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*In the gestures, in the words,
there still breathes the amazement of a new dawn,
the flowering of an unexpected spring.*

– Luce Irigaray¹

1. Introduction

This thesis takes up the challenge to propose a historicization and definition of the term “performative gesture” and contextualize postwar contemporary art practices in the post-Yugoslav space. To achieve this, I examine artworks that were performed or exhibited in public space in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the immediate postwar period.

Researching, thinking, and writing about postwar contemporary art practices and the notion of performative gesture establishes a reciprocal relationship between the two. To think about performative gestures through artworks from the postwar period simultaneously means to contextualize this specific episode from Bosnia-Herzegovina’s art history. Toward this goal, this thesis explores performative gestures in the artworks of Bosnian-Herzegovinian artists Gordana Anđelić-Galić (b. 1949), Almir Kurt (b. 1971), Samir Plasto (b. 1970), Danica Dakić (b. 1962), Suzana Cerić (b. 1971), Anela Šabić (b. 1970), and Ameli Tančica (b. 1970).² Their artworks, treated in this thesis as five separate case studies, articulate—each in its own manner—different ways of embodied storytelling carried out in distinct public spaces in two postwar cities, Sarajevo and Mostar.

Bosnia-Herzegovina is a country located on the Balkan Peninsula in Southeastern Europe. It is one of the six republics that were part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which broke up in the early 1990s. The dissolution of Yugoslavia occurred due to the series of political and economic crises in the 1980s that turned into political outbursts and, in the 1990s, escalated into armed disputes all over its territory. The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina

¹ Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 154.

² Almir Kurt and Samir Plasto were an artist duo known under the name Kurt&Plasto. At the same time, Suzana Cerić and Anela Šabić, not an official artist duo, worked together on the performance *Promenade* (1997), an artwork that serves as one of the case studies in this thesis. I present short biographical information about the artists whose artworks I discuss in this thesis in the introductions to subchapters *Rope*, *Boards*, *Mouth*, *Walk*, and *Paint*.

that began in April of 1992 and lasted until December of 1995 marks the country's modern history and continues to saturate its present through continuous reproduction of war rhetoric by leading politicians. It is also remembered as the 1,425-days-long siege of Sarajevo—the longest siege of any capital city in the history of modern warfare.³ The armed conflict was brought to a halt in 1995 by the Dayton Peace Agreement (hereinafter DPA), a resolution that was originally meant to be just a temporary political solution. However, until this day, the DPA is still in effect in organizing the highly complex institutional system in Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁴ The problematic behind the DPA lies in the political negotiations preceding it, which, in the words of Dino Abazović, “endorsed consociational mechanisms of power-sharing that trade individual human rights and liberties for nominal equality among (ethnic) groups.”^{5,6}

The DPA politically and geographically divided Bosnia-Herzegovina into two constituent entities and one district, i.e., the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and the Brčko District.⁷ The three constituent peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina—Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs—each have their representatives in all branches of government and all public bodies, including the collective Presidency of the country.⁸ This ethnic division is ever-present in all segments of political and public life, including art and culture. Thus, my aim in this thesis is to provide a reading of the contemporary performative art practices of postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina that traverse national and ethnic categorizations as vehicles of interpretation.

Alongside this brief overview of the geopolitical circumstances and prior to any further elucidations of the performative gestures in the postwar public space in B-H, it is essential to

³ “The Siege of Sarajevo,” Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, last modified April 5, 2017, <https://www.rferl.org/a/twenty-five-years-on-from-the-siege-of-sarajevo/28407397.html>.

⁴ Dino Abazović, “Reconciliation, Ethnopolitics and Religion in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” in *Post-Yugoslavia: New Cultural and Political Perspectives*, ed. Dino Abazović and Mitja Velikonja (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 35.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “Consociationalism is a stable democratic system in deeply divided societies that is based on power sharing between elites from different social groups. Consociational democracy can be found in countries that are deeply divided into distinct religious, ethnic, racial, or regional segments—conditions usually considered unfavourable for stable democracy.” See Sabine Saurugger, “Consociationalism,” in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed July 6, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/consociationalism>.

⁷ According to the Statute of the Brčko District, it is “a single administrative unit of local self-government existing under the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” See “Statute of the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina,” Office of the High Representative, last modified June 5, 2008, http://www.ohr.int/?ohr_archive=statute-of-the-brcko-district-of-bosnia-and-herzegovina.

⁸ To paraphrase Abazović, the postwar anomalies make Bosnia-Herzegovina an economically poor-performing country that finds itself in a constant loop of political crisis. Moreover, as Abazović points out, it is a state with barely any possible chances of joining the European Union or of bringing the transition process it has been going through since the dissolution of Yugoslavia to an end. See Abazović, “Reconciliation, Ethnopolitics and Religion in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” 35.

specify the spatial and temporal frameworks of this thesis and to make several terminological and theoretical clarifications.⁹

The artworks examined as case studies in this thesis were performed or exhibited in the public spaces of two Bosnian-Herzegovinian cities, Sarajevo and Mostar. Sarajevo, territorially the largest city in B-H, is the capital of the country and thus its administrative, political, economic, touristic, and cultural center. On a cartographic map, Sarajevo is located almost in the middle of the territory of B-H. A two-hour ride downward from Sarajevo, in the south of the country, is Mostar, an administrative, touristic, and cultural center of Herzegovina. Both cities belong administratively and territorially to the Federation of B-H.¹⁰ In the narrower sense, the topography of the artworks further defines the spatial framework. This topography includes two rivers on which the artists Anđelić-Galić and Kurt&Plasto performed (Neretva in Mostar and Miljacka in Sarajevo), and specific locations in the center and old town of Sarajevo, where the artworks from Dakić, Cerić, Šabić, and Tančica were executed.

Furthermore, the terms “postwar” and “post-Yugoslav” can also be interpreted as determinants of this thesis’s spatial framework. A postwar space is a space of traumata and anxiety, a space of newly acquired freedom and hope, and simultaneously a material space that is in a ruined and precarious state. A post-Yugoslav space indicates a space that territorially, politically, and ideologically used to be part of Yugoslavia. Both terms—as hinted by their prefixes—correspond to an era that came after something and have a somewhat clear point of beginning but no obvious point of ending.

“Post-Yugoslav” is a geographically specific term that incorporates a territory stretched across six present-day post-Yugoslav countries (B-H, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia) and designates an era beginning after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. It arose in the common discourse of the 2000s and succeeded the idea of the “former

⁹ Throughout this thesis, the name Bosnia-Herzegovina is, due to its length and in favor of the flow and rhythm of the text, occasionally written in its abbreviated form: B-H. This abbreviation is used in diverse academic texts concerned with the topic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. For example, the authors Robert Haydn, Mitja Velikonja, and Ugo Vlaisavljević, whose scholarship is a significant part of this thesis, use the B-H abbreviation.

¹⁰ As I explain in one of the upcoming subchapters, i.e., subchapter 1.5. (*Research, Methodology, and Limitations*), one of the constraints of this thesis is that it focuses solely on the postwar art practices from Sarajevo and Mostar. In methodological hindsight, the primary research for this thesis was constructed around the notion of performativity in public space (that later developed into the research on performative gestures) of the postwar B-H. I chose the artworks that opened up the possibility of discussion and further research on the notion of performative gesture regardless of the geopolitically of the performing site. Since the dysfunctionality of the fragmentary political identity is an indivisible particularity of B-H, it is important to make clear that the focus on artworks performed just in Sarajevo and Mostar (and thus the territorial space of the Federation of B-H) is not a deliberate intention of this research. No political motives to exclude the art practices from Republika Srpska exist in the framework of my study.

Yugoslavia.”¹¹ According to Mitja Velikonja, the concept of “former Yugoslavia” or “ex-Yugoslavia” should be separated from that of “post-Yugoslavia.” The former was commonly used in the 1990s “in the frenzy of *independence, democratization, market economy, human rights, national sovereignty* and other transition ideologies and practices, [and] represents angry attempts to sever all ties with the former state.”^{12,13} Besides that, as per Velikonja’s reasoning, the “former Yugoslavia” concept represents “a discursive and concrete institutional shift in the new dominant forces of the successor states by which they sought to wrench themselves from the heritage which was for them compromising. In other words, in their half-history, it was as if Yugoslavia had never been.”¹⁴ As much as the concept of the “former Yugoslavia” stands for animosity toward that space which once was, the “post-Yugoslav” concept implies a continuation of identification with Yugoslavia.¹⁵ The acknowledgment of this continuation is important, as the Yugoslav past and its legacies are still present in political, academic, media, and everyday discourse in the six countries Yugoslavia consisted of, one of them being Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹⁶ Therefore, following Velikonja’s clarifications, I favor the term “post-Yugoslav” in this thesis when referring to Bosnia-Herzegovina’s ties to Yugoslavia and the era afterward.

“Postwar” is initially a general term with no singular geographic or temporal limitations. It does not only refer to the situation in B-H after 1995 but also to every other place affected by a war and every other time in the distant and recent past that was marked by an armed conflict. In this thesis, the “postwar” is geographically and temporarily limited to Bosnia-Herzegovina after the end of the dispute in 1995.

More than two decades after the warfare came to an end, “postwar” still comes across as a relevant term when describing B-H. Due to the political decisions that revolve around the war rhetoric, weak economy, poor educational and cultural system, ever-growing political support of the ethnonationalist division of the peoples, and an ongoing brain drain, B-H seems to be stuck in the hazy status quo of the postwar. Cynthia Enloe makes clear that many factors

¹¹ “The concept of *post-Yugoslavia* arose rather imperceptibly, and then gained increasing momentum during the more sober 2000s, when it became clear that the majority of unrealistic transitional promises and expectations had been betrayed.” [The words in cursive are not my emphasis; they are direct citations of Mitja Velikonja’s original.] See Mitja Velikonja, “Ways of Remembering Yugoslavia: The Yugoslav Rear-View Mirror,” in *Yugoslavia from a Historical Perspective*, ed. Latinka Perović et al., (Belgrade: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, 2017), 520.

¹² Ibid., 519–20.

¹³ The words in cursive are not my emphasis; they are direct citations of Mitja Velikonja’s original.

