ladder being closely involved in the city politics, his idea of 'Critical reconstruction' was gaining more supporters. Thus the city of Berlin slowly became shaped by his ideas. Two major events under Kleihues's guidance in 1990s were particularly influential. In 1987 Together with H.W. Hämer, Kleihues chaired "The International Building Exhibition" (IBA '87). The overall idea of the exhibition envisioned by Hämer was to bring back life to the area around the wall in West Berlin, around South Friedrichstadt. As a director of planning

⁶ Naraelle Hohensee, "Reinventing Traditionalism: The Influence of Critical Reconstruction on the Shape of Berlin's Friedrichstadt," *Intersections* 11, no. 1, 2011, p.83

⁷ *Ibid.* p.63



he could finally develop and apply 'Critical Reconstruction' into real space. The second most important event for 'Critical Reconstruction' was the voting of the "Planwerk Innenstadt" (Inner city-plan) in 2002 by the Berlin senate.

For the purpose of these calls, Kleinhues developed and applied a set of rules: (i) first level changes were made in the ground plan: a return to traditional, pre-Modernist urbanism; (ii) second level changes were those of the street elevation or "structure" of the city, as buildings along a street would need to differ in function but also serve together to create a harmonious whole; (iii) a third level changes included those of the building's "physiognomy," meaning that the buildings in the central area should stick to this image thus creating "city blocks" with combined commercial and living space activities, as well as use preferably traditional materials like stone or ceramics. Drawing on historical building types such as the 'Mietskasernen', Kleinhues sought to "aesthetically connect the face of the city to its past and to its overall form."⁸ His overall ambition was to revive the baroque-era ground plan of the Friedrichstadt.⁹ The Building senator of Berlin Hans Stimmann - a great supporter of 'Critical Reconstruction' - shared the same vision for the city, and devoted himself to support Kleinhues in implementing it despite loud criticism. As it was case with many of the projects "these parameters were generally accepted by all planning agencies and applicants, and were passed into law immediately following the Wende."¹⁰

'Critical Reconstruction' was shaped and further on developed in the atmosphere of the 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' (coming to terms with the past),¹¹ a highly charged intellectual debate that started in the late 1960 in West Germany. Later it was reinforced with the 'Historikerstreit' (the historians' dispute)¹² of the 1980s, and followed by the 'normalisation' process of the German historical narrative after the re-unification.¹³ In this political climate 'Critical Reconstruction' gave a new vision voicing the dissatisfaction with the modernism that shaped West German architecture. But also the dissatisfaction with the representation of the troubled German past was given a voice. Or, as Andreas Huysenn would point out, 'Critical Reconstruction' was the "attempt to create a seamless continuity with a pre-1914 national past that would erase memories of

⁸ Ibid, p.69

⁹ Ibid, p.69

¹⁰ Ibid, p.84

¹¹ Vergangenheitsbewältigung (coming to terms with the past) are notions usually used in the German historical debate referring to the proposed historical reconciliation initiated by Helmut Kohl in the 1980's.

¹² The Historikerstreit (historian's dispute) lasts from 1986 till 1989. The dispute mainly consisted of on times aggressive intellectual discussions between the right and the left wing intellectuals. Jürgen Habermas, being the loudest critic in this dispute, has named this attempt as the 'embodiment of the all-clear,' fearing that this normalization of the past would relativize the German role in the Holocaust.

¹³ Christian Wicke, Helmut Kohl's Quest for Normality: His Representation of the German Nation, (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), p.1-8

Weimar, Nazi, and GDR architecture in the process.”¹⁴ ‘Critical Reconstruction’ aimed for a clear narrative while hiding behind its ‘normalization’ ideology under the veil of heritage preservation. And in this process of preserving the pre-war heritage, it intentionally “forgot” to preserve the recent German past in totality. (And in this process of preserving the pre-war heritage, it gradually left behind the preservation of the recent German past.)

The ‘Antiquisation’ of Skopje

The project “Skopje 2014” is by far the biggest reconstruction project that has happened in Macedonia after its Independence in 1991. It aims at changing the city’s modernist appearance which the city got after the catastrophic earthquake in 1963, and at erasing the socialist past of the country. In the course of building activities that started in 2010 and that are on-going a new and ill-defined style has emerged lacking the explicit theoretical or programmatic underpinning of ‘Critical reconstruction. But, for its evident stylistic orientation towards the past has been dubbed by commentators as ‘Antiquisation.’

In February 2010 a 3D video simulation of Skopje’s main square appeared on YouTube without any accompanying announcement showing a new vision for the City Square. This state-financed vision was simply dubbed “Skopje 2014.” The year 2014 meaning to be the year when the project will be finished. This, in a lack of another proposal soon became the official title of this project. The video presented Skopje’s main square over-crowded with more than 200 monuments inspired from Macedonian history and cultural heritage dating back to middle ages and antiquity. Along with the sculptures the square was surrounded with a new set of memory institutions¹⁵ whose aim was to confirm and build this new narrative. Apart from the ‘horror vacui’ aspect of the proposal - on what is in fact a relatively small square to fit such a “big” vision - among the most astonishing elements was the tendency to cover the already existing facades with “fake ones” in what was at the time announced as “baroque”. This anonymous project – no city planner, architect or artist name was known at the time - was proposing a complete architectural, as well as ideological reconstruction of the city. Needless to say, this massive proposal had several changes since, some projects were cancelled. But even more details were added and the project is being realized in an even bigger scale than planned spreading over the city of Skopje and other cities around Macedonia.

¹⁴ Andreas Huyssen, *Present pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 71

¹⁵ Antonio Petrov, *Essay, Mas Context*, Issue 15: VISIBILITY, 2012, <http://www.mascontext.com/issues/15-visibility-fall-12/blurred/> (Assessed on: 09.04.2016)

After suffering a devastating earthquake in 1963 Skopje was built under the modernist guidance of the Japanese urbanist and architect Kenzo Tange with the help of the international solidarity program. The remnants of the late XIX and the early XX century Skopje, a small town that had entered modernity in a rather shy fashion, disappeared from the city layers and were replaced with new planning that created a rather huge leap into the future. The architect Antonio Petrov best illustrates this shift when he says: "Eager to form an organic body, Tange's fusion of man and machine proposed a megastructure that reorganized Skopje and formed a parallel habitat lifted above the ground leaving the culturally rich Skopian as an 'unemployed citizen' floating over the remnants of a now non-existent past."¹⁶ Thus in the beginning of the 2000s, public discussions started emerging on how to bring back the pre-earthquake charm of the city. They developed into heated discussions, oftentimes based on emotions rather than professional arguments, and were voicing the suppressed and still vivid memories of the city that had a past.

Skopje has been Macedonia's political centre, and the country's political capital since independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Then it changed its status from Socialist Republic of Macedonia to Republic of Macedonia thus outlining its European, democratic course for the future of the country. The realization of this goal has been slowed down, though, by its Southern neighbour Greece. It denied Macedonia's independence by refusing to recognize the country by its constitutional name, and calling into question the country's national identity. Due to this conflict, the UN adopted the provisional reference F.Y.R.O.M. (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). The reference was supposed to be for a bilateral use that is still symbolizing the unsolved conflict between the two countries. This led to economic and political isolation of the country, which is held in a pre-accession 'limbo state' to the EU since 2004. The questioning of the identity and sovereignty of the small nation by the Greek neighbour, the resulting political humiliation and feeling of powerlessness, have been major factors steering a growing subculture in Macedonia that started straying away from the Slavic historical heritage. At the same time it started finding its solace in the strengthening of the historical link with the Ancient Macedonian heritage as a way of symbolic empowerment from its Greek neighbour.

It would be too far-fetched though to claim that just because of the political and ideological limbo situation in Macedonia, its citizens could imagine or agree to the scale of the reconstruction that 'Skopje 2014' has brought about. Without prior public discussion or debate, the process of 'Antiquisation' took place in Skopje. The use of this terminology might be a bit misleading, since the project embraced some *mélange* of styles, which are most suitably described by the Archaeologist Nikos Chausidis under the definition "contemporary eclectic pseudo-classic anachronism."¹⁷ But the term still is fitting in explaining the end point in the historical time to where this project was heading: In order to fully embrace

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ Nikos Čausidis, *Proektot Skopje 2014 - Skici za edno naredno istrazuvanje*, (izd.) (2013), p.76

the strongest symbolism implanted on the city by this project – the official inauguration of the historical lineage of the Macedonian identity – by building a huge statue of ancient Alexander the Great on the main Square.

The project, however, has a far more systematic strategy than its random picking of styles and content might suggest. This strategy makes apparent the project's display of power and domination in its attempt to create a comprehending narrative. The approach unfolded itself in several layers: (1) Building cultural institutions that are changing the public structure of memory: The Museums and sculptures of Macedonian historical figures in public space; (2) building decorative elements of historical success, such as Arch de Triumph - Porta Makedonija; (3) re-naming streets, editing schoolbooks, the airport renamed Alexander the Great; (4) systematically erasing the Socialist modernist heritage by covering it with fake facades culminating with the Government building.

The real political circumstances just added more weight to the general lack of direction of the country. The failure to fulfil the European dream crashed when Greece vetoed Macedonia from becoming a NATO member in 2008. Thus effectively closing its way to EU membership. The ruling right-wing VMRO-DPMNE party having in mind these circumstances tried to soothe the pain of facing this failure by using what's already there in the public discourse. Instead of building another useless EU strategy, it built a self-defeating prophecy and open ground for the governmentally funded, "identity-healing" project. By recognizing the nostalgic sentiment as a great resource it turned the right-wing rather marginal and naïve rhetoric into mainstream politics. Tradition, religion, communist trauma and historical revision suddenly filled the identity gap after the fall of socialism which played a significant role in addressing the already existing grass-root subculture that eagerly embraced this newly created glorified past. The need to belong somewhere in the historical time where they could feel powerful again.

Cultures of pasts: Creating memories

'Critical Reconstruction' and 'Antiquisation' – the two ideological currents accompanying the reconstruction of Berlin's and Skopje's city centres when observed as separate local phenomena seem to have only superficial resemblance at first glance, and actually might appear very different. In Berlin, the reconstruction of the Berlin city palace is a democratically approved project of the upper middle class aiming at erecting a building that, in its outer appearance, resembles one that has been there before, and thus has a certain degree of authenticity. Its most pertinent ideological underpinning, 'Critical Reconstruction,' is a highly formalized, expert discourse that can be traced to its authors.

In Skopje, on the other hand, the middle class parvenus of the current government elite have, without any parliamentary control erected multiple

buildings. Only very few of which have got any resemblance with historic building in the city itself. Most are completely foreign to it and due to their cheap construction none can be mistaken as authentic in any way. 'Antiquisation' is a discourse that is largely implicit since neither the government nor its supporters seem to feel the necessity (or maybe have the intellectual capacity) to conceptually justify their frantic building activities.

By changing our perspective, however, and asking ourselves - what political and psychological reasons and purpose these projects have - I argue that we can observe some striking similarities that go beyond the two projects shared obsession with baroque facades. By looking at them as the effects of more global contemporary cultural phenomena we can see them as part of an exchange of ideas, relations and influences that are affecting 'centre' and the 'periphery' of the globalized world alike.

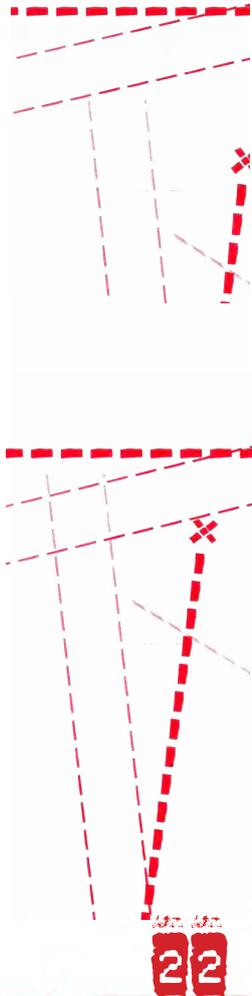
In his 1974 analysis of the "historical shift" in post-war Europe, French historian Pierre Nora writes about the sudden wave of "memorialization" and the change of sentiment from the early post war years in Europe. In "Lieux de memoire" (Spaces of memory), he points at the reasons for creation of these particular spaces:

Our interest in how the lieux de memoire crystalizes and secretes itself had occurred at particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn - but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists. There are 'lieux de memoire,' sites of memory, because there are no longer 'milieux de memoire,' real environments of memory.¹⁸

The loss of "milieux de memoire" (environments of memory) creates "lieux de memoire" (spaces of memory). In such case, the "lieux de memoire" stands for the direct relation to the memory and personal interpretation, whereas the "milieu de memoire" stands for the fixed identity, the memory of the nation, the clear, linear narrative of the origin of one nation. In his study, Nora is pointing out at a break in time when the concept of the historical time is fundamentally shaken and societies that until then had a fixed gaze into the future, now turned back to the past.

The rupture in their historical time that both Berlin and Skopje suffered through the massive renewals, after the war or the natural catastrophe, created temporal breaks in the narratives of both cities. Thus the feeling of being 'torn-out' and the voids that these ruptures created, turned

¹⁸ Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and history: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* 26, The regents of the University of California, 1989, p.7



them into potential “spaces of memory” charged with meaning, which once they were triggered easily erupted.

Further on, Nora is outlining three key elements that lead to this shift. To summarize: (i) the oil crisis from 1974 marks the end of the era of progress of the Western industrialized countries. The ‘acceleration of memory,’ the big leap from rural to developed societies appeared all of a sudden limited and lost its prospects for growth. This feeling of instability combined with the still fresh ‘rural memory,’ opened space for the then French president Valery Giscard d’Estang to decide to commit national heritage as a counterbalance; (ii) the second aspect leading toward this shift he had entitled to the end of the era of de Gaulle. With the hero of the French resistance dead, the memory of the French collaboration and anti-Semitic past reappeared as a “memory that is still present;” and (iii), after the death of de Gaulle, France is rediscovering its pre-revolutionary, royal past. The idea of the revolution, which marked the history of the 20th century, started fading away.¹⁹

The memory discourse is strongly influenced by such real time events. The event of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and its global symbolic importance for the victory of democracy, as well as the break of Yugoslavia in 1990, as a direct consequence of this global political shift, had strongly influenced both Berlin and Skopje. With the disappearance of the strong ideological polarization between the East and the West after 1989, the discourse of memory and various processes of recodification of the communist past became the new program for identity building in the post-communist/-socialist countries of Eastern Europe.

In both cases, the already existing contemporary resentment with functionalist modernism were discursively incorporated, and tearing down or reconstructing modernist buildings was used as one visible symbolic statement for the erasure of the socialist past. Still, whether the project is a result of a long public debate, such as the German case, or an act of pure despotism as in the Macedonian case, this most obvious ideological determinant, i.e. erasing the symbols of this era from the most visible public spaces can clearly be read between the lines in both renewal programs.

In his book “Introduction to history” the philosopher Boris Buden applies Nora’s argument on the ex-Yugoslavian region in order to show how these similar global events had their effects on each country after its independence. Further on he adds that the past today has become a “cultural, and not a temporal category.”²⁰ Referring to the transformations of the place and meaning that the past had undergo in our contemporary societies, Buden claims that today instead of the “past cultures”²¹ which were usually classified as heritage we are witnessing a new type of

¹⁹ Pierre Nora, “Reasons for the current upsurge in memory,” Eurozine, Original in French, First published by Transit 22/ 2002

²⁰ Boris Buden, Uvod u prošlost, ed. Boris Buden, Želimir Žilnik, kuda.org etc., (Novi Sad: Centar za nove medije_kuda.org, 2013), p.20

²¹ Ibid

culture, i.e. the “culture of the past.”²² This observation opens the possibility of marking this historical era as “a time in which the obsession with the past has reached dimensions of its own culture.”²³

If we agree to Buden’s idea that this shift to the past creates a “culture of its own” we could ask then the question: What are the characteristics of this particular culture? In their desire to build back the pre-modern look of the city the visionaries of both Berlin and Skopje have arguably managed to rebuild symbols of top-down power culture, non-transparency and dominance that combine traditional values with neo-liberal means of existence. Or as Andreas Huysenn points out about the reconstruction of Central Berlin, the focus is no longer on history alone, but rather on “how best to decorate the corporate and governmental sheds to better attract international attention: not the city as multiply coded text to be filled with life by its dwellers and its readers, but the city as image and design in the service of displaying power and profit.”²⁴ In this display of power and profit both projects characterize with systemic political support, using non-transparent decision making processes and public funding, while ignoring protest, criticism and public debate.