¹⁴ Velikonja, “Ways of Remembering Yugoslavia,” 520.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

affect the duration of the postwar period.¹⁷ For example, the longevity of one's trauma and the process of their overcoming it.¹⁸ In the case of B-H, the duration of the ongoing prosecution of war criminals, alongside the process of exhumation of war victims, influence the continuance of the postwar state in B-H. I think that it is critical to pinpoint the importance of discussion on the possible expiration date of the postwar and circumstances that could and should affect that shift. Nevertheless, in this thesis, due to its scope, the artworks' thematic, and years of creation, I cannot extensively deal with the elaboration and criticality behind the durational matter of the postwar in B-H.

The artworks at the crux of this thesis belong to, according to the date of their creation, the immediate postwar period, designated by the years 1997 to 2000. With the earliest artwork from 1997 and the latest from 2000, these signposts delineate the temporal framework of the thesis to this specific interval. Upon the war ending in 1995, the immediate postwar period was characterized by political insecurities, social fragility, and traumata, but also hope and optimism. This simultaneously post-Yugoslav era is, in its own right, another traumatic event in which one had to abruptly detach themselves from the Yugoslav identity. It is a period of transition from socialism to capitalism, but also transition from the precarious war condition to a normalized life in the newly acquired state of freedom. Bosnian-Herzegovinian art historian, Aleksandar Adamović, described the postwar atmosphere in B-H as the time period when the "war psycho was yet to be reflected upon."¹⁹ The meaning behind his words can be related to the artworks examined in this thesis. None of the artworks deals directly with the thematic of the war horrors per se, nor with the mechanisms of collective memory or shared experience. The artists chose rather subtle ways of treating subjects such as one's identity, healing, postwar development, and affirmation of art and culture. In some of the artworks, the only tangible link to the war thematic is the geographical context.

This seemingly short period between 1997 and 2000 (if we consider the dates of the artworks), or between 1995 and 2000 (if we take into consideration the year the war ended and the date of the latest artwork), was characterized by the active work of the Soros Center for Contemporary Art (later known as Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art; hereinafter SCCA) in Sarajevo. The center is quite significant for the postwar development of the art scene in

¹⁷ Cynthia Enloe, "How Long Does 'Post-War' Last? Feminist Warnings," filmed November 2012 at London School of Economics and Political Science, Sheikh Zayed Theatre, New Academic Building, London, UK, video, 1:16:08, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QegPl3fxaF4>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ "Aleksandar Adamovic: Painting the Tombstones," Internet Archive Wayback Machine, accessed January 5, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20050909194301/http://scca.ba/Maxumim/aco.htm>.

Sarajevo and, thus, for contemporary Bosnian-Herzegovinian art history. Directed by Dunja Blažević, an art historian and curator, and funded by the Open Society Foundation, SCCA organized numerous exhibitions and art and culture-related projects from the end of the 1990s until the middle of the 2010s.²⁰ Three artworks examined in this thesis (Tančica's *Homage to Yves Klein*, 1997; Dakić's *Madame X*, 1998; and Kurt&Plasto's *500 Meters is Half a Kilometer*, 1998) were performed within the scope of SCCA's annual exhibitions—*Meeting Point* (1997) and *Beyond the Mirror* (1998).^{21,22}

It is in my interest to examine the art practices coming out of this specific period remarkably characterized by the work of SCCA for several reasons. It is important to look closely into the examples of art production supported by an artistic organization, i.e., the center for contemporary art. This would not be as thought-provoking if it were not in stark contrast to today's art milieu in Sarajevo and B-H, where there is significantly less organized institutional support for the development of contemporary art and considerably decreased presence of performance art in public space. In the postwar period, artists had not only a newly acquired freedom of living and working in a state of peace but also had the freedom that comes from having the necessary funds, materials, and support to work and create. Furthermore, when a war ends, people begin redeveloping their choreography of movement and daily routines, a choreography now only partially dictated by the state of war. Thus, it is in the interest of this thesis to explore the artists' way of negotiating this new sense of public space, liberated from war occupation, yet still carrying its material and psychic traces.

²⁰ Dunja Blažević is an art historian, art critic, and curator of contemporary and new media art. From 1996 to 2016, she worked as the director of the Soros Center for Contemporary Art in Sarajevo, which in 2000, changed its name to the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art. See Danica Dakić, *Zenica Trilogy* (Venice: The Pavilion of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the 58th International Art Exhibition: La Biennale di Venezia, 2019, exhibition catalog), 166.

²¹ According to the information published on SCCA's web page, SCCA's timeline has three important moments: 1. Soros Center for Contemporary Art was founded by the Open Society Fund Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of 1996. 2. In 1998, SCCA established a multimedia, video, film, and TV production department under the name SCCA/pro.ba. 3. In 2000, it became Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art and started operating independently as a nonprofit organization dependent on competing for financial support from domestic and international grants and donations. See "SCCA: About," SCCA, accessed June 10, 2019, <http://scca.ba/about-scca/>.

²² Additionally, Amra Bakšić-Čamo, one of the founders of the independent SCCA/pro.ba production company and a film producer from Sarajevo, explained in our written correspondence that when Dunja Blažević retired at the end of 2016, SCCA stopped working as an organization concerned with contemporary art in a curatorial way. Bakšić-Čamo further explains that SCCA/pro.ba continued working as a production company while also supporting the development of contemporary art (for example, in 2019, SCCA/pro.ba produced Danica Dakić's artworks for the B-H Pavilion at the Venice Biennale). Amra Bakšić-Čamo, email message to the author, August 24, 2020.

Synchronously, in the extraordinary times of the war, to live was to perform, and to perform meant to be alive. Hence, the possibilities of the evolution of performance and performativity after the complete counterbalance of performance and life also stand in the middle of this thesis's objective. Moreover, in the 1980s, before the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the outbreak of the war, performance art had just begun developing in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Therefore, in this thesis, I aim to delineate the possible traces of continuity within the development of performance art in B-H.

In order to ground my observations of performative gestures in public space in postwar B-H, I use geography as a preamble and an encompassing theoretical framework. According to the definition in *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, geography is a "science that deals with the description, distribution, and interaction of the diverse physical, biological, and cultural features of the earth's surface" and a "delineation or systematic arrangement of constituent elements."²³ The visual culture theoretician Irit Rogoff, whose theories, concepts, and observations helped form crucial arguments and inspired many passages in this thesis, complicates this universally adopted definition of geography. She poses the question, "What is geography beyond the charting of land masses, climate zones, elevations, bodies of water, populated terrains, nation states, geological strata and natural resource deposits?"²⁴ In her answer, Rogoff extends the universal understanding of geography and classifies it as

a theory of cognition and a system of classification, a mode of location, a site of collective national, cultural, linguistic and topographical histories, [and] a homogenous space which becomes an order of knowledge through universal indexical measures of the land.²⁵

Therefore, I use Rogoff's geography, a science of places and relationships between people and their environments, as an entry point for the contextualization of postwar contemporary art practices in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Furthermore, this thesis revolves around the idea of visual geography in order to, as Irit Rogoff argues, "set up an exploration of links between, first, the dislocation of subjects, the disruption of collective narratives and of languages of signification in the field of the vision, and second, an epistemological inquiry

²³ *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, s.v. "geography (*n.*)," accessed December 13, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/geography>.

²⁴ Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2000), 21.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

which stresses difference rather than universal truth.”²⁶ Thus, with a focus on the complex geographies of B-H, this thesis tries to see in which manner the repetition and reiteration of certain performative gestures are becoming spatial practices with a possible performative force.

1.1. Main Terminology

For a better understanding of the upcoming chapters, there are still several terms and concepts that require closer explanations: ethnonational categories, such as Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs; the complex political system in B-H; the thesis’s use of the word “war”; and the notion of public space.

1.1.1. Ethnonational Categories

As already mentioned, B-H has three official constituent and ethnically defined peoples (Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs) and three official languages (Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian). Bosniak inhabitants are associated with Islam as a religion (Muslims), Croats with Catholicism (Catholics), and Serbs with Orthodox Christianity (Orthodox Catholics).²⁷ There are many layers of society in B-H where the diversities of ethnonational identities do not affect everyday lives and routines. However, there are simultaneously parts of the society where questions of a person’s name, surname, and kinship play a key role. As Dino Abazović explains:

²⁶ Ibid., 13.

²⁷ At the same time, alongside Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs, Bosnian-Herzegovinian society is also composed of cultural minorities such as Albanians, Czechs, Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Jews, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Poles, Roma, Romanians, Russians, Rusyns, Slovaks, Slovenians, Turks, and Ukrainians. See Veronika Ratzenböck, Katharina Okulski, and Xenia Kopf, *Cultural Policy Landscapes: A Guide to Eighteen Central and South Eastern European Countries* (Vienna: ERSTE Foundation, 2012), 15. However, the problem is that the Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs are recognized by the constitution of B-H and thus defined as *constituent* peoples, while all other minorities, groups, and ethnicities (people living in B-H and not identifying themselves as Bosniaks, Croats, or Serbs) are marked as *others* in the constitution. “The constitution—drafted by European and American experts as part of the Dayton Peace Agreement that ended the war in Bosnia in 1995—privileges the three main ethnic groups—Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs—labelling them ‘constituent’ people. The constitution refers to 17 national minorities, including Jews and Roma, as ‘others’ and denies them the right to run for the presidency and the House of Peoples, the upper house of parliament. Bosnia is still believed to be the only country in the world with a constitution that labels some of its citizens as ‘others.’” See “Bosnia and Herzegovina: Ethnic Discrimination a Key Barrier,” Put Constitutional Reform Back on the Agenda, Human Rights Watch, last modified December 12, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/12/12/bosnia-and-herzegovina-ethnic-discrimination-key-barrier>.