Conclusion

As I have tried to show ‘Critical Reconstruction’ and ‘Antiquisation’ as the two important ideological underpinning of city renewal in Berlin and Skopje. By adding new content to the public space they are trying to transform mnemonic space: On the one hand, they aim at creating a memory of a more continuous, less conflictual, and more glorious past. This goes along with covering up two recent historical ruptures: The devastation of war and earthquake, and the political shift at the end of socialism. On the other hand, both are creating a focus on the past in the face of cultural crisis in which societies’ development in the future is losing its promise and the past is imagined as more secure and orienting. They have created monuments to the anxiety of the future, the fear of obsolescence and the crisis of representation. In a time of accelerated speed of life these projects are an attempt to hold back to the past as a safety belt in order to counter this speed with a slower movement.

Thus, Berlin and Skopje’s new monuments, though evoking the past, speak volumes about the present of the societies that are building them. The goal of this paper was to begin decipher some of this text, analyse their shared characteristics at the backdrop of their very different socio-political and economic circumstances.

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Andreas Huysenn, Present pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), p. 63

NATIONLESS [AUTONOMY/LIBERATION] Exhibition opening, 4 April 2015,
Youth cultural center (MKC), Skopje



DISSEMINATION PAPER ON NATIONLESS PROJECT

By Fotini Tsibridou, Professor of Social Anthropology University of Macedonia Thessaloniki

Based on the results by the report of the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities-Skopje and reflecting on the meeting and the events we had during this research project (2014/2015), I will develop my main contribution on Nationless subjectivity in the Greek Way: Reconsidering Refugee Trauma and Minority Shame, summarized on the following key ideas, shaped interactively during the project.

1. Key ideas and feedback points from the project:

The project “Nationless” has put very interesting challenges in order to surpass the impasses of Balkan nationalisms. In the frame and beyond cultural critique (see in Clifford and Marcus 1986; Clifford and Marcus, 1986), I look to discover more participatory, critical and artistic ways that could help us to shape new cultural public policies within Balkan nation-states. Thus, we could build citizenship in more autonomous ways (i.e. nationless subjectivities).

Paying attention to different technologies of secular criticism (see in Edward Said 1983) and reflective nostalgia (see in Svetlana Boym 2001), we could find new ways to comment on nationalism and its frustrating impact upon citizenship.

In more artistic ways, we could mobilize cultural modalities, i.e. social poetics and embodied habitus, intimate feelings and passions urging heterogeneous people to share their own experiences through everyday practices. Thus, we could avoid to reproduce distant modern national narratives of abstract belonging, leading usually to fanatical nationalisms.

Ideas and artistic practices from this project have shown that everyday experiences of sharing goods, memories, tastes, intimate feelings and expectations can motivate fantasies positively in order to surpass segregation, inequalities, discriminations and hate practices. The later usually are up/down policies imposed by the nation state mono-ethnic master narratives and its phobic servants.

The conversion of social analysis with art in order to achieve creative understanding through the mobilization of reflective nostalgia seems an ideal choice in order to motivate more responsible and autonomous trans-cultural citizenship.

By stressing on cultural critique and broader counterpublics we could empower the powerless: by paying attention to all those experiences of cultural intimacy from below we could surpass traumas and shame habitus, coming from less privileged citizens and people, i.e. minorities, migrants and refugees, political opposition, poor and multiple excluded populations by the majority.

This project could aim to the production of a kind of cultural democracy beyond the enclaves of segregation promoted until recently either by nationalist projects or the policies of multiculturalism and cultural rights, usually defined through human rights legal positivism modality.

'Civil society' and 'multiculturalism,' mainstream liberal discourses since the 1990's, seem to become more and more problematic as we realize that through the logic of individual and collective cultural rights we create more enclaves. These enclaves lead to the multiplying of exclusions more than inclusions. To the spread of otherness more than diversity. To the spread of local and imported hierarchies more than equalities.

During the meetings of the project in Skopje, Beograd and Thessaloniki we have tried to talk about the unsaid habitus of silence, trauma and shame, hidden into no mainstream citizenship. We learned about the importance of small intimate life stories, or random meetings, cultural intimacies and familiarities (i.e. on the level of family, friendship, neighborhood, village and city), in distinction to the big picture of nationalist narratives. Intimate stories promote more than multiculturalism trans-cultural and trans-individual encounter experiences.

Changing positions and methodologies between social sciences and arts seems to become a main policy practice that could proliferate mirrors who reflect multiple selves:(a) Social research needs to open dialogue with cultural studies in the frame of counterpublics and cultural critique (i.e. artistic installations and performances, filming experiences of fiction and documentaries, literature, poetry etc).(b) Art aesthetics could produce more political comments regarding citizenship, selfhood, and autonomous subjectivities.

Following the theoretical suggestion by Svetlana Boym who makes the distinction between restorative (i.e. nationalism, ethnicity) and reflexive nostalgia, I think we can experiment to work on the future project for the establishment of cultural democracy beyond the restrictions of monoethnic nationalisms. Restorative nostalgia leads to a return to the roots (nationalism, fundamentalism, conspiracy theory and inclusion to the self); reflective nostalgia on the opposite can promote the technology of the reconstruction of the subject in the

way of Marcel Proust, i. e. *A la recherche du temps perdu* (see the autobiographical roman of Proust who, when he is biting the Madeleine (biscuit from childhood times) and he starts to unravel intimate past traumatic and pleasant experiences, full of meaning for cure of the self at the present).

Reflective nostalgia (RN) and its trivial aesthetics based on emotions and material everyday practices could not only challenge nationalism and its myths with fundamental truths; Additionally, Reflective nostalgia could cure from the trauma of the unsaid negative experiences of nationhood and/or those multiple segregations and displacements usually the people who differ from the majority suffer from. RN and its technologies of trivial aesthetics based on emotions and material everyday practices that could open discussion against legal positivism and the monopoly to to technics of promoting civil society and multiculturalism We need to sensibilise us towards new experiences of diversity in the frame of the Foucauldian 'care of the self' for more autonomous and responsible citizenship, based on event ambivalent subjectivities.

Additionally, we have noticed the importance of oral and draft/on the spot narration people are looking for. People like stories, tales and literature more than heavy scientific social analysis. People adopt social poetics, humor and irony to talk about ambivalent everyday experiences. Let's build cultural democracy by imitating this modality; Let's de-construct national and religious essentialism and/or conspiracy theories, let's avoid positivism as main stream narratives shaping the pathogenic controversial Modern citizenship.

2. text:

Nationless subjectivity in the Greek way: Reconsidering Refugee Trauma and Minority Shame

On the basis of *Nationless's* complementary approaches between art and social analysis I hope to be able to contribute by sharing and being reflexive above different experiences that can comment on one of the two main complexes in the Greek nation state culture: that of the *minority shame* and the *refugee traumas*. Experiences from minorities and old refugee people (since 1923 exchange of population between Greece and Turkey) come to complete in my view the crypto-colonial attitudes detected either to modern state practices and its national representations.¹

¹Michael Herzfeld "The Social Production of Difference in the Global Hierarchy of Value: Stereotypes and Transnational Experience in Greece and the Balkans " in F. Tsibiridou & N.Palantzas (eds) *Myths of the Other in the Balkans. Representations, Social Practices, Performances.* (Thessaloniki, 2013) ISBN: 978-960-8096-05-9, available at: <http://afroditi.uom.gr/balkan/>

I support a hypothesis according to which everyday experiences of sharing goods, memories, feelings and expectations can challenge fantasies of segregation, inequalities, discriminations and hate coming from/because of the master habitus of nationalism. Refugee traumas and minority shame as came out through ethnographic experiences can help us to contribute to build a new cultural and plural democracy. This has been, anyway, the intention of my contribution to this project. Here I will talk about the ways I came up to understand how new autonomous subjectivities can be inspired by those people living at the borders of the mainstream nationalism and state bureaucracy. By focusing on ethnographic and self-reflexive experiences of “refugee trauma” and “minority shame” in the Greek nation state culture, I hope I am able to contribute on the way of discovering new nationless autonomous subjectivities.

A. The impasses of legal positivism

Social Anthropology focusing on the issue of nationalism and otherness cannot but pay attention to practices and experiences of those who live under conditions of minoritization processes (in the modality of becoming) within particular social, political, national and supranational contexts. In order to understand the perplexity of minoritization processes within the glocal (global and local) context, institutional and legal discourse need to be first deconstructed. Socio-political anthropology should equally examine strategies or experiences from below as well as analytical categories of describing and put taxonomy of the Other. The analytical categories and concepts used by the institutional

discourse, such as that of social policies and decision makers can show the impact of institutional power to people’s lives. This is the case of past refugee people established within the Greek nation-state (i.e. of Greek orthodox origin coming from Eastern Thrace and Asia Minor in the frame of the Exchange of Populations treaty, between Greece and Turkey (1923). This is equally the case of historical minorities (religious, ethnic and linguistic) that remained blocked surrounded by dominant majorities, within every single Balkan nation-state since the end of the Ottoman Empire. This is also the case for new post-socialism migrants in the 1990’s as well as late migrants and refugees, originated from the Eastern Mediterranean, Asian and African countries, pushed by war and famine to transgress European borders.

The present approach would like to show how the institutional discourse under legal positivism – by monopolizing the power of description in policy making – can first decide about regulations and categorizing, which can provoke even more segregations and distinctions among minorities on the issue of legal status and citizenship. We need to understand the Western metaphysics of legal positivism related to the human rights discourse spread from the League of Nations aiming to the protection of minorities at the beginning of the 20 century, and

deconstruct the latest management of multiculturalism, promoted mostly in the frame of the European Union, since the post-socialist transition in the 1990's. This dominant legal and institutional discourse adopted by officially recognized minorities or ethnic claims in the name of civil society rights seems to multiply divisions and distinctions on the ground instead of promoting inclusion and equality.²

More specifically, both concepts of "minority" and "culture," as political categories of the Western Modernity, need to be challenged as far it concerns their analytical impute. In other words, we should search more for the dynamics of divers minoritization process that can challenge legal positivism assumptions and institutional discourse. In this frame the trope of 'shame' that implies in every minorital subject for ethnic, linguistic, race, gender, sexual reasons or economic distinction could become a common analytical category in order to understand refugee and minority experiences from bellow. To put it differently, we cannot constantly deny the fact that Western Modernity's institutional discourse and political reality has invested in 'minority condition,' shaping and reshaping subjectivities above the dichotomy reasoning between majority and minorities as abstract categories. The legal and advocacy discourse constitutes a characteristic example. It is probably time to turn our analysis and understanding on the side of the subjects themselves and see how their embodied experiences can enrich our critical understanding. Minoritization processes is immediately related to capitalism and liberal democracy, both embedded to the rhetoric of nationalism. It is at least a hypocritical stance for social sciences to hide this aspect of modern segregation and turn a blind eye in front of the hegemonic Western metaphysics of positivism, culture and communalism included to human rights and multiculturalism claims. The latter could generateg new objectifications and new divisions (i.e. ethnic, national, social, gender etc.), in praxis more exclusions than inclusions, more diversity than unification, more hierarchies than equalities.

On the opposite of legal positivism we can rely on creative dissent approaches, adopted by fieldwork scientific methods and art. The latter could contribute by illuminating people's experiences and their local hermeneutics on everyday stories and habitus, the memory of the things and the materialization of feelings. Counterpublics and cultural critique³ could help us to search for more creative ways to describe and advocate beyond scholastic legal categories and positivist scientific analysis. Social poetics and aesthetics could be used as tools to shape new anti-nationalist narratives where art, passions and emotions feel free to mobilize fantasies for more autonomous citizenship,

²Steven Sampson, "The social life of projects: importing civil society to Albania", in C. Hann, E. Dunn (eds) *Civil Society. Challenging Western Models*. (London: Routledge, 1996), 121-142. Tsbiridou Fotini "Multiplying minoritization processes for new migrants. From legal positivism to creative hermeneutics," *Annuaire International des Droits de l'Homme*, vol. 2011, (2011), pp. 293-313.

³James Clifford & Georges Marcus, *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), Frank Farmer, *After the Public Turn: Composition, Counterpublics, and the Citizen Bricoleur*. (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2013).

away from nationalism's stagnation.

B.Ethnography, cultural critique and cultural democracy: when art meets with creative dissent and counterpublics

The examples I would like to use here are coming from different ethnographic fieldwork, i.e Pomak minority subjects and historical ethnic Greek refugee coming to Greece from Turkey. I will speak on them by insisting on the productive analytical categories of shame and trauma. However, I found their experiences to line on the same level of different other categories suffering from minoritization for ethnic, linguistic, religious, sexual, political or economic reasons, independently of state culture and historical circumstances. Comparing experiences among them could become very productive process of understanding from-bellow. Beyond the critique of deconstructing legal positivism and within the theoretical framework of cultural critique my ethnographic approach looks to discover more participatory and artistic ways that could reshape cultural public policies unmaking and remaking subjectivity, and citizenship within the Greek nation state culture.

Different technologies of critical understanding in the frame of secular criticism⁴ combined with self-reflexive subjectivities,⁵ i.e. social poetics, embodied habitus and reflective nostalgia⁶ can shape creative dissent against nationalism and/or more participatory citizenship.

Additionally, art can mobilize intimate feelings and passions of sharing intimate experiences more than distant modern national usually abstract and fanatic belonging.

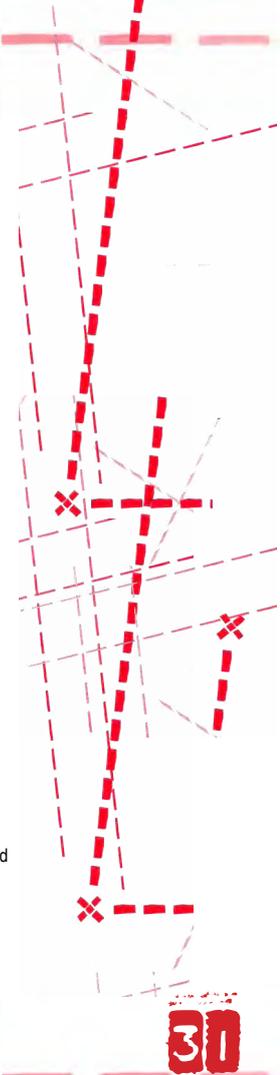
Hypothesis - Analytical Tools and methods: From Ethnography to Art

I support a hypothesis according to which everyday experiences of sharing goods, memories, intimate feelings and expectations can challenge fantasies of segregation, inequalities, discriminations and hate practices coming from/because of the master habitus of nationalism and the relevant state bureaucracy policies and practices.

⁴ Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic*, (Harvard U.P., 1983) Michael Herzfeld "The Social Production of Difference in the Global Hierarchy of Value: Stereotypes and Transnational Experience in Greece and the Balkans" in F. Tsibiridou & N. Palantzas (eds) *Myths of the Other in the Balkans. Representations, Social Practices, Performances*. (Thessaloniki, 2013) ISBN: 978-960-8096-05-9 (p. 19-30) <http://afroditi.uom.gr/balkan/>

⁵ Michel Foucault, *Culture de soi et culture du soi* CONFERENCE AUDIO DE M FOUCAULT A UC BERKELEY DU 12 AVRIL 1983 - (1983) PART1 http://study.stanley-cavell.org/Michel-Foucault_90

⁶ Svetlana Boym *The Future of Nostalgia*. (New York: The Basic books, 2001).



Stress on the convergence of social analysis and critical theory with art in order to achieve creative understanding through the mobilization of 'reflective nostalgia' could mean to change positions between social and cultural sciences and methodologies: social research needs to proliferate mirrors that reflect multiple selves thus open dialogue with art and cultural studies (i.e. producing a documentary, an exhibition, a book etc).

Ethnographic fieldwork is at the basis of the attempt: everyday material practices, intimate stories and feelings as expressed through social poetics that can become the main data from below. Home/indigenous anthropology can contribute while the researcher becomes either object and subject of analysis at the same time. The example from two different ethnographic fieldworks (see the Pomak case and the old Greek Refugees coming from Turkey) can show this intersection of personal, professional, public and private experiences.

Our aim is the production of a new an alternative 'cultural democracy',⁷ beyond the enclaves of nationalism, multiculturalism and civil society claims. We can talk about the unsaid 'cultural intimacy',⁸ habitus of things and memories that make us feel angry and shame; we can start learning about the small intimate family stories of us and our neighbors; we can try to protect the right of intimate past in the frame of neighborhood, village, city, beyond the grand narrative of the state nation country.

The '*refugee trauma*' and the '*minority shame*', are adopted as tropes from below in order to challenge and reconceptualise national Greek citizenship. Both can be seen under the dynamics of '*becoming minority*'⁹ within nation and ultra-nation state cultures (i.e. historical ethnic minorities, old and new refugee and migrant people).

B. Reflections on minority shame: On Pomak silence, fear and shame

My long term fieldwork with Pomak minority subjects in Greece has helped me to develop the critical stance above legal positivism analytical tools on minority issues. Thus, I discovered the significance of 'silence, fear and shame' to the self-definition or hesitation upon an ethnic subjectivity. Additionally, it was my encounter with filmmaking process that liberated my creative understanding upon the ways

⁷Mirsini Zorba, *Politiki tou Politismou. Evropi kai Ellada sto B/ miso tou 20ou ai* [Cultural Policy. Europe and Greece in the second half of the 20th century] (Athens: Patakis, 2014)

⁸Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State*. (New York and London: Routledge, 2004).

⁹Fotini Tsihiridou, "Multiplying minoritization processes for new migrants. From legal positivism to creative hermeneutics," *Annuaire International des Droits de l'Homme*, vol. 2011: (2011) 293-313.

I should follow in the field. In order to discover their everyday embodied habitus regarding personhood, the use of camera and the visual process that have shown those social poetics I was looking for to translate their cultural habitus into my scientific analysis.¹⁰

More specifically, the shooting of the documentary film "The Marriage" was carried out within the broader context of my previous ethnographic fieldwork in the mountainous area of the Pomak villages in Greek Thrace. In several missions me, as ethnographer, the film director and a small team of film technicians we used to work closely together. During the shooting but also during the film's projections in festivals, classes, and on TV, there were incidents involving my informants/discussants, which motivated both my own and the director's self-reflexivity. In a relevant study, still under publication,¹¹ I am developing some methodological issues raised by the ethnographic filming-process itself. These methodological issues regard aspects of culture, representation, translation and negotiation. At the same time they are putting usually one to other's position not only among local and foreigners, but also between different categories of researchers and filmmakers. It is, however, worth mentioning that within this polyvalent ethnographic field more the mirrors of representation multiply, more the analysis and understanding could go further.

Fully aware of what I am saying, I confess that it was this particular experience with films, my love for cinema and my incessant interest in the works of contemporary documentarists with anthropological Background that allowed me to reach the aforementioned deepens in the field. In retrospect, I am particularly happy that this meeting, albeit delayed, did eventually occur.

This filmic experience may have given me the chance as an anthropologist to multiply my mirrors by undertaking the task of the film-maker. In this role, with a view to escape the linear journalistic and homogenizing screen narrative, I became for a while, or forever, an anthropologist always looking behind the camera. This experience, however, affected protagonists and interlocutors alike, either negatively or positively. Apart from the unrest caused by one of the protagonists who wanted to silent his Pomak origins, we have definitely kept in mind another discussants' sayings confessing in the film: "I dream of being able, one day, to make a film like yours for my own people." Therefore, as Jean Rouch concluded, inspired and transformed through his pioneering point of view when the cinema mediates and provokes then both the anthropologist and the director of the social reality are interpreters of the culture they are attempting to understand. Because we

¹⁰ In the annexes of the present dissemination paper I am attaching a representative study, Fotini Tsiibiridou (2007), "Silence' as an idiom of marginality among Greek Pomaks," in K. Steinke, C. Voss (eds), *The Pomaks in Greece and Bulgaria. A model case for borderland minorities in the Balkans*, Verlag Otto Sangher-Munchen, 2007: 49-73. For more detailed analysis see: Fotini Tsiibiridou (2000), *Les Pomak dans la Thrace grecque. Discours ethnique et pratiques socioculturelles*, Paris, L'Harmattan.

¹¹ Fotini Tsiibiridou "Filming, Interpreting, and Critically Understanding an Ethnographic Polyvalent Field", in Athina Peglidou (ed) *Filmic Impressions of Otherness: film and ethnography in Greece* Cambridge Scholars Publishing (under publication Ref. FO/53535)

have this responsibility to translate cultural habitus, we should be more alert to discover the ways through which our discussants express themselves bodily (i.e. silence, as an idiom of marginality, negative emotions of fear and shame, as a minority syndrome).

Reflections on refugee trauma as shared nostalgia of displacement between Greeks and Turks

As the traumas of displacement could affect people for many future generations, I will discuss here the way I, a third generation refugee, did multiple returns to the subject of that trauma, without being able to dissolve complexes relating my discussants and me to this traumatic experiences. When I first finished my Phd thesis based on fieldwork in my grand-mother's village,¹² I was too young to support the main feeling habitus my discussants and I were caring out, which was something a shadow in the soul.

My Phd thesis (Tsibiridou 1990) focuses on refugee people coming to Greece from Turkey and Bulgaria. My discussants apart from their discussions with me as a fieldwork researcher they very rarely talked about their refugee experience. The latter is usually connected to other traumatic periods, i. e. the Bulgarian occupation during the 2nd WW and the Greek civil war that followed. My discussants had to adapt themselves to the new modernization process and they never had the chance to discuss and remember about what they and their parents left behind. After the 2009 Greek debt crisis people who have abandoned the village return to cure here their recent wounds of poverty, migration, drugs, failure and deaths in the village. During summer visits to the village I have been bombarded by all these broken life stories, lost in the national narratives and the missed success stories. I realized how difficult was to once again find security, peace and happiness after they return back to the village. Although I discovered how the moments of Turkish soap operas projected on the Greek TV made their souls softer from the hidden anger. I realize, then, that though this practice of watching Turkish TV series they had the opportunity to connect and symbolize with the missing parts of their intimate past and their progenitors. By watching scenes from the neighboring country they usually felt this cultural intimacy they needed to connect with, but did not dare to admit before the mainstream narrative of excluding Turkish people and their habits within Greek nationalism.

It took me many other rounds and traversal returns, i.e. see around minority subjects or return through the art of cinema, to motivate me emotionally and search to replace the significance of the trauma of displacement to my life as social subject and as anthropologist.

¹²Fotini Tsibiridou 1990 (Phd-Thèse nouveau régime): Tradition et transition: Etude de la formation économique et sociale d'une communauté mixte de réfugiés (Thrace - Grèce), EHESS, Paris: 1990. p. 394.

On the occasion of a return to my first phd fieldwork on refugees' issues 23 years later, by watching two films, instead of biting a madeleine,¹³ I started looking for more creative ways. This was done to make some suggestions on how we can use reflexively the traumatic experience of displacement in order to surpass the monolithic Greek and Turkish nationalistic citizenship. By reflecting on two films related to the trauma of displacement from the two sides of the Aegean I started understanding why and how films and the visual virtual reality can talk about what we, as ethnographers can see and feel in our fieldwork, but usually can't transmit in our readers through written texts.

"Dedemin İnsanları" (My Grandpa's People) by Çagan Irmak and "A Touch of Spice" (or "Politiki kouzina") by Tassos Boulmetis are talking about traumatic experiences of displacement through powerful scenes of everyday moments, full of materiality and emotions. By watching those films, refugees from 2nd and 3rd generation have felt pain but have been cured from the unknown feeling in their souls that "something always was missing on their lives", as usually my informants in the field use to repeat. The films with the powerful moments full of emotions, tastes and music have touched this unknown shadow in the soul of the relevant audience as well as mine.

My main concern was how could I involve feelings and emotions, memories of everyday material experiences in my analysis. All those intimate devices of a very nostalgic past that can help me to translate the traumatic experiences of my previous discussants in the field of the village that hosted my grandmother as refugee subject. I found how important was to work in a complementary way. My main concern became to find out how virtual reality can intervene and complete social analysis by giving place to the unsaid that me and my discussants have hidden deep to our souls. By watching the films, I felt deep respect to those filmmakers paying respect to their own relatives, suffering literally for this displacement and the following discriminations as different Others within the new nation state they came/vent to establish their lives. An idea came into my mind – how we can rewrite national history by including these traumatic experiences not through restorative nationalism using instrumentally those traumas from above, but through the reflective side of those suffering from nostalgia for their home life. The distinction between restorative nostalgia versus reflective nostalgia, suggested by Svetlana Boym becomes very useful analytical framework for the encounter of social analysis with art and broader counterpublics. As reflective nostalgia needs the alternative or complementary perspective, cinema and visual representations, as well as literature, could contribute at the side of other experimental

¹³ Marcel Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Coll. Classiques Paris: Ed. Humanis 2012.

ethnographic approaches over dangerous citizenship.¹⁴

Sharing everyday experiences with the Other through taste, love and care in the frame of neighborhood, as well as music and social poetics can become the materialized vehicles of essential and inclusive plural communication.

In addition to that, some charismatic characters can make the difference too. Back to my fieldwork among everyday refugee I had noticed the importance of social poetics to the building and reshaping of interesting story telling of broken lives.

They were three grand-mothers who motivated my research 30 years ago, when I started my first ethnographic fieldwork. Their spontaneous, fragmented and ambivalent stories lead me all the way to my thesis, but they could become the main characters of the movie I wish, but I never made with them!

I own them (Yiayia Efthalia, Babo Maro and Babo Bougadaina) the ways since then I connect with fieldwork research and look for gifted discussants/characters those key-informants, as anthropology taught us to base on in order to make our ethnographies less borrowing.

While restorative nostalgia leads to nationalism and ethnicity, creating strict frontier among people, reflective nostalgia combining techniques and styles could lead at all those ambivalent experiences upon the inclusion of the Other.

Reflective nostalgia is not only challenging nationalism and its myths of unification, but can also cure from the trauma of the unsaid negative experiences of displacement, and remain open and sensitive to new experiences of diversity for the building more autonomous citizenship.

Both, the Greek and the Turkish nationalisms avoided to pay attention to those traumatic experiences from a reflective perspective. On the opposite they were both invented hate discourse or silence.

We can use the refugee experience in the path of reflective nostalgia not only to cure people for next generations suffering from this lost, but as an example to think about diversity of the new Greek pluralist culture today (see the challenge of coexisting with refugees from Syria, Afganistan and Irak).

¹⁴Neni Panourgia. Dangerous Citizens. The Greek Left and the Terror of the State. (Fordhan U. P. 2009)

Let's find new ways to communicate this knowledge in more open space and massive ways, beyond writing. In the frame of cultural critique, either exhibitions and alternative to national museums, cinema, internet can become the new venues to host public culture.¹⁵

We have just to remind to us that fairy-tales shared on the ground and not those promoting political correctness, on the opposite of national myths, can deal with controversial ambiguous truths; stories can be cruel but also can cure people who traumas and suffering by experiencing conflicts, by interpreting the missing parts of the past etc.; on the opposite the mono-ethnic narrative of national myths that can only create gaps and silences, essential dichotomies between lie and truth, mind and body, men and women, we and others, national and non-national, faithful and unfaithful patriots and traitors etc. we need to re-construct stories with ambivalent messages translating the everyday controversial experiences.

Nationless project has shown how important is to slow down with the distant past and teach our children about the recent present and everyday practices, experiences, tastes and shared memories of the intimate past. People need to symbolize and connect with intimate material thinks and experiences if they don't want to escape to unfamiliar darkness. Find the line of the lost time in order to take care of the self in the present, built more autonomous subjectivities and feed more inclusive and responsible citizenship based on cultural democracy.

¹⁵ This is the case of the International Film Festival in Thessaloniki, see in: Dimitris Kerkinos (2013) "Balkan cinema in Thessaloniki International Film Festival," F. Tsihiridou & N. Palantzas (eds) *Myths of the Other in the Balkans. Representations, Social Practices, Performances*. Thessaloniki: eBook ISBN: 978-960-8096-05-9(251- 255) <http://afroditi.uom.gr/balkan/>

Georges Marcus & Michael Fischer . *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in Human Sciences*. (Chicago:University of Chicago Press, 1986).

Iordanis Styliadis , Palimpsests 2015

NATION / EMANATIONS

(20 June 2015, Museum of Yugoslav History, Beograd

— We were drifting
into the near wood
wondering
whether to keep
our memories
or stay the night
and build

— a long discussion
about our fears
to be abandoned

A choice made collectively
drives our consciousness
towards a long discussion
that changes our relations
for long.

We are left
to care
for each

A bus will carry us
to a faraway lake
on the mountain
We've gathered
and withstand together
to confront our reflection
on the surface
of the still water

The 1990s
And the ongoing struggle to finally
will lead us to a point
where the memory, our reality,
constitute
a backdrop for history
our history
made as a constellation
of histories

STILL WATER
as a writing field
where the visual is
becoming textual

ALTERING THE PALIMPSESTS

Iordanis Stylidis

THESSALONIKI 10 10 2015

Dear all

Being into this on going initiative we have to explore the core content of:

1. The mixture of participants willing to identify or to be identified;
2. The identity of this flowing process (the nation-less workshop) as a radical orientation possibility that can and soon will be a navigation open protocol regarding the transformation of the near by and the overall standard political and everyday living phenomenology of this shared reality (me as ego, you as enemy, us as superiors, them as inferiors, as strangers, monsters, ordinary failures) we are all drifting in;
3. The delicate fragments of each and every personal behavior patterns forming a preliminary constitution of disciplines that will eventually transform this soft and fragile meeting to a robust and thrust forward thrust political scope and perspective.

I am welcoming you all to my home city. Although, I am a constantly moving human in a way that has deeply directed the metamorphosis of my personality. Thus, making the question (or living status) regarding that "other," who has to be reached and identified, an incomprehensible question (or living status). I am constantly welcoming or pushing back the inexplicable personalities I am engaged with into my near by environment, but not those entitled a code reference by an authoritarian spectacle oriented communicational network of dogmas.

A month ago I have participated (most of us did) in the Belgrade meeting. And some time before I have also participated to the Skopje first collective confrontation with our-selves towards the unknown others. The others who rapidly became the comrades we will work together for long.