Presently, the everyday lives of the majority of Bosnia-Herzegovina citizens are overwhelmed by “ethnic modes,” their worldview channelled in ethnic terms. Despite a level of the individual attachment to their ethnic group – and certainly many do not define themselves in exclusively ethnic terms – the institutional and political milieu makes every individual fully aware of the real effects of being ethnically marked by their social surroundings. Ethnic issues enter citizens’ homes, and persistently follow each and every communication, even the most benign, among members of the population. One can conclude that the post-war ethnopolitical order in Bosnia-Herzegovina is based on the political production and maintenance of an entire network of differences. [...] Bosnia-Herzegovina is a set of political circumstances and praxis in which each person’s citizenship is predetermined by his or her kinship, which is to say by his or her belonging to a specific community of supposedly shared origin. [...] the functions of representation and decision-making, as well as the establishment of the legal framework, are permeated by discrimination on the basis of kinship.²⁸

1.1.2. Political System in Bosnia-Herzegovina

The complexity of the political system in B-H lies in the country’s division, tailored in the Dayton Peace Agreement, resolutions of which became adopted in Bosnia-Herzegovina’s constitution. According to the latter, B-H’s government includes five governmental levels: state level, entity level, ten cantons in the Federation of B-H, city level, and municipalities.²⁹ Such a partition of governmental bodies creates constant issues in the field of arts and culture. First of all, in the DPA, care for cultural institutions on the state level was omitted. The DPA states that the only responsibility of the state level is the protection of cultural heritage and the establishment of a small cultural department at the ministry of civil affairs.³⁰ The consequences of the latter then reflect in the compartmentalization of cultural responsibilities in the Federation of B-H between ten cantonal ministries that rarely share a similar understanding of culture.³¹ Therefore, undefined support to cultural institutions, non-existent unified and regulated cultural policy in the Federation of B-H, and complicated and non-transparent funding processes hinder the successful working of art institutions and the development of art and culture in general.³²

²⁸ Abazović, “Reconciliation, Ethnopolitics and Religion in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” 40.

²⁹ Ratzenböck, Okulski, and Kopf, *Cultural Policy Landscapes*, 15–16.

³⁰ “The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), accessed February 19, 2020, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/0/126173.pdf>.

³¹ Ratzenböck, Okulski, and Kopf, *Cultural Policy Landscapes*, 15–16.

³² Ibid.

According to Dino Abazović, B-H society is still struggling to find ways of reconstruction that would or could eventually become a substantial foundation and a chance for a better life.³³ He notices that with the passing of time, it becomes clearer that “the political and institutional design of Dayton-tailored Bosnia-Herzegovina does not contribute to the vital processes society needs, such as the mending of broken social relationships.”³⁴ Moreover, Abazović explains how the postwar situation in B-H can be characterized as the “absence of war” rather than “peace itself.”³⁵ In his respective opinion, Bosnia-Herzegovina, as designed by the DPA, “has revealed itself to be an ineffective creation based on the constant regeneration of crisis that encourages the accumulation of political power by ethno-nationalist elites.”³⁶ According to Abazović, the crux of the problem with the DPA lies in the fact that its resolutions rely on core contradictions, i.e., “[d]eclaring a unified state of Bosnia-Herzegovina while recognizing two antagonistic entities, proclaiming democracy while entrenching ethnically based institutional structures and reaffirming individual rights while legitimizing ethnic majoritarianism, from the outset raised serious concerns as to which political concept in Bosnia-Herzegovina would prevail.”³⁷

1.1.3. The Word War

Since this thesis focuses solely on contemporary art practices from Bosnia-Herzegovina and no other post-Yugoslav country, I employ the word “war” in the singular form without the additional attributes such as Balkan or Yugoslav (wars). The aforementioned also corresponds to the way the war is perceived, discussed, and written about in B-H. From the Bosnian-Herzegovinian art historian Nermina Zildžo’s point of view:

The period of war, which the world calls ‘Balkan war’, refers to the years between 1991 and 1995. In our country, we simply call it ‘the war’, without any modifier such as ‘first’ or ‘second’ or the like. And although it has no special attributes, no one confuses it with any other war since no previous one matched it in brutality.³⁸

³³ Abazović, “Reconciliation, Ethnopolitics and Religion in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” 35.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 36.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Nermina Zildžo, “Burying the Past,” in *East Art Map: Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe*, ed. IRWIN (London: Afterall, 2006), 141.

Finally, having clarified several key concepts relevant for the examination of this thesis's objective—performative gestures in the postwar public spaces of Sarajevo and Mostar—it is necessary to turn to one more, that of public space.

1.1.4. Public Space

This thesis presumes public space, firstly, as a physical dimension of a city and secondly, as a theoretical and political construct. The latter reflects Kristine F. Miller's claim that public spaces ought not to be perceived only by their physical and concrete qualities but also by their influential nonphysical characteristics, such as legal, economic, political, or aesthetic.³⁹ She addresses public spaces not just as static physical entities but concurrently as “constellations of ideas, actions, and environments.”^{40,41}

In the artworks examined in this thesis, distinct public spaces, such as city rivers, an old town's summer garden, or a city promenade—represent performance and exhibition sites. This role was assigned to them by the artists and thus made them become part of the artworks and art discourse. Public space as a performance site holds a significant role in the genealogy of performance art in B-H. In the 1980s, artists like the performance group Zvono [Bell] used

³⁹ Kristine F. Miller, *Designs on the Public: The Private Lives of New York's Public Spaces* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), xi.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ This understanding of the public space as a constellation of ideas, actions, and environments calls to mind the notion of the public sphere. Or, as Miller herself points out, “[...] public space, if it is going to play a role in democratic life, must be a hybrid of actual physical places and active public spheres. To tie public spaces to public spheres we must investigate the constantly changing intersections of physical places, the laws and regulations that govern them, the people who claim them through their use or demands, and the actions of government officials to answer these demands.” See Miller, *Designs on the Public*, xi. However, I prefer to use the term “public space” over the term “public sphere” because my research interest primarily revolves around the way certain artistic spatial practices develop and act within and upon the physical dimensions of public space. I do not exclusively look into the laws and regulations that govern public spaces. At the same time, in the context of current Bosnian-Herzegovinian politics, I perceive the public sphere in B-H to be fragmented. Thus, in order to use the theoretical vocabulary of the public sphere, I would have to contextualize, deconstruct, and criticize the language of its complex fragmentation in B-H, which does not correspond with the original interest of this thesis. Nevertheless, I am not discarding the possibility that the notion of the public sphere could be a useful mechanism to think and write about contemporary performative art practices in postwar B-H. But to write in the context of the notion of the public sphere would ask for the development and use of a different theoretical approach in this thesis.

to deliberately perform in public spaces in B-H and the rest of Yugoslavia.^{42,43} They aimed to be close to passersby and, hence, to blur the dividing line between the art institution (as well as its conventional art public) and the general public.⁴⁴ In other words, Zvono intended to bring art out into the streets, that is to say, to make it accessible to everybody.⁴⁵ They went so far as to perform at Sarajevo's football stadium in the halftime of a football match (*Sport&Art*, August 30, 1986, Koševo Stadium, Sarajevo).

The idea of exhibiting and performing in public space continued throughout art practices in the postwar environment. Again, this implied being in the radius of the general public but also played a significant part in the postwar normalization processes of the quotidian reality. The artists were revitalizing public spaces through the means of artistic production and synchronously challenging the limits of their creativity.⁴⁶ To return to Miller's argument, we can conclude that performative artistic practices in public space inform the aesthetic quality of the postwar public space.⁴⁷

In addition, this thesis employs one of Henri Lefebvre's space concepts from his spatial triad, i.e., the concept of representational space, which he describes in the following manner:

[S]pace as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users', but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who describe and aspire to do no more than describe. This is the dominated - and hence passively experienced - space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects. Thus, representational spaces may be said, though again with certain exceptions, to tend towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs.⁴⁸

⁴² I have formed these concise remarks on Zvono's art practice by combining the content of texts by art historians Asim Đelilović, Meliha Husedžinović, and Nermina Zildžo. See Asim Đelilović, *Museum in Exile: Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Modern Era* (Sarajevo: Dobra knjiga, 2015), 260; Meliha Husedžinović, "Body Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina," in *Body and the East: From the 1960s to the Present*, ed. Zdenka Badovinac (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998), 40–42; Branka Vujanović, "Zvono: Poziv na ozbiljnu igru" [Zvono: A call to serious play], in *Zvono [The Bell]* (Bihać, B-H: City Gallery Bihać, 2010), 3–16; and Zildžo, "Burying the Past," 141–54.

⁴³ In the subchapter 2.1. *Periphery within Periphery*, I briefly mention that the Zvono group was not the only one developing and dealing with performance art in B-H in the 1980s. However, for my research and study of performance art, I primarily focus on Zvono's art practice as I trace similarities between their performances and those postwar performances that I closely examine in chapters 5. *Water* and 6. *Concrete*.

⁴⁴ Đelilović, *Museum in Exile*, 260. Husedžinović, "Body Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina," 40–42. Zildžo, "Burying the Past," 141–54.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ I have summarized this interpretation based on Dunja Blažević's exhibition text published in the catalog of SCCA's annual exhibition titled *Meeting Point* (1997). See Dunja Blažević, "Before," in *Meeting Point: First Annual Exhibition of the Soros Center for Contemporary Art*, ed. Dunja Blažević (Sarajevo: Soros Center for Contemporary Art, 1998), 8–13.

⁴⁷ Kristine F. Miller, *Designs on the Public*, 11.

⁴⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 39.

In light of Lefebvre's logic, I regard the notion of public space as an example of representational space. The characteristics of the former and the latter (public space and representational space) coincide in that both are instances of an everyday space inhabited, produced, and acted in and upon by people. The artists examined in this thesis created distinct constellations of objects and enacted specific stances in the realm of the public space. Thus, by acting in and upon the public space, they created a representational space parallel to the physical dimension of public space.

Lastly, it should also be emphasized that during the war, the imagery of this particular public space was globally televised and documented in the form of various written and filmed media reportages. Therefore, through postwar artistic practices, the recognition of this specific public space shifts from the war environment to the artistic one. Its representation transforms from documentary war imagery to the imagery of performance documentation.

1.2. Descriptions of Chapters

There are three main frameworks to be distinguished in this thesis:

1. art history of postwar B-H
2. performative gesture
3. geography

These frameworks serve as pillars of the “geography of gesture,” developed throughout the logic of six chapters.