We are still striving to achieve a persuasive answer uniting and embodying all our separate identities. Thus, standing not only in terms of ethnic long-term believes and exercises and forceful everyday dogmatic behaviors but, mostly, because of the everyday familiar disciplines we are

My proposition, announced some time ago is the "altering of a Palimpsest." It calls for acceptance of an aesthetic time path bringing into scrutiny a set of artworks (photographs of expressive gestures made in Belgrade) conveying or conveying not a meaning surplus as far as the next meeting in Skopje. We have to listen each and every story forming a part of their flowing aesthetic identity. Also, the literary writing on the surface of their idol printings will add a meaning value or a critical and stochastic deviation.

Thus, all of us will, somehow, involve into the "making" of an ongoing constantly transforming meaning plateau of variations.

Choosing such a discipline could lead us to:

1. The acceptance of the idea and the generating a collective artwork standing not on a set of specific and unique forms and gestures, consisting of a group of anonymous short term artistic units. But, an artwork made of a mixture of proposals sustaining a topology of possible multivalent deviations tightly connected into a unifying process. We all constitute the artwork!
2. Exterminating the idea of the acting self. Thus pronouncing the first sentences of the multitude of editing gestures on an unstable moving visual or multimedia peculiarity.
3. Exploring the idea of the artwork generated from anything (any gesture, any text, any material or memory left over, any photograph, any narration) evolving enthusiastically as a collective meaning attractor.

It is good to be together again.

...ON THE THORAX,
WHEN IT DOES HARD-CORE
...NOT ANYMORE
SEIGH BOSTIK
...ON HARD-CORE!
... 198

NACIONA
LNO NEIDENTIFIKLIV,
NEIDENTIFIKOVAN
UNIDENTIFIABLE and
UNIDENTIFIED in terms of
NATION



NATION / EMANATIONS
20 June 2015, Museum of Yugoslav History, Beograd

NATIONALIST INTERPELLATIONS IN THE BALKANS: THE RETERRITORIALIZATION OF TRAGEDY BY FARCE

Artan Sadiku

I am trying to develop a thesis for a rather heretical approach to some classical theoretical and practical/political issues, focusing mainly on three concepts: ideology, capitalism and nationalism. All of them from the perspective of the current Balkan predicament.

I believe that the elaboration of these concepts in such a way will enable a critical assessment of the current critical social discourses in Balkans. And, through that, being politically driven by an anti-fetishizing tendency towards pure theoretical gestures of auto-legitimization, attempt to correlate to the real conditions pertinent to the praxis of a revolutionary, anti-capitalist and emancipatory politics.

I will purposely avoid to enter into a discussion on the different established approaches to the question of ideology. Namely into the theoretical discussion on class and non-class ideologies, paradigmatic class ideologies or the determination in the last instance of ideology by class. I believe most of us here are familiar with these themes. What I consider to be a proper political challenge is to explore the operation of the current neo-nationalist ideological interpellations in the Balkans. Performing this in the midst of the prolonged crisis and aiming at establishing certain political positions, one evades a twofold trap:

1. Social and political critique focusing only the political challenges towards the mobilization in times of crisis of the class commonalities of the post-socialist subjectivity throughout the Balkan countries risks being heavily marginalized by the hegemony of current neo-nationalist ideology. It thus, has to engage with nationalism. But how is that to be done?!

and on the other hand,

Overt critique of nationalism. As well as an attempt for political mobilization of the masses on an anti-nationalist political vision for the region in the context of the same hegemony of the neo-nationalist ideology risks losing its foot with the very classes of people it seeks to mobilize. It will rather find an ally within the circles of the elites against which it aims its struggle.

How should one than move from the point of ideological consensus in the instance of theory? If nationalism deployed out the context of decol-

onization (where as Laclau elaborated, it plays the role of interpellating a people against a foreign/external power, always bearing in mind the critique of Fanon on national consciousness as only an empty shell, a crude and fragile travesty of what it might have been.), enacts the famous claim of the Marxist tradition, that of cementing the class struggle into a unified nation state, to the point of adopting certain political positions in the instance of everyday society. And if a politics of emancipation and struggle, especially against social oppression through economy, should stand in grounds with the oppressed masses, than it must craft its critical rhetoric in a bilateral heresy: (1) releasing itself from the dogmatic extrovert fetish for self-sufficiency, political ego-masturbation with anti-nationalism, in the course of exploring other political approaches to actions that effectively fight nationalism and (2) engaging politically with the masses of the oppressed which have embraced nationalism while carefully examining the risk of involving into the reproduction of the nationalist ideology.

Making a critical rhetoric work for the oppressed is as tricky as their current fetishized political interests in the context of nationalist hegemony.

I believe that it is of utmost importance that we begin by positing the very the site of the occurrence of neo-nationalist interpellations in the Balkans. In doing so, we must genealogically move from the current context, through that what is has inherited from the tragic break-up of Yugoslavia, to the very point of conception of the new Balkan post-socialist reality. I will have to give some context-in order to reach to a critical point of elaboration of such a heretic approach.

The break-up of Yugoslavia emerged as a gesture of the nomenklatura elite which now attempted to save their nations from the grip of repressive apparatus v.s. the state ideological apparatus which failed in reproducing common Yugoslav socialist subjectivity. One can claim that RSA (Repressive State Apparatuses) and ISA (Ideological State Apparatuses) were in contradiction (but this is to be explored and researched).

The process of state-building was one of ethno-nationalist state building, elevating ethnic interest into national interests of states with a multiethnic composition of their societies.

Then came the 'transition'.

FIRST CLAIM: The elites into power who established such a state claimed that the sacrifice of the bloody dissolution of the socialist federation was worth for the neoliberal heaven to come in which all were to pursue their happiness in the market freedom of economic opportunities.

SECOND CLAIM: But that happiness required another sacrifice, that of privatization of what was public ownership, All that under the genuine ideological concept - TRANSITION. Transition became and remains the main operational concept of political rhetoric even though it is almost completely derelict as a term in use.

Almost two decades after the inauguration of transition from socialism to capitalism, the social misery in the Balkans became the main political and social, potentially explosive, issue of the day. The elites embarked on adopting a second set of transitional political rhetoric. That from the Balkan social misery to the heaven of European Union wellbeing. This is why I had an MA in such a stupid thing as the EU Studies.

Transition as an operative concept is at the heart of the ideological interpellation of people into transitional subjects. Subjects that wait in vain for the heaven which nevertheless seems to be constantly postponed. Transitionarity is a very specific mode of ideological interpellation. Because, it first subjects the individuals to a certain role —citizens who have to wait —and it qualifies them for doing NOTHING. Or define it in a positive way — actively rejecting to do something (politically). It is not that this sort of interpellation has something lacking. It is a full ideological interpellation to the transitional (not in-transition but of-the-transition) subject. This differs from the concept of boredom that was discussed yesterday as a political potential. It is an active subject of waiting.

Transition as a mode of thinking the political fights against the fixation of the concrete social result of the implementation of the neoliberal system in the Balkans. Thus, it prevents the masses from enacting a critical view to capitalism/neoliberalism. If there is yet no final result, there is nothing to relate to. The only thing left is to wait.

In the course of waiting the political elites enacted a series of laws of deregulation, flexibilisation of labor market, lowering the taxes. All that in the name of foreign investments. But, soon it became clear that capitalism doesn't work for the majority of the people, even under its own capitalistic terms of free market that allegedly should benefit the wellbeing of the majority of people. The lowered taxes and restrictions of labor rights made the market more dynamic only in the terms of extracting profits for the large owners of capital.

Then came the crisis. In order to contain the potential social unrest and a new potential subjectivisation of the masses, on the grounds of the nationalist state building project, the elites redeployed the nationalist myths as central political issues. This is the FARCE. And the tragedy within the farce is that it got embraced by the masses.

On the other hand, the EU Integration took a mode of another nationalist interpellation. The race between Macedonia, Greece, Albania, Serbia, Kosovo and others on who is more 'European' fueled nationalist flows in the region.

Actually the most racist policy remains the visa restriction now only applicable to Kosovo.

There is a risk that nationalism be perceived as anti-capitalist ideology in times of crisis. That it is a safe haven for the rescue of a nation facing social degradation (which is economic-social). In contrary to the attempts to make the crisis invisible, the increased visibility of crisis enforces the need for nationalism. Death trap. The radical right/neo-fascist political groups mobilized their extreme discourse which is re-territorialized by mainstream parties. Thus we enter in the stage of mainstream politics becoming aggressively nationalist and racist. Look at Greece and Hungary.

I Believe there is some truth in Laclau and Therborn. Their thought can be interpreted in the context of nationalism as ideology. Nationalist ideology, even though its constitutive elements are class independent, or they are non-class elements, is still class patterned. This is in a sense that these elements— as is the case with the crisis in the Balkans —are articulated in a way that makes class a determinant factor. This sort of articulation, thus, ensures that the rallying of the masses to the national cause turns to work for the interests of the elites in power. That would confirm the claim that the ideological assemblage of a society, even though it includes such non-class ideologies, is always determined at last by its class composition, or dynamics. I am not entering into the discussion of nationalism as bourgeoisie ideology that with its victory has nationalism embedded in itself.

NOW COMES THE HERETICAL CHALLENGE: Which are the possible repercussions for our radical theory that arise from the challenges we are facing when we try to move from the domain of theory/philosophy of nationalism to the domain of emancipatory/revolutionary politics of the everyday society? Here I would like to quote Deleuze: 'A theory has to be used, it has to work. And not just for itself'. Deleuze than short-circuits the expected relation between theory and praxis. 'Praxis,' he says, 'is a network of relays from one theoretical point to another, and theory relays one praxis to another.' But, he adds, a 'theory cannot be developed without encountering a wall, and praxis is needed to break through.' This is why I believe that today we have a challenge in the theory of nationalism. Marxist theory of ideology has encountered a wall. And we need praxis to break through. That is why at this point we have to move and work with the masses in practice/ that is politics of everyday society.

A PRELIMINARY PROBLEM OF A TENDENCY IN RADICAL THEORY/RADICAL DISCOURSE

The lack of address of radical discourse results in that the masses are left to the articulation of the nationalist/conservative parties, and thus the result of the last European elections, with radical right wing parties gaining serious ground. This non-engagement with the masses in their predicament which would challenge our concepts of thinking the path to emancipation and revolution has crucial repercussions for that which has come to be known today as radical theory. Indeed, in the becoming out of joint of theory with the popular “reactionary” sentiment, it needs a constant reinvention of its own radicality to fulfill the radical clam. This leads the radical theory to become interesting in the domain of political philosophy, but useless for any transformatory praxis.

So if nationalism in its current articulation serves capitalism then our move to the domain of masses should be guided an anti-capitalist drive. That is the idea of communism. And at this point I must disagree, as I have disagreed with myself few years ago, that the idea of communism is to be pursued, at least in the Balkans, but I assume Ex-Soviet societies as well, through the denomination for political purposes of this idea, with the word communism. If Alain Badiou poses the question if the word communism is forever doomed, I would have to say that, for the sake of the communist idea, we have to declare the word communism not doomed, but probably DEAD. And there still remain the differences in the nostalgic reception of communist experiments between the ideological constructions of ‘East’ and ‘West.’

What are we to do in the context of nationalism serving capitalist interests from the perspective of the communist idea? As I mentioned earlier we have to move in the domain of the masses and work within that domain. And it is at the site of everyday society that we encounter the issue of hegemony as a political site proper for our struggle.

Having in mind the two initial risks that one ought to be aware (focus only on economy or anti-nationalism), after what I just elaborated, the use of the word communism to denominate our communist politics will doom our politics to the realm of Yugoslav nostalgia or nostalgia for the Soviet Union. This is so because of the fact that one of the key ideological interventions of neoliberalism after the fall of WALL was to establish a strong anti-communist anti-socialist attitudes in the eastern societies.

But in the ‘West’ it’s not much different when taken into consideration that the biggest social movements of the masses in the recent history of Europe and American continent organized their politics around the concept of democracy. It is precisely democracy which enjoys a doubtful

hegemonic status that posits itself as our terrain of political battle. The content which has hegemonized the concept of democracy as an empty signifier is one of the elites, of neoliberalism. And we must fight for the content of the masses to hegemonize the concept of democracy. The word democracy can be perfectly fit for the communist idea as it is paradoxically fit today for the logic of extreme economic necessity of capitalism. Attaching a paradigmatic content to both communism and democracy as concepts means to ignore the whole concept of ideological battle and focus instead on the empty signifiers.

And at last, a heretical elaboration in Badiouan terms. That is, if we are to engage with the masses, this would entail for us who have affinity in theory an encounter with the masses, an encounter from the void of the masses (communism). If the masses are reactionary than communism marks the void of the masses. The masses are the situation and the positive political language of the masses is the language of the situation. If we are to enact our political fidelity to the event of our encounter with the masses to that what the event has inaugurated - communism then we ought to force this as political truth into the language of the situation, which as Badiou prescribes, after accommodating this truth through the creative process of naming (forcing of truth into language) of truth, means something different from what it meant in the previous situation. And that positive political effective language, for our politics is currently the word democracy. The word democracy, in the new situation (of the masses) means communism.

I want to end with a quote from Sex Pistols:

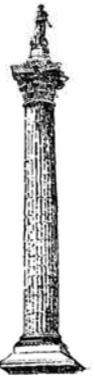
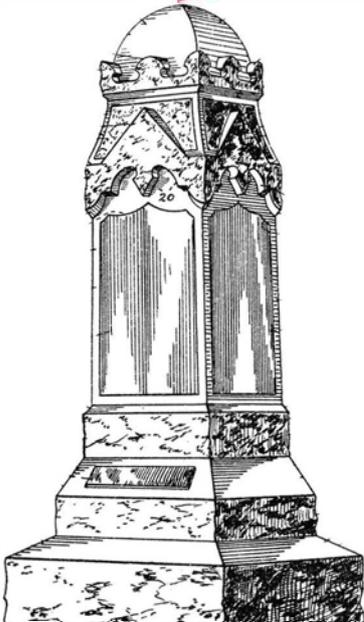
I don't know what I want, but I know how to get it.

Two words are important here: WHAT and HOW

WHAT: requires a name for an answer, a name of an empty signifier of the content of which we have no clue. As the content of the name communism in the previous century's attempts and the content of democracy today.

HOW: requires a description of politics, of the struggle towards what we want, of experimentation and constant reinvention of the positive of communism under whatever name.

(**NATIONLESS**)
ARTWORKS



Nada Prlja and Branko Prlja

Operation City, 2006 - an ongoing public art action, recorded by 10 photographs, each 30x40 cm

This projects is based on the attempt to alter/give new meaning to predominantly nationalist and ethnically biased graffiti on city walls. The project consists of finding ways of adding to or altering existing graffiti within public spaces. This action is an attempt to introduce an element of 'healing' the cities from this continued negative presence and aggression. The action was performed in Skopje, Rijeka and London and it is ongoing.



Maria Sarri
Nationalism on YouTube in the Balkans



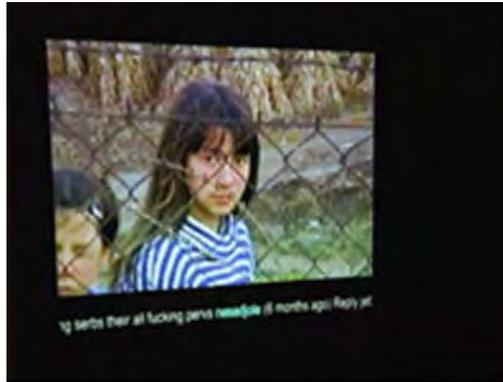
This work intensely researches the visual expression of the YouTube users through Balkans in the area of national debates. The subjects, the images and graphic visualizations of these debates produces virtual space of conflict. The reproduction of standard clichés and images builds a mosaic of views. The work is based on re-appropriated material collected from YouTube and consists of three videos (the two of them presented at Skopje) and a big collection of video stills templates. “Purenness of the race,” “glory of the nation,” religion and historical incidents are part of the issues presented in these videos. The importance of this material concerns the way most of the Balkans’ peoples still understand themselves through the rejection of the “other.”

Balkans, video installation, 2009

The 1st video is a collage of homemade videos of children performing national hymns or national songs in the intimate spaces of their houses. In between are some national hymns of official bands with national flags inserted.

The 2nd video is a small capture from a camp somewhere in Kosovo. The peace force's soldier in a 3 minutes' video captures a group of children shouting and playing behind a fence. In the editing the comments of the YouTube users have been added as subtitles. Many people mostly Serbians and Albanians under anonymous nicknames are performing a hard debate of swearing, cursing or blessing the children. Everyone tries to guess their national identity although the video is very poor of information and the incident could be realized everywhere.

The 3rd video consists of a big text in black font. A collection of slogans, curses and statements of many videos has been selected. The statements sometimes are identical only the names of the nationality changes. Sound of a ring with an audience is been heard.



The work is based in re-appropriated material collected from YouTube and consists of three videos.

ROMEO&JULIET@FREELAND: A FACEBOOK ROMANCE

An interview with Maria Sarri by Akis Gavriilidis

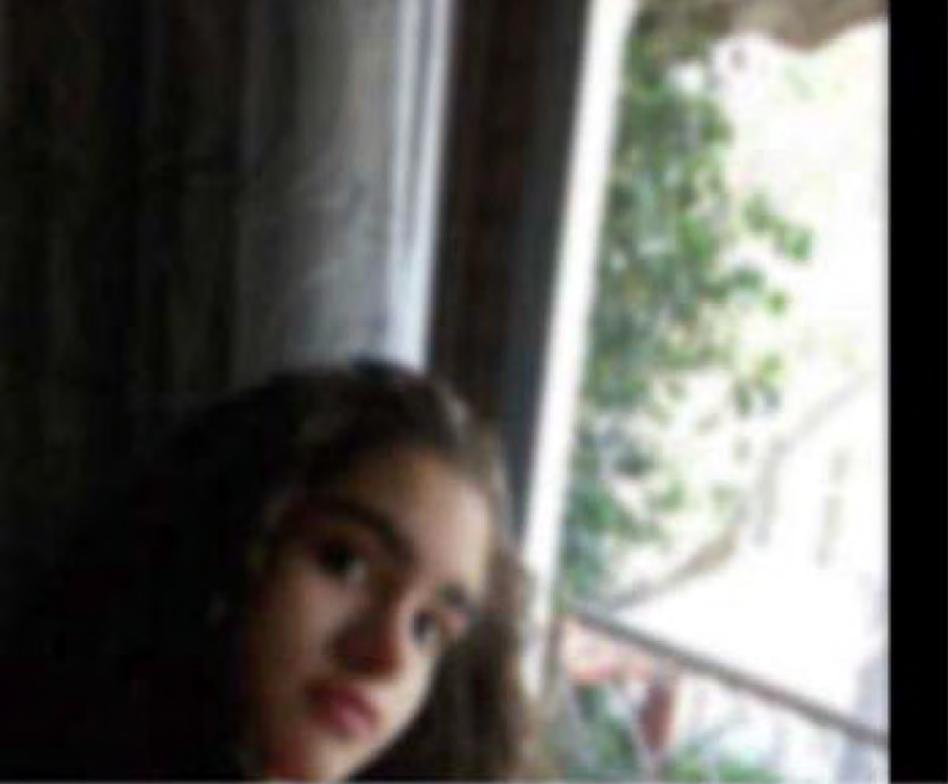
What is exactly the story of this video?

In May 2013, the news on Greek TV's, Internet news sites, and all media in Greece were after the story of the disappearance of a thirteen years old girl. The young girl had decided to run away from her home and her family in Athens and go to Kavala, on the other side of the country, to meet a twenty-three years old young man whom she had met through Facebook and fell in love with. The young man is an immigrant from Albania working as a shepherd at the countryside. Although, his secret dream is to one day become a hip hop star. The girl met the young man and together ran hid in a nearby forest. As the police was searching for them, the media revealed their Facebook profiles. Immediately the young man's Facebook profile became the target of many users who started harassing him. In the beginning it was not very clear what was exactly happening with them. So, the media tried to manipulate the story and produced a horrible drama accusing the young man of the seduction of a minor and pedophilia. At the moment an undeclared war was happening on the Internet. Groups of racists were attacking groups or individuals (human rights activists, immigrants, and others). Soon, the young man's profile became a battlefield of arguments, accusations, and insults. During the four days of chasing, as the truth came out gradually from police's reports, the arguments at the comments section on his Facebook profile wall changed. And, voices that supported real mutual love between them gained ground

The video is based on print screen images from the young man's Facebook profile with the comments of the other users. I edited them with animation in order to give a real-time, lively format. Videos from TV news are also included. Searching for a music theme, I found Albanian hip hop music created by Albanian immigrants in Greece in Greek and Albanian. It was a surprise! I had no idea of the pain, the passion, and nostalgia that these songs reveal, they are a world that is secret from Greeks

Why did you choose this subject, what attracted you to this story?

In 2009, I started working with stuff on YouTube concerning Balkan nationalism. I had already decided to move to Istanbul for a time for master studies and I had already visited Macedonia once for an artistic project. But, even earlier the ideas of the Greek Enlightenment's revolutionary figure Rigas Fereos about a Balkan federation had triggered me. In a few words, having started a research into Greek modern history and issues of Greek identity, it was fatal for me to fall on the Balkans. Although Greeks generally are not fond of adding "Balkan" to their identity, I think it is in their soul. Another aspect of this work is my relation with the social media: the last 15 years, the rapid development of social media and their interaction brought face to face our mutual Balkan passion. These debates, even the most hateful ones, confirmed our need for mutual communication. For example, in debates under the young Albanian's profile, people who in the beginning were enemies, gradually came to like each other, even to fall in love. This story also shows that, in the electronic world, borders and prejudices do not have the same effect as in real life: a Greek girl from Athens fell in love with an Albanian shepherd who lived at the other end of the country. Another example is the Greek-Turkish romances: since Facebook started to expand, many Greek-Turkish love stories erupted. Turkish TV serials conquered Greek



Titinaki Morakii Marilou

Follow · 6 January '18

etsi ine oi megalo erwtes..prwta se pane sto feggari i
meta se afnou n eki n psaxis tropo n ghrsis... — xiti
Mario Aiazi.

Like · Share

👍 40 people like this.

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Titinaki Morakii Marilou ...

30 January at 09:34 · Like



Maggie Maggoula ❤️ koukara m...

3 February at 18:06 · Like · 🍀 1



Titinaki Morakii Marilou thanxi!!!!!!!

1 April at 21:58 · Edited · Like



Kristina Botsi ti omorfi pou eisi koukisa mou esu

6 February at 16:55 · Like · 🍀 2



Mario Aiazi oi atazi mou se afisa eoo???



Mario Aiazi haaa my beautiful eyes the moon is
close because with you I can go further...

18 April at 21:23 · Like



Titinaki Morakii Marilou Ναi οντως..να εμα σιλο

μαζ σου κι καταφερνει το ΠΑΝΤΑ..

television much later than the love boom appeared in Facebook.

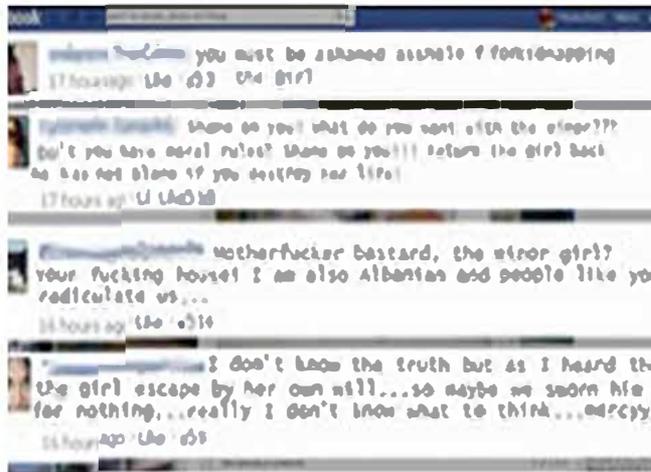
The video is trying to cover the multiplicity of the online experience, as well as the different layers and perspectives. When you're surfing on the internet on your computer while the same time television in the room is on and a couple of tabs are also active on the browser with extra information or music, at the same time the story of the comments on Facebook itself also creates images and narrations into the image and narration. Far on the image, as in a renaissance painting, you can see nature. Behind the multiple layers of noise and comments there is a forest with two lovers trying to hide. Music also works the same way: the urban beat of hip hop songs distributed online at YouTube are an endless Balkan mourning of a son longing to see his mother – a very common motive in Balkan oral tradition.

You presented this video at Thessaloniki in the framework of the “Nationless” project. What was your feedback, and what was your expectation from this interaction?

The project “Nationless” had started long before I joined it. So, I haven't contributed to the creation of the concept although I found it very interesting and inspiring. I have participated into the two of the three events: the one at Skopje and the one at Thessaloniki. At Skopje I presented my older work on nationalism in Balkans, again with re-appropriated material from YouTube. Soon after that, I started making this work in order to present it in Thessaloniki as a follow-up of the Skopje presentation. The term “nationless” may work better between ex-Yugoslavian countries. But between Greeks, Macedonians Albanians and other Balkans it is more complicated precisely because they don't know so well each other. The first step for me was to have as a point of departure of the given identity and, through this identity, to try to meet and know the other in order to overcome the prejudices that are based mostly on ignorance. Then is easiest to be “nationless.” As you Akis have many times successively pointed out (speaking and writing on the Greek – Macedonian debate): “We hate in the other what we don't like in ourselves, what we consider as an obscene enjoyment that they stole from us, and this is one reason for national mistrust and hatred.” We have to realize and cope with these feelings. “Nationlessness” can also occur as a result of the overwhelming presence of identities in the Balkan's area. I mean if you count them you lose your mind and this excess of identities make them unspecified so you end up in a “nationless” area with many different local colors and variations.

The meeting of artists and theoreticians is very important although it is very difficult to work in practice. T and this has nothing to do with the national identity but with these two very special identities: artists, theoreticians (general cultural/social theorists, philosophers, anthropologists), and Then each individual has a very own character so as you understand there are again multi- leveled situations that making the meeting and especially for such a short time very difficult to reach a concrete conclusion. B but this is not the point no one is looking for certain answers, but only for aspects that can exists and smoother the ground .

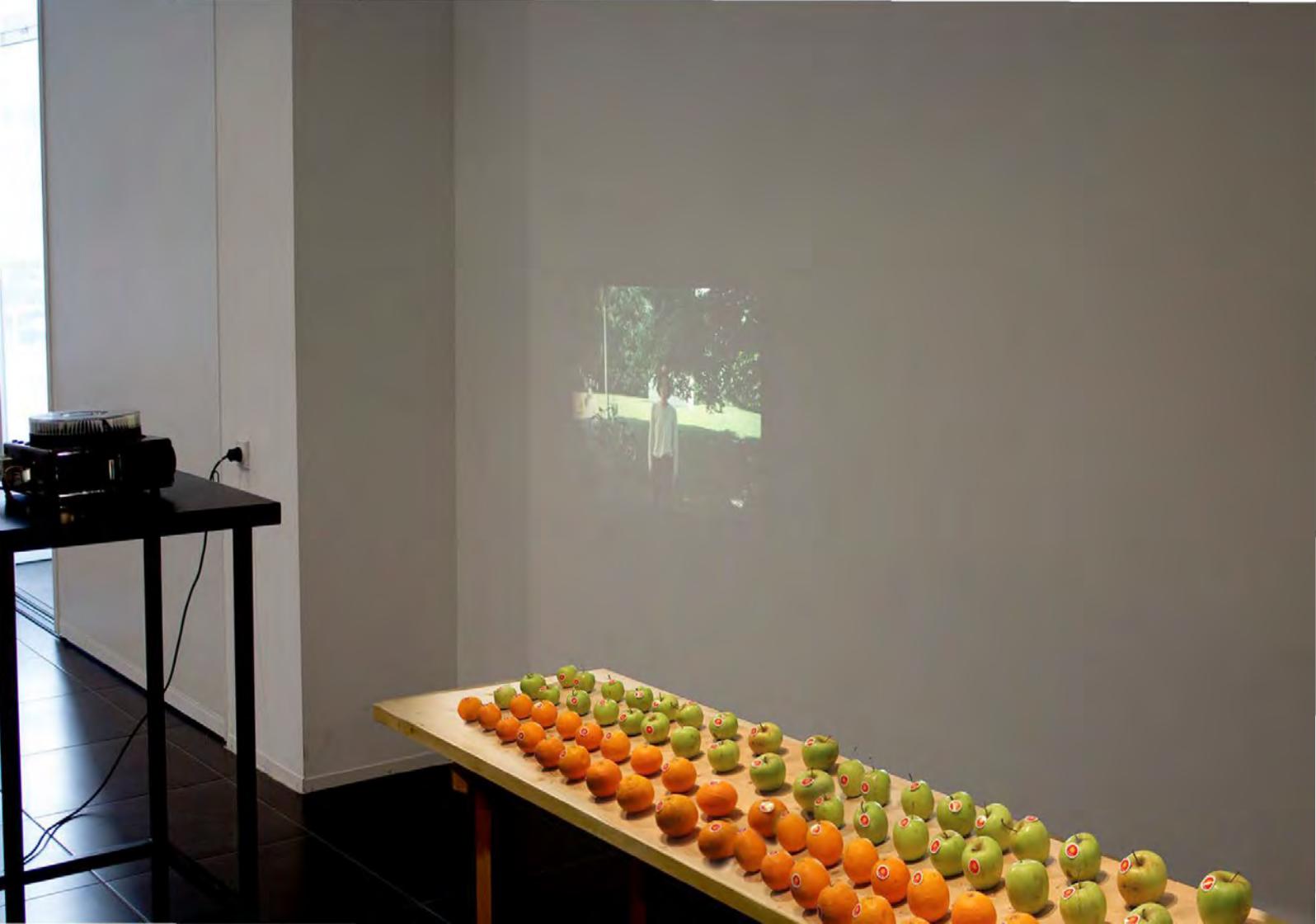
The feedback was positive. M, mostly because the work hasn't been exhibited in a wide range of audience but the participants of the project: artists and theorists. I would like to have the opportunity to share it with a wider audience. A and to talk more about it but even with these limitations “Nationless” was the ground for the realization of this work.





**Jane Calovski and Nayia Frangouli,
Common denominator, 2000**

The artistic duo Frangouli/Calovski present the Common Denominator project, which is composed of two independent autonomous parts. The first is a CD compilation of Macedonian and Greek music with distinct nationalistic and political overtones, while the second is a stand with fresh fruit (apples and oranges) which during the exhibition is handed out to visitors. The work deals with different perceptions of the individual national cultures, while at the same time, it attempts to intone the collective European psyche. Macedonia and Greece share the same history and a great deal of unresolved common problems connected with cultural, religious and linguistic differences. Frangouli and Calovski say that the two nations are extremely mistrustful and even paranoid of each other. The artists wonder whether there exists a way of purging oneself of these destructive emotions which capture us within our own fears. In her essays on the issues of nation, nationality, origin and the future of national ideas, Julia Kristeva concludes that the cult of “roots worshipping” is based on the emotion of “hatred” towards others and oneself at the same time. In the situation of permanent violence, every individual loses hope in individual abilities and retreat to his or her own world. According to Kristev, facing “hatred” in this position can lead to two pairs of opposite extremes in accepting one’s own culture and nation: glorification and accusation on one hand and the sense of a need for explicit manifestation and complete denial thereof. On the basis of a personal experience of this phenomenon, the artists conclude that in reality, it is “refugees” who, through the agony of having to leave their home, get to know differences and similarities or the meeting points of shared memories. A good example of this is Macedonian and Greek poems, because when “purified” of national and political connotations enforced on them by the lyrics, they together turn into “pleasant tunes” from the southern Balkans. Arranged and mixed in this way, they are “nothing but” music that can no longer strike a passionate chord. By blending music and by handing out apples and oranges, the artists wish to emphasise the impossibility of giving a concrete form to an opinion without changing the frame of reference. Great compassion and attention - and the sensuality of the simple although desirable smooth surface of fresh fruit - is what Nayia and Yane wish to offer us.