The present introductory chapter explains the topic and its frameworks; annotates specific theories, notions, and terms significant for the subject matter; introduces research questions, thesis statement, and literature review; clarifies relevancy, contributions, and limitations of this thesis's topic; and provides a comprehensive explication of the thesis structure.

The second chapter—*Exhausted (Art) Geography*—contextualizes artworks presented in the thesis within the wider post-Yugoslav, postwar, art historical, social, and geopolitical framework.⁴⁹ Furthermore, it articulates Irit Rogoff's concept of “exhausted geographies” and

⁴⁹ The name of the second chapter—*Exhausted (Art) Geography*—is derived from the text of the same name written by Jelena Petrović. Petrović used, in the text's title and the text itself, the concept developed by Irit Rogoff. Here, I appropriate Petrović's take on the title but mainly use Rogoff's notion of exhausted geography as a theoretical concept. This matter is further elaborated in the thesis's second chapter. See Petrović, “Exhausted (Art) Geographies: An Attempt to Define the Geopoliticality of Contemporary Art,” *Erste Stiftung Magazine*, April 27, 2018, <http://www.erstestiftung.org/en/exhausted-art-geographies/>.

illustrates how and why Bosnia-Herzegovina can be considered an example of such a geography.

The third chapter—*Performative Gestures*—deconstructs the term “performative gesture,” explores its meaning against the background of performativity theory, and proposes its historicization and definition. The metonymically structured fourth and fifth chapters—*Water* and *Concrete*—constitute artworks as case studies and offer close readings based on the theories and concepts substantial for the thesis.

Lastly, the sixth chapter provides a concise overview of concepts and debates developed throughout the thesis, reflects on the research questions and thesis statement, enunciates the relevancy of the topic, and articulates the interrelation of the geographic context and performative gestures in the examined artworks.

1.3. Research Questions and Thesis Statements

With the objective to delineate contemporary performative art practices in the public space of postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina, this thesis seeks to answer the following research questions: What kind of gestures are constructed in the artworks of Gordana Anđelić-Galić, Danica Dakić, Ameli Tančica, Suzana Cerić, Anela Šabić, and Kurt&Plasto? What kind of agency do these gestures carry within the specific geographical context of postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina in the years 1997 to 2000? How do these gestures challenge this specific geographical context, and in what manner does this particular geographical context shape these gestures?

Irit Rogoff claims that geography and space are always gendered, racialized, economic, and sexual and that the textures that bind them together are rewritten daily through a word, a gaze, a gesture.⁵⁰ In line with Rogoff’s reasoning, this thesis claims that the artworks of Anđelić-Galić, Dakić, Tančica, Cerić, Šabić, and Kurt&Plasto rewrite systems of geographical signification through context-specific performative gestures.

Furthermore, this thesis comprehends performative gestures as acts within public space that can be recognized in the durational or fleeting artistic action or in the placement of specific objects in distinct places within the realm of the city. Such performative gestures expose or address lacks and gaps, vulnerabilities and invisibilities, displacements and losses tied to the geographical context of postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina.

⁵⁰ Rogoff, *Terra Infirma*, 28.

For instance, the artist Anđelić-Galić sews the banks of the River Neretva in order to symbolically mend the broken relationships between the Bosniaks and the Croats in Mostar while Kurt & Plasto pave the River Miljacka in Sarajevo to express their dissatisfaction with the slow postwar development and repair of the urban infrastructure. At the same time, the Cerić and Šabić duo occupies a section of the main promenade in Sarajevo and stages a walk. With the simple gesture of walking, they create an unusual cultural momentum in the quotidian surrounding. In the same simplistic manner, Dakić disrupts the flow of an old town passageway with a black-and-white soundless video installation depicting a slowly opening and closing mouth (as if it were speaking) and subtly incites the questions surrounding the impossibility of articulating oneself. Finally, Tančica paints his body and clothes blue and stages an homage to Yves Klein in the streets and corners of Sarajevo.

Each of these distinctive gestures, i.e., expressions in the public space—sewing, paving, walking, interrupting—questions, challenges, and refers to the specific topics and issues pertaining to the geographic context of postwar B-H.

1.4. Key Assumptions

In this thesis, I primarily assume that throughout the process of researching, documenting, and creating trajectories of the specific performative gestures identified in the contemporary art practices of the immediate postwar period in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a relational form of geography is being developed. The concept was formulated by Irit Rogoff, who illustrates it as follows:

[...] relational geography is no longer anchored in the cohering imperative of the nation-state. It is not the state with its illusions of being seamlessly bound from the outside and solidly coherent from the inside that makes up the single unit components of the geographical map. Instead, we have a map that is composed of aggregates of intensities, of insurgencies that link and empathize and speak off each other, of generational loyalties that cross boundaries, histories, and languages. [...] A form of relational geography does not operate, as does classical geography, out of a single principle that maps everything in an outward-bound motion with itself at the center. Instead, it is cumulative, it lurches sideways, it is constructed out of chance meetings in cafes, [...], of intense rages, of glimmers of hope offered by ideas that enabled imaging a better world.⁵¹

⁵¹ Irit Rogoff, “Engendering Terror,” in *Concerning War: A Critical Reader*, ed. Maria Hlavajova and Jill Winder (Utrecht, the Netherlands: BAK Basis voor Actuele Kunst, 2006), 140–41.

Rogoff's concept significantly resonates with the ideas manifested in this thesis for the reason that it is not bound to the principles of the state. It could prove to be rather refreshing and prolific to think through the standpoints of relational geography about places such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the governmental system is continuously failing its peoples. Failing even beyond the acute matters of conflict and reconciliation. More precisely, places where economic, health, educational, and cultural infrastructures are not supported by governmental regulations. Therefore, to operate on the reel of relational geography seems to occur as not only a necessary but also a logical move.

As Rogoff explains, the map of relational geography does not consist of the outlined boundaries of the territory, and as such, it could prove to be a necessary counter map to the current cartographic chartings of B-H based on contradictory resolutions of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Firstly, the process of researching and writing about Bosnian-Herzegovinian postwar art practices with an emphasis on the lack of existing material on performance art, in particular, renders a map of relational geography. Due to the absence of the necessary and almost systematically straggling literary sources, the research and writing processes hinge on the information gathered from casual and sudden meetings with artists and art workers and informal and unplanned stumbling upon information.

Secondly, a combination of the concept of relational geography and the logic behind the thesis's structure based on the metonymic topoi could prove to be one of the necessary methodological moves in thinking about and through fixed binaries of center and periphery, conflict and reconciliation, and performance as live event versus performance documentation. At the same time, such an approach might appear to be substantial when it comes to writing about art practices left out of the dominant canon, as is the slowly changing case with contemporary art from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The third assumption from which this thesis emerges is that the subtle and poetic performative gestures by Dakić, Anđelić-Galić, Cerić, Šabić, Kurt&Plasto, and Tančica may be understood as artistic practices that counter the horrors of the war, as well as the media's spectacularization of the war.

Finally, this thesis proceeds from a fourth and final assumption, namely that it is possible to trace a trajectory line of continuity and development of performance art in Bosnia-Herzegovina from the 1980s (and the performances of the art group Zvono) onward, i.e., a trace of cohesion between the prewar and postwar performative artistic practices in public space.

1.5. Literature Review and State of the Field

The literature I reference in this thesis can be divided into the following categories: geography and visual culture, the sociopolitical context of B-H, art from B-H, and literature concerned with gesture and performativity.⁵² Within these categories, the primary and secondary literature sources intertwine with each other. However, the most helpful throughout the research and writing process have been the secondary literature sources, i.e., thematic texts, essays, and academic journal articles. In the following paragraphs, I use this described taxonomy to present an overview of the literature essential for the development of this thesis.

Geography and Visual Culture

The book *Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture* (2000) by Irit Rogoff marked and inspired my starting point for thinking about geography and culture and the way in which these can be intertwined and mutually interchangeable. In her book, Rogoff challenges the traditional perception of geography and opens up the possibility of engaging with geography through the examination of art practices. Moreover, she critiques and challenges notions of traditional geography that are in crisis, elaborates on the issues of the positioned spectatorship, and emphasizes how location should not be key for knowledge and identity production. Most importantly, this book was particularly significant for the development of the logic behind the metonymic structure of this thesis and methodology of reading the artworks. Namely, in the book, Irit Rogoff deploys the metonymic structure based around specific geographic sign systems, which I appropriated for the chapters concerned with examination of the artworks.

Rogoff further explores the notions of geography and culture in the texts “Oblique Points of Entry” (2015) and “Engendering Terror” (2006). In the former, Rogoff proposes and explores the concept of “exhausted geographies,” and in the latter, the concept of “relational geographies.” Both concepts are used in this thesis to denote and describe the specific geography of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Rogoff’s writing has been an important point of departure for this thesis, as it inspired and triggered thinking and writing about art practices through and beyond already established categories, binaries, and paradigms.

⁵² I also include several sources that I do not reference in the thesis. However, they are noteworthy because they opened up new horizons during the research process and, in a certain way, prompted the direction of my thinking.

Alongside Rogoff, Jelena Petrović's texts "Exhausted (Art) Geographies: An Attempt to Define the Geopoliticality of Contemporary Art" (2018) and "Post-Yugoslav Art: Beyond Social Utopia" (2019) were also meaningful for the contextualization of contemporary art practices from B-H within the wider context of the post-Yugoslav space. In these texts, Petrović appropriates and further develops Rogoff's concept of exhausted geographies with the example of art practices from the post-Yugoslav space. Both texts inspired the constellation of the second chapter in this thesis, entitled *Exhausted (Art) Geography*.