WHERE IS NOW? REFLECTIONS ON MY PARTICIPATION IN NATIONLESS

Angeliki Avgitidou

Nomadism seems to always have been associated with artists. In Renaissance, artists would travel from one Italian city to another in search of their next patron, or even move to another country altogether. As this was the case with Sofonisba Anguisola who travelled to Spain to work in the Royal Court of Philip the second. In the 18th century the Grand Tour of ancient Greek and Roman remains was deemed essential for the education and personal development of western aristocrats. Neoclassical art and architecture as well as Romantic idealism were built on the knowledge gathered from these trips. In 19th century Europe, amidst the bohemian culture of barely surviving artists and the European phantasy of exoticism, Van Gogh moved to Arles in search of a brighter light. Cézanne moved to Aix-au-Provence determined to rediscover painting. And Gauguin to Tahiti in search of authenticity and pureness. Travel is now a search of an utopia, a realm where the revelations about art and life will happen.

In the 20th century ideas and information already traveled more frequently, better and quicker. Speed and technology captured the imagination of many artists. It was time travel, especially to the future than excited futurists and constructivists alike. By the 1960's mobility as a concept closely related to space travel emerges and gets magically illustrated in the designs of the visionary group Archigram. "Flying city" and "Walking city" are based on the new circumstances of travel and the possibilities opened by technology. They demonstrate nomadic living, an euphoric one in the first case and a grim one in the latter.

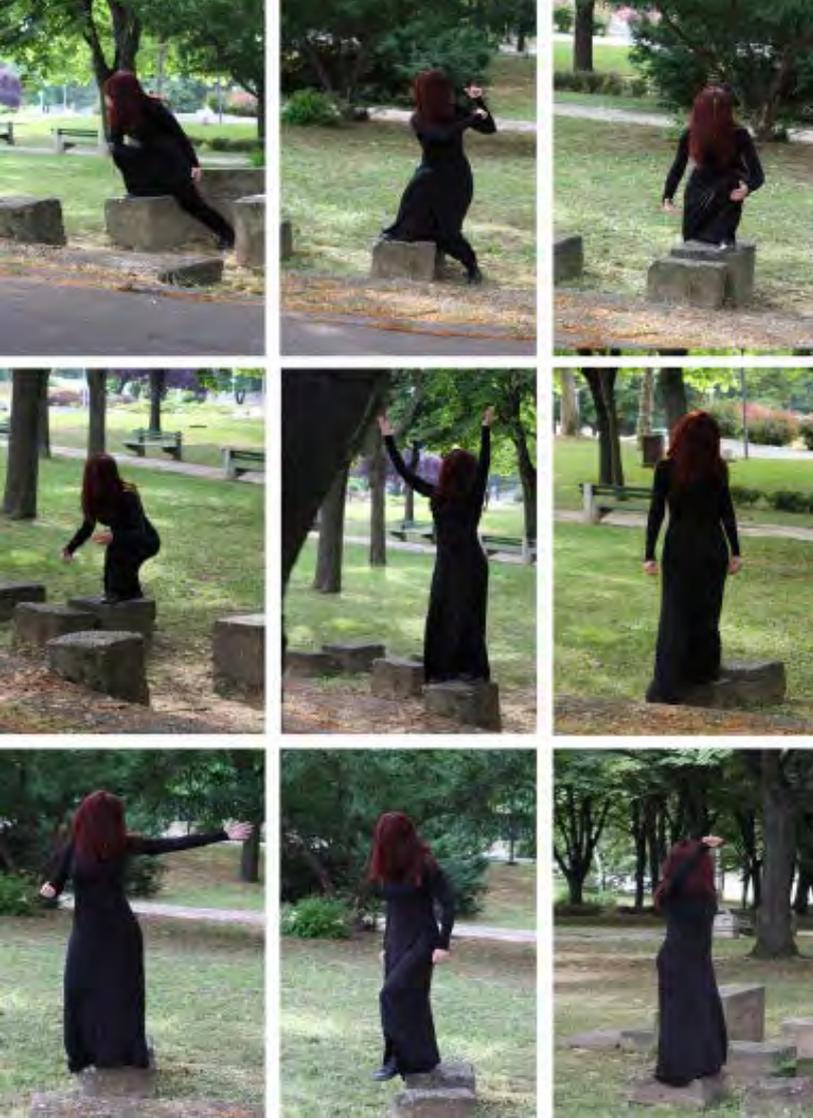
Artists nowadays seem to be on the top of professional groups that travel, in search of education or experiences, in order to take part in exhibitions or to take advantage of residencies and a globally available economy of commissions. This has in no way resulted in the financial amelioration of their situation. In their majority artists are usually working odd jobs living in borderline poverty or, in the best of situations, teach in order to maintain an income.

As a teacher in various graduate and postgraduate programs, I too have to travel in order to teach, attend meetings and conferences etc. This is alongside my artistic activities, requiring travel themselves as well. In performance art, a common demand among various schools and approaches is to remain in the present, in the "now". This is a never-ending effort for the performance artist. One that paradoxically must happen effortlessly. While travelling and being in different places all the time, I often ask myself "Where is 'now'?" Where is the now I should be experiencing? Which one of these presents is my own? This strange connection of the conditions of time and place appears logical in my trail of thoughts and consumes my thoughts. The only time that I do not struggle with this question is while making art. In a strange resolution, the answer appears where the question stops being asked, when I forget about it. My participation in Nationless had this effect. These small clusters of time that I could produce work under the conditions created in the program resulted in the following works being produced.

LESS1, Skopje, 2015.

For this work I created a persona of undeterminable origin and gender whose face can't be seen. Like a stranger suddenly popped out in Skopje from nowhere, I roam the city. I am curious about things and artifacts. I explore and I rest. Almost oblivious to the world I make little contact, if any at all. It's a strange world I don't belong to. At the same time remaining all too distinctive and clueless.





LESS2, Belgrade, 2015.

This work was influenced by the Museum of Yugoslav History as being the site of the proceedings. At the moment the exhibition “Art as Resistance to Fascism” was opened. Before getting to Belgrade I researched socialist sculpture. And while onsite I research the aforementioned exhibition. Hence, I designed some body movements associated with depictions of the heroic struggle, the harsh realities of war and the rebuilding after the war. I performed these as a faceless dark dressed figure in a long dress in the courtyard of the museum on concrete slabs and a fragment of stairs that served as pedestals.



STRANGER: LESS THAN SELF, MORE THAN NATION

Prokopios Orfanos

*To stand, in the shadow
of the scar up in the air.*

*To stand-for-no-one-and-nothing.
Unrecognized,
for you
alone.*

*With all there is room for in that,
even without
language.*

Paul Celan

If we decide to move from *alien* to *stranger*, there is a possibility to meet Georg Simmel. "The Stranger" is a famous *excuse* of the German sociologist. The *stranger* is a social type that has many interesting and positive characteristics.

Simmel's *stranger* is not a wanderer anymore but (s)he *comes today and stays tomorrow* in a community. The *stranger* is still attracted by the wandering but (s)he stays and interacts with a group. (S)he shapes a character of *mobility* in which remoteness and nearness are synthesized (Simmel 1971, 143, 144). There are at least two interesting aspects of her/him.

The first is about correlation. One can only correlate with her/him in an *abstract* way, share *more general qualities* and can't communicate on the basis of common characteristics (Simmel 1971,146).

A second interesting aspect of Simmel's social type is "objectivity" . The *stranger* has no roots that bound her/him up with the group. He expresses her/himself with an *objective attitude* (Simmel 1971,145).

In which way(s) all these strange words correlate with *Nationless* and especially with "_LESS 1"?

Obviously, our alien is in-between the paradox of *attachment to any point /detachment from every given point in space* (Simmel 1971, 145). (S)he thickens this in-betweenness with a paradoxical action *in the city*, but not of it . 1

The alien in "_LESS 1" interacts, - communicates, walks in the city. (S)he is wandering faceless in the public space and correlates with things and people: an interrelation happens in an *abstract* way. We are unaware of the qualities that (s)he shares with objects and persons that (s)he " faces" .

1.We are following here the analysis of Margaret M. Wood, on the stranger: Margaret Mary Wood (1934), *The Stranger: A Study in Social Relationships*: 44-5.



This unspecified, nationless (wo)man performs her/his wandering in *objective attitude*: not in strict relation with local elements, not with an expected attitude, not communicating common characteristics, not sharing community bonds. (S)he remarks on her/his own special way a modernist, decadent, imposed identity of a specific public space.

What will happen if we place the stranger/alien in the friend/ enemy opposition?

The alien/stranger seems to be unrecognized and alone. (S)he lives in a unique situation under threat. If (s)he doesn't share common features, her/his values are hidden and also her/his face is unknown, then maybe the public space can be dangerous.

At the same time (s)he can be misunderstood, while remaining speechless, with a vociferous body. The strangeness that (s)he carries could be seen as a threat, or even more it can construct a threat. Is (s)he a friend or an enemy?

The stranger undermines the spatial ordering of the world -- the fought-after co-ordination between moral and topographical closeness, the staying-together of friends and the remoteness of enemies. The stranger disturbs the resonance between physical and psychical distance: he is physically close while remaining spiritually remote. He brings into the inner circle of proximity the kind of difference and otherness that are anticipated and tolerated only at a distance -- where they can be either dismissed as irrelevant or repelled as hostile.

(Bauman 1998, 60)

So, this strange figure participates in a unique sociopolitical game, by challenging the social bond with her/his wandering. (S)he is questioning what was familiar, similar and known in social life. When a stranger/alien becomes an enemy even for absurd reasons, (s)he will be connected with politics. The concept of 'political' is related to sovereignty and enmity.

The concept of this sovereignty which never goes without an enemy, which needs the enemy to be what it is, is not necessarily linked or limited to such or such a state structure (monarchical, oligarchical, democratic, or republican).

(Derrida 2009, 77)

The Stranger's wandering can give rise to hostile actions on the part of *the people* or *the nation*, so, in this way (s)he will be connected with politics and sovereignty. Even though this stranger/alien can be far away from home, without "roots," (s)he can provoke such feelings and interventions.

A stranger/ alien walks, stands, acts, performs, remarks. Her/his origin is unknown. Her/his appearance is uncanny. (S)he looks like a leaf without a tree. And when a bizarre figure moves/stands and disturbs the daily routine, then who will be threatened next?

*A leaf, treeless
for Bertolt Brecht:*

*What times are these
when a conversation
is almost a crime
because it includes
so much made explicit?*

Paul Celan

References

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**PARTIA
E FORTË**

The Strong Party (Partia e Fortë) is a satirical political party from Kosovo formed in 2013. Its goal is “to come to power to control public money in the interest of supporters and the like-minded”.

As part of the group’s commitment to gender equality, over thirty percent of the candidates running for office in the upcoming election are men. The Party seeks to maintain the political status quo, praising Kosovo as a democratic country where living people as well as “those resting in peace” can vote.[5] Party leaders claim a victory of around 120 percent, as measured by the group’s pollsters.

The Party is headed by Visar Arifaj-- his official title Kryetar Lexhendar (Legendary Chairman) intentionally misspelled with the so-called hard xh-- and other young activists from Prishtina. It is the only political party which has no ordinary members - besides the Legendary Chairman all its supporters serve as deputy chairmen. The Strong Party is a grassroots organization linked to the coffee culture of Kosovo’s capital.

Through various documentation presented at the exhibition, will have the chance to find out more about the activities and actions of this political party.

The Strong Party (Partia e Fortë)
NATIONLESS [AUTONOMY/LIBERATION]
Exhibition opening, 4 April 2015,
Youth cultural center (MKC), Skopje





Velimir Zernovski,
Distilled Twinkle, Twinkle..., 2014, dimension variable, (pink velvet/rope/
silicon),

“It’s true I always wanted love to be / Hurtful / And it’s true I always wanted
love to be / Filled with pain / And bruises...”
(Antony Hegarty)

It is an installation of a Mickey Mouse - like figure, made of pink velvet that
can always be set differently depending on the context and the exhibition
space. It represents a symbol of a history built upon experiences of per-
manent failure, shame and loss. History that suggests no future. Extremely
pessimistic scene that plays with the image of death in a very childish man-
ner. Suggesting desire for new readings, new struggles, new beginnings that
would refuse the reproduction of the present as we know it.

NATIONLESS [AUTONOMY/LIBERATION]

Branko Tesević and Dragan Protić,

4 April 2015, Youth cultural center (MKC), Skopje

Халуци-Нација
Имаги-Нација

ЗА ТУЖИ
БЕЛИ ДРОВО
КОПАЈ СИ
ЦРНИ
ГРОВОВИ
ГОТОВИ

ЈА С -
БЕЗ ОГЛЕД
НА КОЕ
ИМЕ
СЕ
ОДЗИВАМ

UNË -
PA MARRË
PARASYSH
NË CILIN
EMËR,
PËRGJIGJEM

ОСКАР ДАВИД



ЈАС
БЕЗ
ИМЕ СЕ
ОДЗИВАМ

НА КОЕ
ИМЕ СЕ
ОДЗИВАМ

PA MARKA DALASISH NE CILIN =HER TEBGUGI=



ХАЛУЦИ-НАЦИЈА
ема-Нација
імаги-Нација



ХАЛУЦИ-НАЦИЈА
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NATIONLESS [AUTONOMY/LIBERATION]
Branko Tesević and Dragan Protić,
Action,
April 2015, Skopje

the state
is not
an artist

Filip Jovanovski

The state is Not an Artist , 2015, Installation (two paintings, oil on canvas, 100/70 cm each and neon text)

This installation is a combination of two research projects of the author, namely: Don't stare so romantically (2011-2014) and the work Mother Olympia Courage and Her Children (2014-) realized during an art residency at the TIKA Institute of Contemporary Art in Tirana, in collaboration with the painter Teo Napoloni and Ivana Vaseva, as the project researcher.

The slogan "The State is Not an Artist" is a statement generated during a conversation of the author and the leftist movement "Solidarnost" members (Goran Janev, Mariglen Demiri, Artan Sadiku and Fabio Matoli) with the highly-qualified workers-participants in the construction of the project "Skopje 2014" (Jovica Pavlovski, Nasret Elmazovski and Goran Jovanovski), during an exhibition part of the author's project "Don't stare so romantically". Transcript and recordings from the conversation, held on 9 April 2014 in the Open Graphic Studio in Skopje, were used as part of a solo-exhibition titled "The power of the Spartans or power of love".

The work "Mother Olympia Courage and Her Children" makes a reference to the Bertolt Brecht play "Mother Courage and Her Children" which talks about Ana Firling or Mother Courage, parasite of 30 year long war

These two previous research projects were centered on the workers of the governmental architectural project "Skopje 2014", more precisely their position of creators of the social constellation of power positions and the mother as a symbol of the nation in two distinct historical periods, in the Albanian history 1945-1991 and in the Macedonian 2006-2014. The Albanian case is presented through the monument "Mother Albania" from 1971 authored by Kristaq Rama (Prime Minister Edi Rama's father), Muntaz Dhrami and Shaban Hadër, built in honor of the fallen partisans of World War II. The Macedonian history case is presented through a fragment of the larger complex of fountains "Soldier" located at the Phillip the Second square in Skopje (commonly known as Olympia and the young Alexander) whose author is Valentina Stefanovska, as a mother of the new state identity.