Sociopolitical context of B-H

When it comes to the sociopolitical context, in his text "Reconciliation, Ethnopolitics, and Religion in Bosnia-Herzegovina" (2014), Dino Abazović provides a significant overview of the recent problematics in the politics of Bosnia-Herzegovina. His reasoning proved to be useful for understanding and writing about the postwar conflict and political organization in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Furthermore, the book *Rat kao najveći kulturni događaj: Ka poetici etnonacionalizma* [War as the Biggest Cultural Event: Toward the Semiotics of Ethnonationalism] (2007) by Ugo Vlaisavljević was helpful to further formulate the concepts of war, conflict, and reconciliation.⁵³ Among other arguments, one of Vlaisavljević's claims is that posing the question of reconciliation when it comes to the postwar situation in B-H is quite ineffective. According to Vlaisavljević, for reconciliation to happen, we first need to understand which sides need to be reconciled—Bosniak, Croat, or Serb. From the point of view of each particular side, the *other* one is the *guilty* one, thus complicating the key to reconciliation. This observation helped form and support my own view on the question of reconciliation, a term I try not to use in this thesis because I think that in the last twenty-five postwar years, B-H society has outgrown the question of reconciliation. In my opinion, the reconciliation discussion seems to be a dead-end street in political, public, and media discourse in B-H. Furthermore, Vlaisavljević's book represents an extensive philosophical (and even ironic) view on the ontology of war and its cultural importance in the context of B-H and the Balkans. Vlaisavljević does not only write about the 1990s war but goes back to the Second World War and the animosities it caused between peoples living in B-H. Vlaisavljević's book is useful because it provides a wider framework for understanding the war and how to methodologically frame it

⁵³ This book is written in the Bosnian language and, to my knowledge, has not yet been translated into English. The book's English title in the brackets above, *War as the Biggest Cultural Event: Toward the Semiotics of Ethnonationalism*, was translated by me for the purposes of this thesis.

through writing. It was an important book because it showed me that one can indeed originate from B-H and still objectively discuss the topics of war.

The reason that reconciliation is not a useful term in the context of Bosnia-Herzegovina's postwar politics is also Monika Palmberger's claim in her text "Practices of Border Crossing in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Case of Mostar" (2013). In the article, she provides an overview of Mostar's critical issue—a city politically divided between its two main populations: Bosniaks and Croats. Palmberger examines the problematics of "border-crossing in the post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina," as she puts it, through the use of the theoretical mechanisms of memory and reconciliation.⁵⁴ She writes about borders as physical entities but also recognizes their metonymical qualities, which contributed to my theoretical framework for the understanding of Mostar's internal border—the River Neretva—where the artist Gordana Anđelić-Galić realized her performance *Sewing* (2000).⁵⁵

Furthermore, the book *Citizens of an Empty Nation: Youth and State-Making in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina* (2015), written by Azra Hromadžić, offers another significant perspective on the ethnonationalist division in Mostar. Hromadžić's central interest is Mostar's generation of high school students, yet, she also provides a bigger picture of the day-to-day political situation in the rest of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the time period from 2004 until 2015. Her informative volume is specific because it addresses an educational institution in Mostar (the Mostar Gymnasium) and represents different relations and opinions formed within and about it. Observing the relationships between the students, interviewing them, and sharing and contextualizing their opinions, Hromadžić deals with the problematics of division between Bosniak and Croat peoples and how it affects the politics of everyday life and one's education. Hromadžić's methodological approach is insightful because she combines the practical and theoretical aspects; she includes examples from the palpable reality, and in an open and—at times—intimate manner, also writes about her personal experiences tied to the breakdown of Yugoslavia, outburst of the war, and the way nationalism sneaked its way into the quotidian lives of people in B-H. This source was beneficial for two reasons. Firstly, Hromadžić's overview and commentary on the postwar events in B-H helped me historicize political and

⁵⁴ Monika Palmberger, "Practices of Border Crossing in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Case of Mostar," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 20, no. 5 (Spring 2013): 544, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2013.822799>.

⁵⁵ I provide a close reading of Anđelić-Galić's artwork in subchapter 4.1. *Rope*.

social events from B-H's recent past. Secondly, it gave me the needed perspective to grasp the dialectics of the ongoing postwar conflict in Mostar.

Art from B-H

When combined, several informative readings helped me create a comprehensible overall picture of the artistic developments in B-H from the 1980s onward. All of the compendiums mentioned below differentiate in publishing dates and provide information about more or less the same art matters. However, in each text, the author brings a new perspective or argumentation, or introduces information not observed in another textual source. I used these literary references that complement each other content-wise to trace and conceive a genealogy of performance art in B-H and thus contextualize the artworks examined in this thesis within it.^{56,57}

In her essay "Burying the Past" (2006), Nermina Zildžo presents a comprehensive overview of the art practices and sociopolitical shifts in Bosnia-Herzegovina from the 1980s until 2006 (prewar, war, and postwar art). She starts with the event of the war and explains how it affected, interrupted, and slowed down artistic and cultural development in B-H and continues with a taxonomy of events in Bosnian-Herzegovinian art and culture from the 1980s onward. More important is the encyclopedic information about several prominent B-H artists. She presents artists' biographies and characteristics of the art practices of, among others, the Zvono group and Danica Dakić. Furthermore, Zildžo's coherent and clear narrative helped create a timeline of Bosnian-Herzegovinian recent art history, which I expand on by adding information provided by the other authors mentioned below.⁵⁸

The short essay by Dunja Blažević, "Sarajevo: War and Peace," contributed to an understanding of art development in the war and postwar atmosphere in B-H and Sarajevo.

⁵⁶ The significance of the literary sources in this category is their existence in the English language, which made my methodological approach easier, i.e., I did not have to translate the texts from Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian into English. Concurrently, I find it particularly relevant that these texts are in English and presented inside publications issued outside of B-H because this gives visibility to their content. Nevertheless, this specific notion of visibility simultaneously creates a lack within the contemporary art discourse in B-H, making it almost unapproachable to the local Bosnian-Herzegovinian public to fully understand the ongoing expositions. It is not my aim to extensively research the aforementioned predicament in this thesis, but it is worth mentioning because it speaks about the problematics of language geography.

⁵⁷ I consider the literary references defined in this category more as sources of (art) historical information on artistic and cultural development in B-H than as a theoretical basis, and it is in that way that I use them.

⁵⁸ At some points in the text (mostly in the footnotes), Zildžo's commentaries appear to be sensitive and subjective, which I come to understand as the war, and its repercussions were still highly fresh in the year 2006 when Zildžo wrote this text. Nevertheless, I deliberately chose not to pay attention to these instances as I tried to preserve objectivity in my writing.

Blažević writes that young artists in 1997–98 (or the “young war generation” of artists, as she describes them) felt the need to work in the mediums of photography, video, computer, installation, and performance. She also states that the SCCA gave the young artists a chance to work and proposed “the city as a point of departure” for their new artworks. Moreover, Blažević notes that the war caused a discontinuity in art development and that, in the late nineties, artists had the need to overcome this discontinuity. This essay was thus useful because it clarifies the development of performance art in the immediate postwar period and the possibility of continuity between the art of the 1980s and late 1990s.

Equally valuable were Meliha Husedžinović’s two essays. In the first one, “Aspects and Positions of Art from Bosnia-Herzegovina 1949–1999,” Husedžinović writes about the art practices in B-H in the 1950s, i.e., the development of art groups that dealt with the exploration of conceptual painting and the dialectics of space and form, which was also the name of one of the groups (Prostor-Oblik; *prostor* meaning “space” and *oblik* meaning “form” in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language). Husedžinović also considers art in the 1980s and focuses on the Zvono group. She concludes with the examination of art practices produced during the war and after. Her text helped delineate the art historical signposts in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav Bosnian-Herzegovinian art history, which was necessary for the writing of the second chapter. Husedžinović’s second essay, “Body Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” is a significant contribution to the genealogy of performance art and performativity in the context of art geography in B-H. Even though Husedžinović does not mention artists examined in this thesis (except the Zvono group), I consider her text significant because of the thorough overview of the shifts that preceded the Zvono group and how they affected the continuation of performance art in the late 1980s and 1990s.

In the more recent working paper, “Politics between Art and Space: Sarajevo after 1995” (2018), Danijela Dugandžić analyzes art practices in public space in the context of postwar Sarajevo. This text provided helpful descriptions of Kurt&Plasto’s art practice, particularly of their artwork *500 Meters is Half a Kilometer* (1998), which I analyze in this thesis. At the same time, Dugandžić questions the possibility of art to reclaim public space by stimulating political commentary and creating new forms of sociality. Dugandžić’s writing helped establish the general framework for understanding the political and social atmosphere in postwar and post-Dayton Sarajevo, which according to the author, has not changed significantly since the signing of the peace agreement.

Amy Bryzgel’s book titled *Performance art in Eastern Europe since 1960* is an important source because it deals with performance and performativity and Eastern Europe—

two topics this thesis revolves around. Although Bryzgel does not mention the artworks I examine in this thesis's five case studies, her book is a critical point of my research because it includes performance art from B-H and thus provides a methodological precedent; and most importantly, it includes performance art from B-H as part of Eastern Europe and in the context of global art. Her introduction is a beneficial source for understanding the problematics of Eastern Europe vis-à-vis the already established global performance art developments.

The most recent and thus far the only existing delineation of contemporary art practices from Bosnia-Herzegovina is Jonathan Blackwood's book *Introduction to Contemporary Art in B&H* (2015). The author outlines notable paradigms and shifts in the postwar art scene and mentions various artists and significant examples of their art practices. However, he does not provide an in-depth exploration of the significant subjects, leaving many issues only superficially explained. His writing is problematic because of the lack of definition of specific terms and the keenness for generalization. Blackwood's book is thus exactly what its title says: an introduction, or, in other words, a beginning for one's first encounter with contemporary art from Bosnia-Herzegovina, providing enough free room for further explorations.

The combination of these texts provides an encompassing taxonomy of the prewar and postwar art and culture in B-H, thus, allowing me to trace the genealogy of performance art in B-H and contextualize the artworks examined in this thesis within it.

Literature Concerned with Gesture

The introduction in the book *Migrations of Gesture* (2008), edited by Carrie Noland et al., provided an astute insight into the general understanding of gestures and current theory on gestures. The book, consisting of contributions from various authors, is conceived as a cross-disciplinary overview of the thoughts and writings concerned with the concept of gesture. Extremely useful, for my purposes, was the derivation of the term "gesture" from the Latin language. The word "gesture" originates from the Latin word *gerere*, which means to carry, act, or do. This etymology helped ground my thoughts about performative gesture and its potential to carry meaning, to act, or do something.