This artwork speaks of the manipulation and exploitation of the dominant power positions as achieved through the medium of art, but it also talks about the power of art and the artist, using the state as a means (a tool) of "artistic" intervention in society.

The paintings in this installation was made by an artist-craftsman, questioning the dominant power position of the craftsman as opposed to the author of the artwork, in addition to the relation artist-social system.

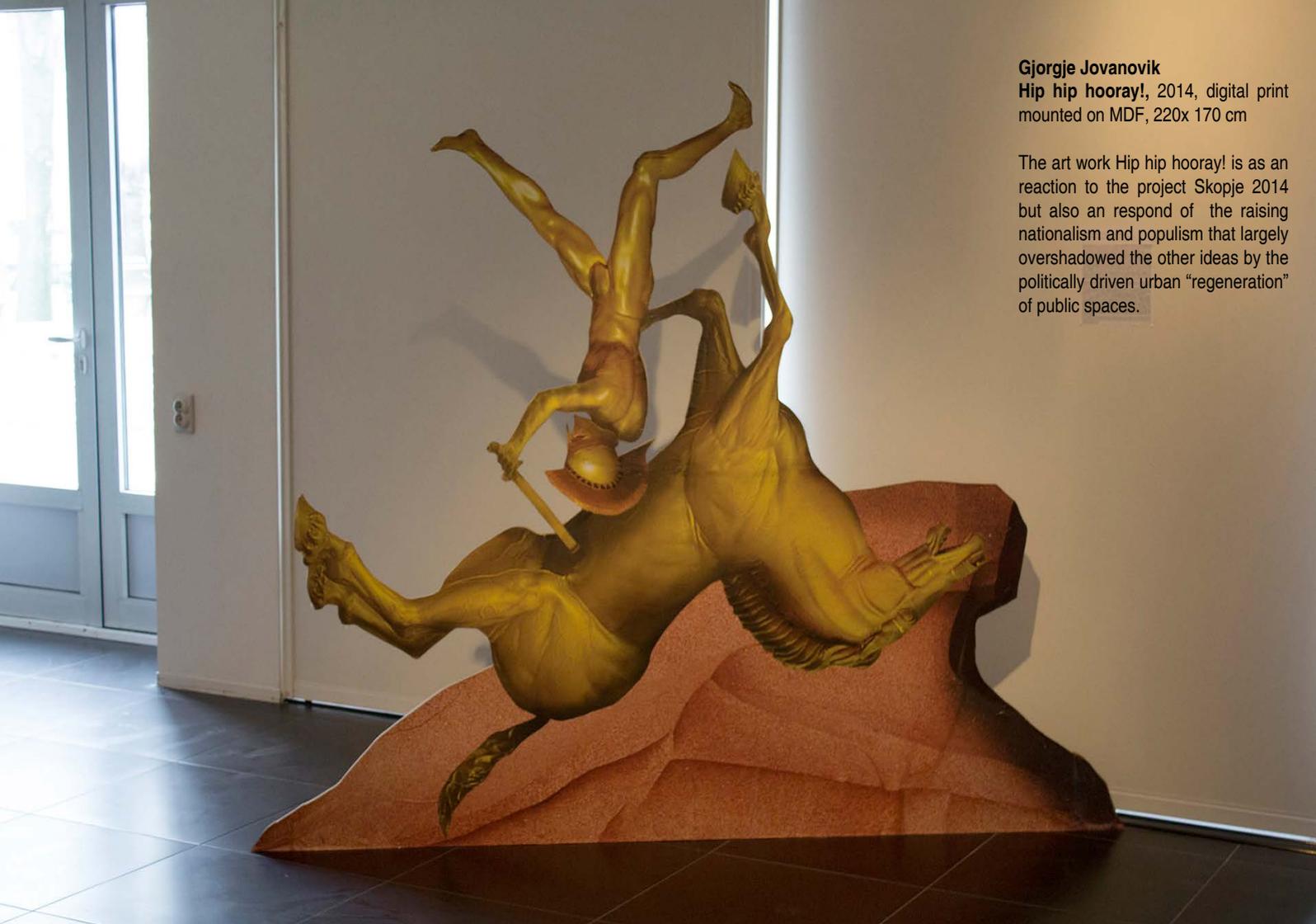




the state
is not
an artist



Olson Lamaj
Eagle, 2007, digital print, 150x100cm



Gjorgje Jovanovik
Hip hip hooray!, 2014, digital print
mounted on MDF, 220x 170 cm

The art work Hip hip hooray! is as an reaction to the project Skopje 2014 but also an respond of the raising nationalism and populism that largely overshadowed the other ideas by the politically driven urban “regeneration” of public spaces.

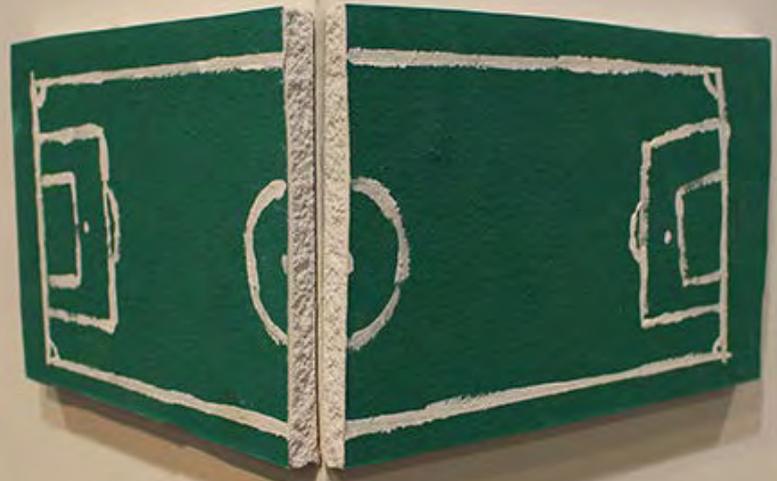
Driton Selmani,
Offside, 2015

Interior wall paint on gypsum board, 2x70x50cm

Offside - Adjective, adverb

Illegally beyond a prescribed line or area or in advance of the ball at the beginning of or during play or a play.

A mirror held towards the surrounding societies without judgment or commentary. An investigation on how football is used, as a tool to unfold phenomena's such as cultural, political and social differences in modern societies. By doubting its own primarily function as a game, and its comprising power to melt cultures together.





Eva Giannakopoulou and Persefoni Myrtsou,
The Brides of Maltepe (Maltepe Gelinleri), Ongoing Project, 2015

“The Brides of Maltepe” is a filmic series that seek to explore verbal transcriptions of relationships and confessions evolving around four families in Greece, Turkey and Germany. Eva and Persefoni share their lives between the three countries, and as observers and circumstantial protagonists they attempt an introspective process. At the same time, examining stereotypical and prevailing structures of transnational love and maverick forms of partnership with humor, irony, nostalgia and a bittersweet mood.

Nationless, Impressions on the Project

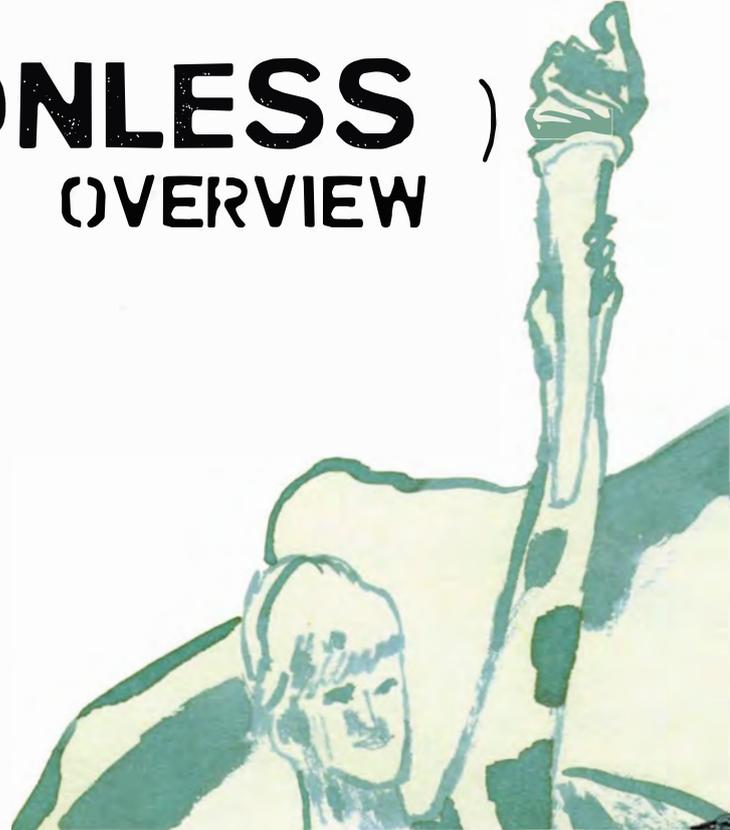
Eva Giannakopoulou and Persefoni Myrtsou

Coming together under the aesthetic prism of Nationless Balkan based psychogeographic connotations, is unfortunately not a usual condition for Greek visual artists . The modern Greek national identity is still formally resisting even the partial identification with the Balkans. And is selectively aware of its inherent Balkanian attributes recognising only connections based on less disputed cultural traits. Looking towards the “western art” has become a common practice for us of investigating our artistic and theoretical standing points and references. Observing western Europe from the standing point of the periphery makes for an awkward topologic condition. For the observer it generates both the possibility of a peripheral and of central standing point -in its heteronomous condition- developing an impression of familiar uncanny feeling. The Balkan art could be here and there. It is familiar and unfamiliar. We potentially identify or diversify our artistic subconscious with/from it, producing or reproducing stereotypes concerning our “authentic greekness” and our “contested balkanness.” This feeling is remarkable exactly because of its dualistic potential and its producing insecurity. If the condition of possessing a standing point entails the condition of not possessing one, it would be interesting to consider the possibility of a potentially in-between space as a nationless state of being. Crossing-borders and cross-disciplinary methods, the way they have been practiced during the seminar, have both been essential characterising the whole initiative.

We consider the project offering us the opportunity to explore alternative ways of political and artistic agency trough the others and ourselves as well. It has cultivated an interactive observance of “subjects” being determined by a critical political condition, that of the production of identity and its link to nationhood. Exploring the quintessence of “what is a national identity” or how it could transcend and potentially determine our topological and notional borderlessness, are all ardent topics for analysis. In the case of the project we have the impression that it has been artistically presented and considered with provocative methods. Adopting ironic and politically challenging artistic and social processes -whether these have been produced in public or private space- have been an original method of making reference to the status of “nationality” and the potentialities of social mobilisation.

(NATIONLESS)

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OVERVIEW



NATIONLESS [AUTONOMY/LIBERATION]

Exhibition, discussions and films

(4-5 April 2015, Youth cultural center (MKC), Skopje)

PROGRAM

4 APRIL

17:00 – 19.00 [Discussion] Nationless? Exploring the political and artistic possibilities towards 'nationless' autonomous subjectivity

Theorists: Slobodan Karamanic (SRB), Fotini Tsibridou (GR), Artan Sadiku (MK), Akis Gavrilidis (GR), Maja Muhic (MK).

20:00 [Exhibition] Nationless: A Continuous Struggle - a collection

Artists: Olson Lamaj (AL), Iordanis Styliadis (GR), Maria Sarri (GR), Dragan Protic – SHKART (SRB), Visar Arifaj – STRONG PARTY (KS), Nada Prlja and Branko Prlja (MK), Angeliki Avgitidou (GR), Branko Teshevic – STREET HERO (SRB), Yane Calovski and Nayia Frangouli (MK/GR), Filip Jovanovski (MK) and Gjorgje Jovanovik (MK).

5 APRIL

13:00 – 16.00 – Art as explosive: TNT (Treasures of Nationalist Treason)

Presentations and discussion with participating artists, activists and theorists.

16:00 – 17:00 [Screening] Alternative Balkan Caravan (2011) - a documentary on youth gay communities produced by United Society of the Balkans.

In order to fight for the rights of a community, first you have to identify these rights and then to inprint them. This exact depiction, we set as a target for 2011 and furthermore decided to do it by using multimedia and art. This way it was given birth to the idea for the creation of a documentary which would present the life and status of the homosexual, bisexual and transexual rights in Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Rumania, Greece and Turkey.

18:00 – 19:30 [Screening] DIORTHOSSI/CORRECTION (2007) feature film by the director Thanos Anastopoulos

A man gets out of prison. Like a modern Ulysses he undertakes a homeless journey into contemporary Athens, populated by migrants, homeless and other marginalized people. On his way he meets a woman and a little girl. Are the three of them members of a disrupted family or just persecutors and victims of a violent conflict driven by society that prevents them from living together?



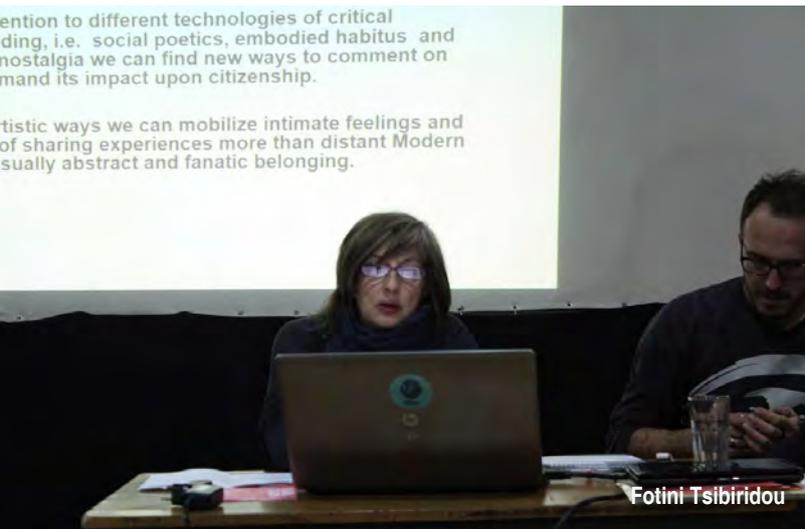
Discussion] Nationless? Exploring the political and artistic possibilities towards 'nationless' autonomous subjectivity



Artan Sadiku

...ention to different technologies of critical thinking, i.e. social poetics, embodied habitus and nostalgia we can find new ways to comment on and demand its impact upon citizenship.

...rtistic ways we can mobilize intimate feelings and of sharing experiences more than distant Modern usually abstract and fanatic belonging.



Fotini Tsihiridou



Slobodan Karamanic



Olson Lamaj



Angeliki Avgitidou





Халуци-Нација
Имаги-Нација

ЈА С -
БЕЗ ОГЛЕД
НА КОЈИ
ИМЕ
43

ЗА ТУДИ
БЕД
КАЈА СИ



Art as explosive: TNT (Treasures of Nationalist Treason)

Presentations and discussion with participating artists, activists and theorists.