When speaking about gesture's possibility to act, Judith Butler's text "When Gesture Becomes Event" (2014/2017) comes as a natural follow-up. In the text, Butler states her already existing concepts developed around speech acts and gender performativity and revisits them to

develop her understanding of gestures distinctive for Brechtian theater.⁵⁹ Equally important is Butler's engagement with J.L. Austin's theory of performativity, which was essential for an elaboration of the term "performative" in connection to "gesture." However, the most important contribution of Butler's text to this thesis was her understanding of the notion of a gesture as an event that can be interpreted independent from the body's speaking apparatus.

Furthermore, when it comes to the interpretation of performative gestures, Luce Irigaray's "Gestures in Psychoanalysis" (1987) has been helpful in analyzing the artworks by Danica Dakić and Gordana Anđelić-Galić. In her text, Irigaray examines gestures in psychoanalysis, e.g., interpreting Sigmund Freud's understanding of the child's gesture of repetitive toy throwing when the child's mother is away. Irigaray explains that this child in Freud's story has to be a boy because girls act differently in the absence of their mothers; she claims that girls are performative and have the need to outline the space with dance or with repetitive movements in the space. Irigaray's shifting analysis is relevant for understanding artworks in which female artists (Dakić and Anđelić-Galić) delineate the space, i.e. the specific performing site, with repetitive performative gestures.

Lastly, a text that needs mentioning, though I do not explicitly use it in the thesis, is the introduction from the publication *Performativity, Politics, and the Production of Social Space* (2014) titled "Geographies of Performativity," written by the publication's editors, Michael R. Glass and Reuben Rose-Redwood. In this text, the authors elaborately treat the matter of performativity and present its theoretical genealogy from J.L. Austin to Judith Butler. This survey offers a textual map of the development of the notion of performativity, which helped set the basis for the theoretical chapter on performative gestures (3. *Performative Gestures*). Generally, this edited collection of essays connects the ideas of human geography and political performativity (as the editors describe it) but in a context that goes beyond the needs of this thesis's theoretical framework. The focus of this compound is to form a link between the notions of human geography, politics of spatiality, and political performativity while revisiting and revisioning Butler's arguments on performativity.

In conclusion, during the course of the research on the literature relevant to the thesis

⁵⁹ Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956) was a poet and an influential playwright of the twentieth century. He conceived a theater based on the use of gestures as a performance language. In my understanding of Brecht's theory of gestures, bodily gestures can personify different social constructs. Acting on stage according to this predisposition, as David Barnett explains, thus means communicating the relationship between individual and society to the audience. Physical gestures on stage should indicate to the audience the context behind figures' doings on stage, i.e., suggesting that the behavior of the figures is influenced by their class positions in society. See David Barnett, "Gestus," *Brecht in Practice*, accessed July 28, 2021, <http://brechtinpractice.org/theory/gestus-2/>.

topic, I have not found a source that defines the term “performative gesture” as it is used in contemporary art discourse. At the same time, there is a rather significant lack of existing comprehensive and coherent material on performance art from B-H. This thesis thus partially fills in the existing gaps in academic materials.

1.6. Importance of Topic and Contributions to Knowledge

I begin this chapter with a rather antagonistic question, to which this thesis does not provide an elaborate answer but emphasizes the importance of posing such a question: Who speaks and from which position? What is the symbolic language of geographical naming, and how can one master such language? This art historical riddle recalls the notion of horizontal art history by Piotr Piotrowski. According to Piotrowski:

A horizontal art history should begin with the deconstruction of vertical art history, that is, the history of Western art. A critical analysis should reveal the speaking subject: who speaks, on whose behalf, and for whom? This is not to cancel Western art history, but to call this type of narrative by its proper name, precisely as a “Western” narrative.⁶⁰

However, it is precisely Piotrowski who, for a moment, decamps from the notion of horizontal art history when he does not include artists from small, peripheral countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina in his nominal publications about art in Eastern and postcommunist Europe. It is not my aim to oversimplify the notion of horizontal art history, and I am keenly aware that the critique/accusation of art historical methodologies is, in fact, not a methodology. But what I am trying to portray with the latter is the oxymoronic nature of the notion of horizontal art history—it, too, has its verticalities. So, I propose the following reiteration and extension of the term “horizontal art history”: Horizontal art history should begin again with the deconstruction of vertical art history within itself; that is, the history of Eastern European art. Additionally, what this thesis aims to address is that (horizontal) art history as a discipline should work toward transcending the notions of geography and location as performative sites of identity and knowledge production.

Throughout the thesis, intertwined within the chapters, I aim to emphasize the importance of posing the following questions: Who—and from what positions, power

⁶⁰ Piotr Piotrowski, “Toward a Horizontal History of the European Avant-Garde,” in *European Avant-Garde and Modernism Studies*, ed. Sascha Bru and Peter Nicholls (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 49–58.

structures, and geographies—writes art histories, and how can we look beyond the paradigms of dominant art histories and their methodologies? To paraphrase Irit Rogoff, there is an urgency in looking outward, from the periphery toward the center, while simultaneously avoiding possible prevailing or favoring of the periphery (or the center) or letting the location be the active site of identity and knowledge production.⁶¹ In light of Irit Rogoff's reasoning, I aim to see how and if it is possible to think about art from Bosnia-Herzegovina through the prism of an "alternative set of relations in which it is not scientific knowledge or the national categories of the state that determine both belonging and unbelonging, but rather linked sets of political insights, memories, subjectivities, projections of fantastic desires and great long chain of sliding signifiers."⁶²

Apart from Piotrowski's writing, my reasoning about horizontal art history was stimulated by a blind spot in Amy Bryzgel's book, *Performance art in Eastern Europe since 1960* (2017). In the section of the book concerned with painted bodies in the context of Eastern European performance art history, Bryzgel does not mention the performance piece *Toplo-Hladno* [Warm-Cold] (1982–92) by Zvono or Ameli Tančica's performance *Homage to Yves Klein* (1997).^{63,64} In these performances, the artists painted their bodies in order to convey a certain message to the public. Zvono painted their faces to test how colors affect people, while Tančica painted his body and clothes with the color blue and performed an homage to Yves Klein in the streets of Sarajevo.

It is interesting to trace and historicize the continuity of the repetitive (recurring) performative gesture of painted bodies in the context of performance art history and artistic spatial practices in B-H. I consider it intriguing that none of these artworks appears in the abovementioned book, which has a specified section devoted to Eastern European artists performing their painted bodies in either public or institutional space. In this regard, I recognize that all methodological research, not only in the field of art history but also cross-disciplinarily, has its blind spots, and it is exactly these that open up the field for other researchers and future

⁶¹ Rogoff, "Engendering Terror," 150.

⁶² Rogoff, *Terra Infirma*, 7.

⁶³ Zvono's *Toplo-Hladno* [Warm-Cold] performance was an action the group repeated several times. As I have not been able to confirm the exact dates of these performances, nor the actual number of times they occurred, I am dating them with the approximate years 1982–92, i.e., the duration of Zvono's existence. Additionally, Branka Vujanović mentions that the *Toplo-Hladno* performances began shortly after Zvono's first street exhibitions. With their first street exhibition being in Vase Miskina Street in Sarajevo in 1982 (September 8, 1982), I conclude it is most probable that these performances occurred in 1982. See Vujanović, *Zvono: Poziv na ozbiljnu igru*, 5.

⁶⁴ Nevertheless, in other segments of the book, Bryzgel does include artistic practices from B-H from the 1980s (Zvono) onward and contextualizes them within the Yugoslav, post-Yugoslav, and postwar Bosnian-Herzegovinian historical and social framework.

projects. However, what I am trying to do by elaborating on the book *Performance art in Eastern Europe since 1960* and painted bodies from the art history of Bosnia-Herzegovina, is to indicate that the actual lacunae in Amy Bryzgel's book are the result of the non-systematized approach to art history within the nonexistent institutional apparatus in Bosnia-Herzegovina. What its art geography lacks is the institutional support with a cohesive program and direction as much as the critical apparatus that would interpret the production of contemporary art. In that respect, it is not the aim of this thesis to simply pinpoint blind spots and acknowledge this act as a sole contribution to knowledge. On the contrary, this thesis aims to provide nuance in explaining and discussing how such gaps within the prevalent art discourse occur. With the latter in mind, where does the thinking about painted bodies in the context of B-H art history lead us? Why is the historicization of these three performances recognized as important, and how does it connect to this thesis?

The historicization of these performances—in which artists opted to paint their bodies as a performative gesture—in the framework of Bryzgel's book would mean an acknowledgment of this particular part of B-H art history within the broader global art historical canon and would thus bring more visibility to this specific art geography. Furthermore, while examining these artworks of painted bodies in my thesis, I extend the existing written art historical sources but also pinpoint the challenging systemic issue in analyzing B-H art, i.e., unavailability of obtaining information and the lack of support for culture and its institutions.

At the same time, to my knowledge, a comprehensive state-of-the-art publication concerned with the topic of B-H performance art history does not currently exist, neither in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian nor in the English language. Thus, this thesis fills an important gap in the knowledge of Bosnian-Herzegovinian performance art. Further relevance of this thesis is in its elucidation of the issues tied to exclusionary geographical categorizations within the art historical discourse and the historicization of unresearched performative gestures of the postwar period in B-H within the academic field. Thus, this thesis contributes to the ongoing development of Bosnian-Herzegovinian performance art history and the historicization and definition of the term “performative gesture.”⁶⁵

⁶⁵ A recent exhibition, *90s: Scars*, in the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka, Croatia (July 27–September 27, 2021), also speaks of the relevancy of this thesis. The exhibition's objective “to revisit and better understand the art of the early transition period of European states with post-socialist heritage” reasserts one of the aims outlined throughout this thesis—rethinking and documenting 1990s art from the post-Yugoslav space. See “90s: Scars,” Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Rijeka, accessed July 28, 2021, <https://mmsu.hr/en/event/90s-scars-3//>.

1.7. Research, Methodology, and Limitations

The research conducted for this thesis consists of two parts: The first one triggered, shaped, and narrowed down the topic, and the second, undertaken after defining the scope of the thesis, was the contextualization of the artworks and performative gestures within the theoretical grid. Firstly, I developed an interest in contemporary performative art practices from B-H upon encountering video documentation of several performance pieces from the Zvono group. It was a non-methodological examination of the existing information on Bosnian-Herzegovinian art history characterized by a spontaneous encounter, which eventually developed into a more meticulous and methodological source gathering. There were two nonscientific albeit important factors that influenced the research curve: my personal connections to B-H and its art scene and the fact that the video documentation of Zvono performances is easily accessible in an online format on the YouTube channel of one of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian artists, Nebojša Šerić Shoba. In the course of the research, it became obvious that there is an existing gap in the current knowledge on Bosnian-Herzegovinian postwar development of performance art. Since the postwar art era in B-H was marked by the work of SCCA, their catalogs and website seemed a logical start for the gathering of material and thus marked the second research phase.

SCCA's web page was (and is) an extensive source of pictorial and descriptive textual material, as they thoroughly archived their projects online. However, the web page material proved insufficient and was thus combined and completed with information originating either from artists' catalogs or personal conversations with the artists. The latter played an important role in the assessment of the information about the artists and their artworks examined in this thesis. In this regard, no particular methodology was developed. It mostly depended on personal conversations with the artists, which occurred via online communication mechanisms, from email to social media channels (Facebook and Instagram). These conversations sometimes were an immediate success, whereas many times relied upon a durational back-and-forth messaging. The rather informal interviews revolved around the elementary but essential questions concerning the specifics of the artists' biographies; facts about the artworks (duration of the performance piece or its reenactment); existence of the video documentation; and the artist's key concept behind the artwork. The material assembled from these personal conversations depended, to a great extent, on the artists' willingness to cooperate and their

remembrance.⁶⁶

In terms of the documentation of the artworks, as previously mentioned, the artists' and art organizations' web pages and specific project-related publications and catalogs served as relevant material sources. SCCA's website was a source for the photographic documentation of the performances by Ameli Tančica, Kurt&Plasto, and Danica Dakić.

Furthermore, the web page of the art group Maxumim, whose founders were, among other artists, Suzana Cerić and Anela Šabić, was a source for acquiring the video documentation of their performance. This is the only instance of video documentation used as source material in this thesis and proved to be easily accessible and downloadable from Maxumim's website. The photographic documentation of Gordana Anđelić-Galić's performance was taken from the publication of the project, *Unique Sign – Unique Location* (2000), under which framework Anđelić-Galić's artwork was conducted.

According to the obtained research material, the performance documentation of the artworks examined in this thesis has not been included in an exhibition format, nor were the performances reenacted.⁶⁷ Concerning the dichotomy between performance as a live event and performance documentation, I do not favor either in this thesis. I rather proceed from the premise that the observation of a performance piece with historical distance does not hinder the analysis and interpretation of the artworks. In this regard, I follow Amelia Jones's claims that the distinctiveness of knowledges acquired from one's engagement in a live performance "should not be privileged over the specificity of knowledges that develop in relation to the documentary traces of such an event."⁶⁸ In both cases, as Jones explains, "the audience for the work may know a great deal or practically nothing at all about who the performer is" and what their reasons and concepts behind the performance are.⁶⁹ The audience of a live performance

⁶⁶ Some of the artists, such as Suzana Cerić and Anela Šabić, stayed unreachable throughout the whole research and writing process. At the same time, in regard to the artist Danica Dakić, there was no need for the development of a personal contact, as her comprehensive catalogs provided enough useful material.

⁶⁷ However, this may not be the case for Cerić's and Šabić's performance *Promenade* (1997) as I have discovered the performance mentioned in the publication *Ars Aevi Collection 1992–2006* by Ars Aevi Contemporary Art Museum in Sarajevo. Their artwork is listed as part of the group exhibition of the *Rendez-Vous* collection, in Sarajevo, in 2001. Enrico R. Comi, who is named in the catalog as the curator of this group exhibition, does not mention Cerić's and Šabić's performance in the text he wrote for this publication. At the same time, the video stills from their video documentation are published in the catalog, among the images of other artworks from specific Ars Aevi collections. The artists' performance and short tabular biographies are also listed in the index of artists and artworks in the catalog. This leads me to conclude that the video documentation of the performance *Promenade* was part of the exhibition of the *Rendez-Vous* collection in 2001 in the Ars Aevi Museum in Sarajevo. Nevertheless, as I do not have textual information nor photographic documentation of the way the video documentation of this artwork was installed, shown, and received by the public, I decided not to assign specific attention to these details in the close reading of the artwork.

⁶⁸ Amelia Jones, "Presence in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation," *Art Journal* 56, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 12, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00043249.1997.10791844>.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

“may seem to have certain advantages in understanding such a context.”⁷⁰ Simultaneously, the retrospective observation also has its merits that can be recognized in the possibility of identifying certain narratives one is not aware of in real time.⁷¹

The greatest methodological challenge in this thesis has been to define the notion of the performative gesture. To ground the interpretation, this thesis uses an interdisciplinary approach and combines Luce Irigaray’s psychoanalytical definition of gesture with J.L. Austin’s and Judith Butler’s understandings of the notion of performativity. With the intention of further resolving this challenging task, I decided to approach the term “performative gesture” by deconstructing it into its two units—adjective “performative” and noun “gesture”—to define them separately before reintegrating and analyzing them as a compound again.

The second greatest methodological challenge of this thesis was finding a suitable way to write about art from Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is, in my point of view, filled with obstacles. At first, I did not know how to successfully delineate the contemporary art practices from B-H vis-à-vis the existing academic literary material, which in most cases does not include examples of Bosnian-Herzegovinian art history. And when these do appear in some of the nominal academic publications, they are rather impoverished. The challenge was also to position the contemporary performative art practices from B-H against the background of already existing geographical categories embedded in the art historical canon. The constant question was: Does B-H belong to the present Eastern European art canon, and if so, how, when it does not comprehensively appear within the leading literary sources dealing specifically with this canon? Concurrently, all other existing geographic categories, such as the Balkans, Western Balkans, and Southeastern Europe, seemed to be difficult to build on as they all have different political subtexts. At the same time, it was not an easy task to define my writing position from Vienna, which is geographically and politically perceived as the powerful West to Bosnia-Herzegovina. In this regard, Irit Rogoff’s approach to demystifying geography and its categorizations seemed a helpful way to begin the discussions about Bosnian-Herzegovinian art but concurrently to criticize and write against the grain of the complexity of geographical categorizations as defining mechanisms.

In light of the preceding paragraphs, it can be concluded that the interdisciplinary theoretical grid of this thesis is based around three frameworks: 1) theory of geography, 2)

⁷⁰ Jones, “Presence in Absentia,” 12.

⁷¹ Ibid.

performance and performativity, and 3) theory of gesture. All of these theories develop and come together throughout the six thesis chapters.

Furthermore, the methodological approach related to the readings of the artworks is defined vis-à-vis the context and spatiality in which the artworks were performed. Each artwork is regarded as a separate case study and has its own micro-world based on the relations to the referenced artworks and art-related events. Nevertheless, each case study has a unified narrative developed around the analysis of the artwork. This method consists of insight into the artist's biographical trajectory and their career, description and close reading of an artwork, and a short conclusion concerning explanation of the performative gesture.

It is equally important to note that not all of the artists share the same biographical path. Some are still active within the sphere of contemporary art production in B-H and elsewhere, and some are not. For example, Danica Dakić can be characterized as an internationally established artist. She divides her time between Germany and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and she also represented B-H at the Venice Biennale 2019. At the same time, Ameli Tančica, who had started his career in the postwar years in Bosnia-Herzegovina, today lives and works in Australia.⁷² His performance, one of the case studies in this thesis, was the only one he ever made and publicly performed.⁷³ The artist duo Kurt&Plasto, who had been working together and producing art from 1996 to the mid-2000s, are also not working collaboratively anymore and are not currently engaged in the making of new artworks, together or separately. Similarly, both artists Suzana Cerić and Anela Šabić no longer live in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Cerić is based in the United Kingdom, and Šabić in the Netherlands, and it is not known if and what kind of art they are making today.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, while aware of the differences in the careers of the artists, this thesis is not placing emphasis or aiming at a comparative analysis or the assessment of the value of the chosen artists. Even though their biographical and career trajectories differ, the artworks that are the focal point of this thesis were all equally important in the development of art and culture in postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Additionally, this thesis has developed several limitations. The artworks presented are part of a broader thematically organized exhibition or a project, such as the exhibition *Meeting*

⁷² Ameli Tančica, email message to the author, March 6, 2019.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ In the course of the research for this thesis (and during the writing process), I was not able to make contact with Suzana Cerić and Anela Šabić. I am not sure if their places of residence and work are still relevant. I acquired the information that Cerić lives in the United Kingdom and Šabić in Belgium from the web page of the art group Maxumim, of which Cerić and Šabić were members in the time period from 1997–2000. See “Maxumim: Exhibitions,” Maxumim, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://maxumim.com/umjetnici.html>.

Point conceived by the SCCA (1997) in Sarajevo, or the exhibition *Beyond the Mirror* (1998), also organized by the SCCA. However, this thesis does not go into a detailed analysis of these exhibitions and projects. At the same time, the artwork *Sewing* (2000), by Gordana Anđelić-Galić, is taken out of the context of an Austrian-Bosnian and Herzegovinian artistic project, *Unique Sign - Unique Location*. Similarly, like the abovementioned exhibitions organized by the SCCA, this project was also not extensively analyzed within the thesis. Such international projects and collaborations between international institutions occur frequently in the context of contemporary Bosnian-Herzegovinian art and have significantly influenced the postwar geography of Bosnia-Herzegovina (and brought many artistic activities to bigger and smaller cities and communities in the country). These projects ought to be critically regarded and analyzed. However, analysis of such projects would ask for a different methodology and approach and, in the end, a different thesis topic.

The most transparent limitation of my approach to the topic of contemporary performative art practices of postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina is the lack of engagement with artistic practices in public space outside of the cities of Sarajevo and Mostar. This would again ask for a greater survey of the existing materials that would go beyond the parameters of this thesis. Nevertheless, this blind spot could suffice as a departure point for the development of possible future research and the extension of this thesis beyond its present academic boundaries.