NATION / EMANATIONS

(20 June 2015, Museum of Yugoslav History, Beograd)

PROGRAM

11.00 – a performance by Angeliki Avgitidou, (gathering in front of the Museum of Yugoslav History and visiting a sculpture by Vojin Bakić: “A Call to Uprising”)

12.00-12.30 – Information about the Museum of Yugoslav History and the introduction of participants and guests

12.30-13.30 – Tour of the exhibition held at the Museum of Yugoslav History and a live writing of works

14.00-14.30 – Poetic block in Tito’s garden (guests singer songwriters)

14.30-16.00 – Presentations of the written works and discussions (gallery)

16.00-17.00 – Introduction to the presentation (cinema hall)

17.00-18.30 - Slobodan Karamanić: Yugoslav Revolutionary Subjectivity: People ≠ State

“Yugoslav Surrealism/ Yugoslav Surnationalism: The Roots of the Vision of the People’s Liberation Struggle”, by Ivana Momčilović, playwright (Brussels, Belgrade)

18.30-19.00 – Poetic block 2 in Tito’s garden

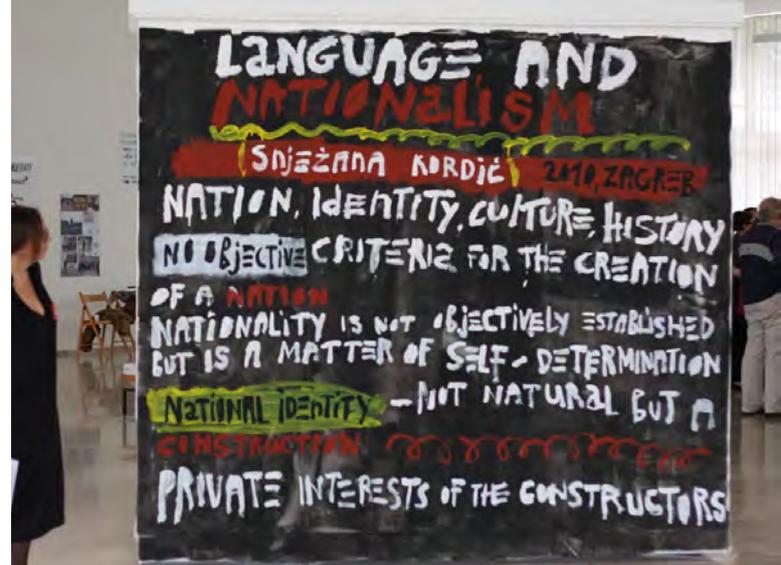
19.00-20.00 - Discussions (cinema hall)

“Workers have no fatherland. We cannot take from them what they do not have.
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, from the Communist Manifesto

Taking into account the primordial violence that lies at the heart of each politics of identity, which in order to “include” someone, always excludes someone else, the Belgrade variation of the Beznacionalnost/ Nationless project held on the route Skopje-Thessaloniki-Belgrade, calls for the conceptualization of the horizon that could be thought as exceeding the mono-identitarian concept of the bourgeois Nation-State, offering a refracting perspective of “the street and the backyard” of contemporary identities.

Trying to think the possibility of emancipation through and outside the framework of national awakening waves of the bourgeois State (19th century), this project raises the question of relevance of an identitarian void. Can the concept of a void which in astrophysics represents matter par-excellence become the starting point of a new materialistic fiction of an emancipating supra-identity, a conceptual “split” that would bridge, by an uncertain balance at the beginning, the discrepancy caused by rhythmical convulsions of correlate belonging: national and nationalistic, identitarian and atavistic; restricting and always segregationistically dividing? What would this new step be? Word, image, movement are given to the poets, theoreticians and visual artists of the region.

Edition Yugoslavia and the Škart Group as conveners of the Belgrade gathering focus on the example of Yugoslav exceeding of European “modernist” aspirations at the moment of creating a wide identity Yugoslavia in the National Liberation Struggle in 1941 and the example of poetics and politics of Yugoslav surrealists, calling on the participants and partners to present their local subjects of research.

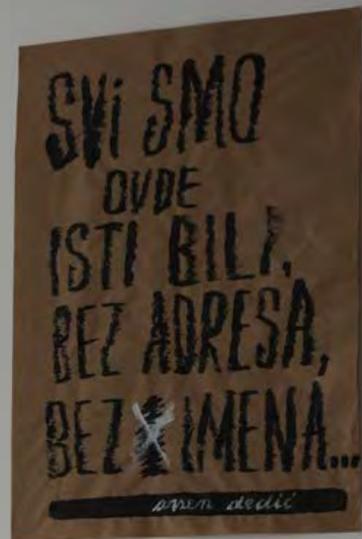
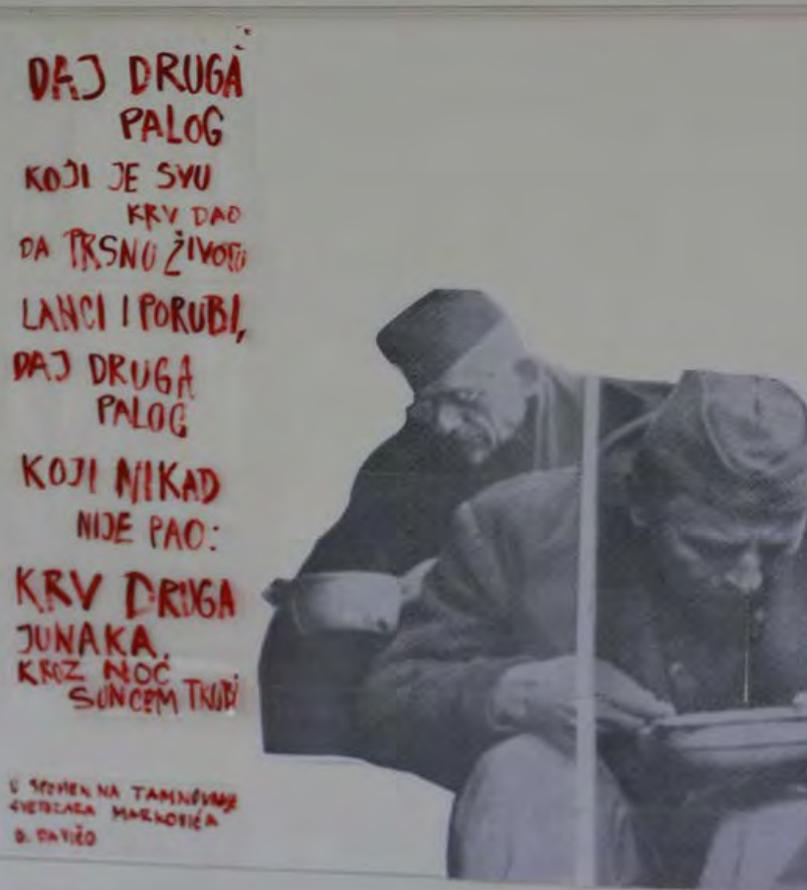






NATION / EMANATIONS,
Concert
(20 June 2015, Museum of Yugoslav History Beograd)







Doppelganger artist duo
presentation



Slobodan Karamanic



Ivana Momčilović

NATIONLESS? THE REFLECTIVE NOSTALGIA AND TRIVIAL AESTHETICS

(9-11.10.2015, Contemporary Art Center of Thessaloniki Cinema Museum of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki Museum of Photography)

FRIDAY 9-10-2015

Conference

1. Fotini Tsiibiridou
2. Akis Gavriilidis
3. Parateixia, Alexia Kalatzis
4. Yugonostalgie, Ljubomir Jakić
5. Artan Sadiku
6. Elena Veljanovska

SATURDAY 10/10/2015

Exhibition

Artists: Iordanis Styliadis,(GR) (introduction to the palimpsest idea) Angeliki Avgitidou(GR),Nada Prlja (MK),Filip Jovanovski (MK), Gjorgje Jovanovik (MK), Oslon Iamaj (AL), Persefoni Mitsiou (GR) , Maria Sarri (GR), Elsa Kotsoni (GR), Driton Selmani (KS), Apodec (GR), Danilo Šolović (SRB) Filip Zarić (SRB)

Students from MA program History Anthropology and Culture in Eastern and SE Europe
Students from School of Architects, University of Thessaly

SUNDAY 11/10/2015

City tour.

4h-5h Tour at the Cinema Museum

2 Film projections

Set of reflexive meetings between researchers and activists in art and theory. After welcoming friends from Pristina, Belgrade, Skopje and Tirana, we will alter the images of the created artworks already been established during our meetings in Belgrade and Skopje. Further more, we will promote our dialogical approach among artist and architects, researchers in humanities and social sciences. We are aiming to liberate thoughts and build new vivid social bonds that can reform the public space.

Elena Veljanovska.presentation
Thessaloniki Museum of Photography



Exhibition and discussion, 10 October,
Contemporary Art Center of Thessaloniki



Nada Prija





Iordanis Stylidis



Olson Lamaj



Driton Selmani





Filip Jovanovski



Evanthia Giannakopoulou



Ljubomir Jakić



Gjorgje Jovanovik

**Nationless / Actualization [Exhibition and conference]
(5-6 December, Youth Cultural Center (MKC), Skopje)**

Artists and theoreticians from Macedonia, Greece, Albania, Kosovo and Serbia meet in Skopje at the Youth Cultural Centre on Saturday and Sunday (5-6 December) for an exhibition and conference named Nationless / Actualization, organized by the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities - Skopje to confront and exchange of the regional theory, activism and artistic practices.

This was the last in a series of events of the project Nationless. The event engaged theoreticians and artists in visual and narrative explorations of the possibilities of the interplay of artistic and theoretical production in the Balkans towards opening of new fields of contestation, reconfiguration and actualization of liberation/autonomy beyond the nationalist production of subjectivity.

On Saturday, 5 December at 20:30 pm in the gallery of the Youth Cultural Centre there was an opening of the exhibition Actual art, a rupture within the antagonism with participation of Dragan Protic, Branko Teshevic, Darinka Pop Mitic, Kurs Organization, Olson Lamaj, Driton Selmani, Visar Arifaj, Iordanis Styliadis, Angeliki Avgitidou, Nada Prlja, Filip Jovanovski, Velimir Zernovski and Gjorgje Jovanovik.

On Sunday 6 December at 17h in the gallery of the Youth Cultural Centre there was a discussion entitled Sabotaging the nationalist recurrence, towards a theory of possibilities with participation of Ivana Momcilovic, Artan Sadiku, Agon Hamza and Vincent van Gerven Oi.

After the first event Autonomy / Releasing held in April in Skopje at the Youth Cultural Center, Nation /emanations held in June in Belgrade at the Museum of the History of Yugoslavia, Reflective nostalgia and its everyday aesthetic held at the Museum of Contemporary art in Thessaloniki, Actualization was the fourth and final event of the project Nationless, joint work of the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities – Skopje, Dam Dash- Belgrade and the University of Thessaloniki - Department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies.



Nationless / Actualization [Exhibition opening]
5 December, Youth Cultural Center (MKC), Skopje



LANGUAGE AND
NATIONALISM
(Srijana Krdžić) ZLO ZAGREB
NATION, IDENTITY, CULTURE, HISTORY
NO OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THE CREATION
OF A NATION
NATIONALITY IS NOT SIMPLY ESTABLISHED
BUT IS A MATTER OF DETERMINATION
NATIONAL IDENTITY IS NOT A NATURAL
CONSTANT
PRIVATE





Nada Prija
Peace-Loving
2015, 4 photography, flag



Olson Lamaj,
Blvd METEOR, 2015, 9 drawings on paper, 30x40cm
each, pavement stone



Narionless reflection, (collective work)
2015, multicolor paint , print , various
dimensions





JEZIK I NACIONALIZAM

(Svežana Nordić)

NACIJA, IDENTITET, KULTURA, PAVIJEŠT

NEMA OBJEKTIVNA KRITERIJA ZA PO
VIŠENJE **NACIJE** STR. 188 **FRAGME**

NACIONALNOST NIJE OBJEKTIVNO ZADOTA
NIJE JE STVARNI SMAGREĐENJA STR. 19
NACIONALNI IDENTITET NIJE



Polj #

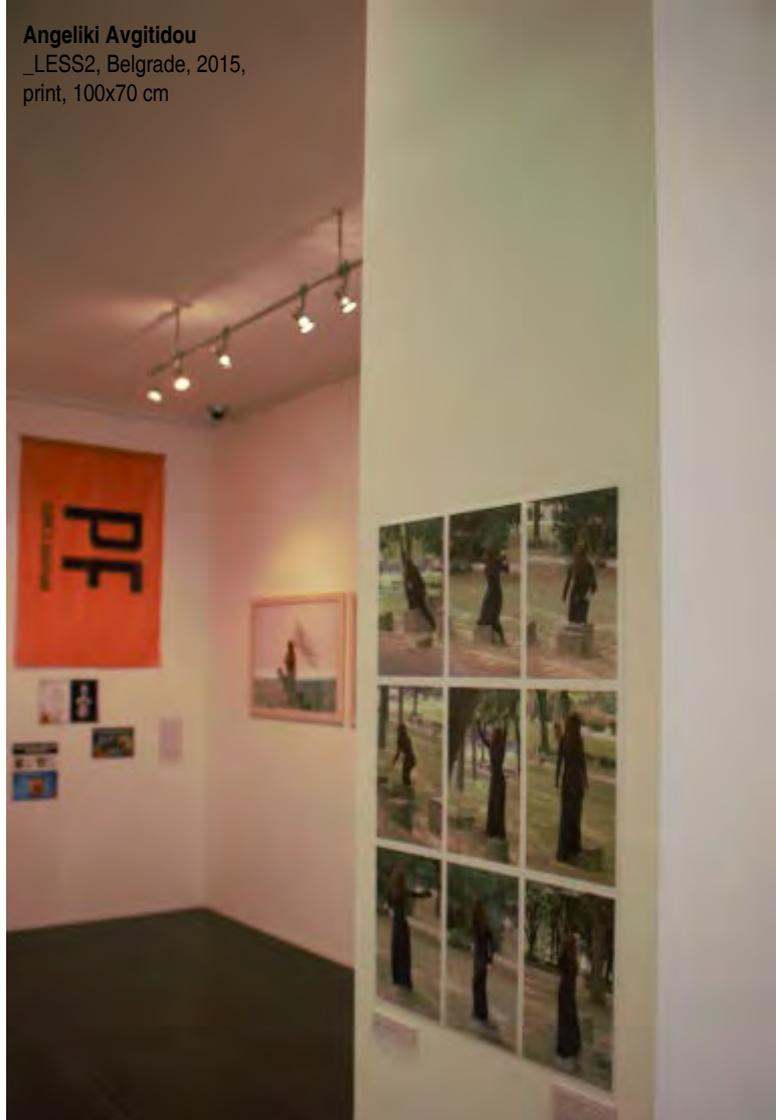




Gjorgje Jovanovik,
Horse Statues, 2015,
2 prints , 100x70cm



Angeliki Avgitidou
_LESS2, Belgrade, 2015,
print, 100x70 cm



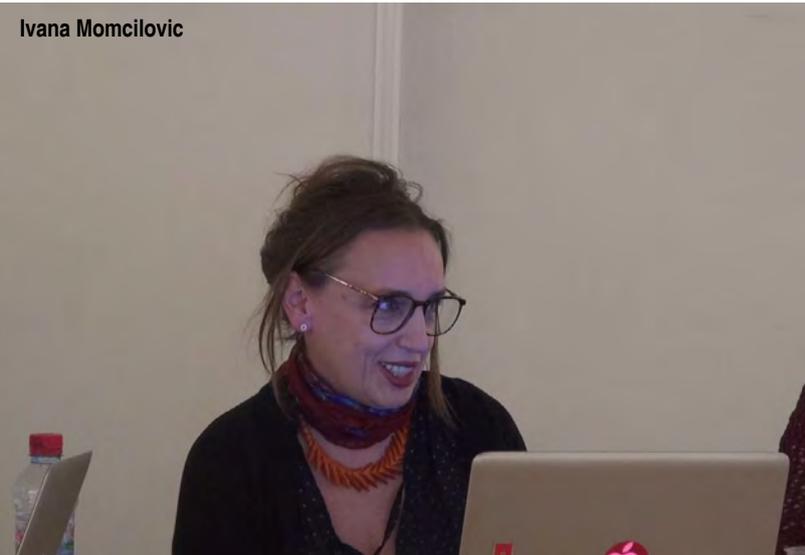
Dscussion Sabotaging the nationalist recurrence, towards a theory of possibilities
6 December



Agon Hamza



Ivana Momcilovic



Vincent van Gerven Oi