1.8. Structure

The spine of this thesis is supported by two correlated structural parts. The chapters of the first part provide theoretical, social, and political contexts needed for the understanding of the notion of the performative gesture and lead toward the analysis of the artworks. In these chapters, Bosnian-Herzegovinian geography is explored within the wider geopolitical context of the post-Yugoslav space, Eastern Europe, and the theory of performativity and gestures.

The second part of this thesis deals with the artworks as separate case studies for the purpose of their close reading. As is already evident from the Table of Contents, the second part is rather distinguishable from the first by the use of common singular nouns as chapter and subchapter titles: *Water*, *Rope*, *Boards*, *Concrete*, *Mouth*, *Walk*, and *Paint*. This section is grounded in the logic of the metonymic topoi and influenced by the methodological and structural organization deployed by Irit Rogoff in her book *Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual*

Culture (2000).

In the book, Rogoff provides an extensive reading of various artworks and exhibitions that, in an apparent or subtle way, deal with the notion of geography. She deduces a unique sign system from the artworks—*luggage, mapping, borders, bodies*—with the attempt to examine how these systems of geographical signification are rewritten by contemporary arts practices.⁷⁵ This system determines the structural organization of Rogoff's book and makes a distinction between individual artworks or exhibitions as case studies. In addition, Rogoff writes about geography through the prism of visual culture and criticizes traditional approaches within the disciplines of geography and art history that are based on the positioned spectatorship and established in the places of power. She aims to see how contemporary visual cultural production is rewriting the abovementioned sign systems “away from colonial offices, universal knowledge fantasies, and utopian scenarios towards a more complex multi-positionality.”⁷⁶

Before diving further into the logic of the thesis's structure, it is essential to look into the rationale behind the term “metonymic topoi.” In the literary sense, metonymy is a figure of speech that can be described as a substitution of one word for another word that has the same grammatical and related meaning.⁷⁷ Appropriated from the literary to this thesis's methodological approach, metonymic topoi can be defined as words or notions that substitute, or, better said, stand for another related thing, process, or conception.

The metonymic structure of this thesis is based around the notions of water and concrete that mark the two main chapters within which the artworks are presented and examined. These two chapters formally differentiate artworks according to the characteristics of the performance sites. *Water* as a topos encompasses artworks that have been performed on or in a body of water, while *Concrete* includes artworks that have been performed in a city's landscape (in the street or between building walls; i.e., in the environment characterized by concrete as a building material).⁷⁸ Apart from suggesting the characteristics of performance sites, *Water* and *Concrete* stand for particular geographical signs.

⁷⁵ Rogoff, *Terra Infirma*, 13.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 11.

⁷⁷ Arthur Quinn, *Figures of Speech: 60 Ways to Turn a Phrase* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs M. Smith Inc., 1982), 103.

⁷⁸ While this distinction exists, I do not intend to put these two categories—performance site and geographical sign—in a dichotomous relationship. Differentiation based on the characteristics of the place where the artwork has been performed or exhibited (water or the city landscape) exists for the purpose of staking out a clear approach to the interpretation of the artworks and establishing a distinction of their formal characteristics. This formal organization facilitates the navigation through the text and better understanding of the nuanced differences in the performative aspects of the artworks.

The chapter *Water* consists of two subchapters: *Rope* and *Boards*, while the chapter *Concrete* includes three subchapters: *Mouth*, *Walk*, and *Paint*. These chapter titles in the role of metonymic topoi are rooted in my reading of the artworks; thus, they are not imposed as representing categories by the artists. I chose them as I found that they play an important role in defining the performative gestures in the artworks but are also related to certain geographical connotations. They represent either the props that the artists used in their performances and interventions in public space or designate an action or characteristic visual element of the artworks. Gordana Anđelić-Galić sews the river with rope, Kurt&Plasto pave the river with boards, while in Danica Dakić's video installation, a female mouth is opening and closing. The artists Suzana Cerić and Anela Šabic stage a walk through the city, and Ameli Tančica performs his blue-painted body for the camera in specific city locations. These categories are not only descriptive but also associative and relational.

The topography of Bosnia-Herzegovina is marked on the north and the east by the rivers Sava and Drina, forming the natural borders between B-H and Croatia and B-H and Serbia. At the same time, in Mostar, the city known in the postwar period to be divided according to the ethnonational affiliations of its inhabitants, the River Neretva represents an internal border between Bosniak and Croat parts of the city. For example, Gordana Anđelić-Galić's gesture of sewing the riverbanks of the River Neretva evokes the notion of borders in the geographical context of postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the same time, concrete, as a designated construction material, stands for the development of a postwar society.

Irit Rogoff argues that she used metonymic topoi to record breakthroughs of possibility rather than to reiterate long-existing forces of critical and intellectual history. In her words:

[...] The structure of the work is highly metonymic one in which I have opted for marking those tiny, radiant breakthroughs of possibility rather than rehearsing long streams of critical, intellectual history [...]⁷⁹

The key word that resonates with the goals of this thesis is *possibility*. To think through the logic of metonymic topoi opens up the possibility to write about Bosnian-Herzegovinian postwar contemporary art practices away from the established paradigms such as ethnonationalist postwar, post-conflict, post-Yugoslav, or Eastern European art. At the same time, this implies writing away from (or writing with the awareness of) already established categories within the art historical canon—*universal knowledge fantasies*—that only partially

⁷⁹ Rogoff, *Terra Infirma*, 13.

deal with spaces such as Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, the methodology of metonymic topoi does not resolve the problem of *universal knowledge fantasies* and blind spots within them but does open up a possibility of drawing attention to the histories and art practices left outside of the prevailing canon.

To write and think about contemporary art from Bosnia-Herzegovina means to have in mind all of its geopolitical, social, and historical contexts and shifts. Bosnia-Herzegovina is a postwar and a post-Yugoslav space, a country territorially positioned on the Balkan Peninsula and in the continent of Europe, but not in the European Union. The Balkans are considered to be peripheral to Europe, and Bosnia-Herzegovina a periphery country of the Balkans. In art discourse, art practices from Bosnia-Herzegovina are sometimes designated alongside the art practices of Eastern Europe, based on the perception of Eastern Europe as a conceptual umbrella term under which the countries of the postcommunist and post-socialist regimes are gathered.

In recent times, the term Southeastern Europe has emerged as a politically correct term for naming countries (and artistic practices) coming from the Western Balkans.⁸¹ All these categories represent an exercise in geographic naming and come from particular power centers and power structures, which define what periphery is or is not. However, to think about the periphery, or from the periphery, means to think about the center, too. In doing so, one ends up being locked in the loop of binaries and reiterative dichotomies, which are already exhausting the field of art history.

The importance of the metonymic structural organization of this thesis lies in the possible freeing of art discourse from the interpretations imposed by discourses that are developed in and around the center or in and around the periphery. Such an organizational logic traverses the notions of binaries such as center/periphery, west/east, and live performance/performance documentation and shifts the focus to the artworks. However, the use of the metonymic topoi does not escape or obliterate all of the aforesaid dichotomies. It rather aims to incorporate everything—the center and the periphery, the said and the left out—

⁸⁰ For instance, this is the case with the writings of respective authors Piotr Piotrowski and Miško Šuvaković, dominant and important figures in the field of contemporary art history from Eastern and Southeastern Europe who just vaguely flirt with the shifts and paradigms from the peripheries.

⁸¹ The term “Western Balkans” is one of the examples of geographic naming coming from the center of power, in this case from the European Union (EU). Igor Štiks and Srećko Horvat explain the term as “a geopolitical construct forged in Brussels, composed of the former Yugoslav republics that have still not joined the EU, ‘plus Albania.’” See Srećko Horvat and Igor Štiks, “The European Union in the Balkans,” in *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism: Radical Politics After Yugoslavia*, ed. Srećko Horvat and Igor Štiks (London: Verso, 2015), 26. Bosnia-Herzegovina is among Kosovo, Serbia, North Macedonia, and Montenegro, the former Yugoslav republic that has still not joined the EU.

and contrasts the methodological approach, where a certain topic or predisposed category, contested by the abovementioned binaries, informs the direction in which artworks should be interpreted. The metonymic structure of neutral but not indifferent categories is not primarily based around the notion of geographical naming, power relations, or some sort of hierarchy and provides an alternative entry point for reading the artworks.

Lastly, with the use of the metonymic topoi as a method for structural organization, I aim to evoke the curiosity of the reader. *Water, Rope, Boards, Concrete, Mouth, Walk*, and *Paint* create a cartography of poetic imagery that could potentially trigger the associative processes in readers' minds and thus might lead to the emergence of further little *breakthroughs of possibilities*.

2. Exhausted (Art) Geography

The present chapter begins with an explanation of the term “exhausted geography” and unfolds into an overview of the notable political and artistic shifts that affected the trajectory of Bosnian-Herzegovinian contemporary art.⁸² Throughout the subchapters—*Periphery within Periphery*, *Postwar B-H*, and *Post-transitional B-H?*—this chapter contextualizes B-H's postwar performative art practices within the wider (art) historical, geographical, political, and social framework. The organization of these subchapters follows a chronological order of historical events. However, this chronology is occasionally interrupted to reflect on the preceding or upcoming content. The first subchapter characterizes B-H as a periphery within the periphery in the context of Yugoslavia's art geography. In the second subchapter, I use the term “postwar” to provide an overview of the war's aftermath in B-H but simultaneously to put into question the time frame of this particular period. In the third subchapter, I deploy the term “post-transitional” to refer to the current political, economic, and art situation in B-H and to briefly revisit the moment of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the beginning of the transition.

⁸² In this chapter, with the focus on the development of performative practices in public space in Bosnian-Herzegovinian art history, I compose a genealogy necessary for contextualizing and understanding the artworks examined in this thesis.

The title of this chapter bears the name of Irit Rogoff's elaborate concept of exhausted geographies for the purpose of interpreting the Bosnian-Herzegovinian geopolitical situation.⁸³ Despite being a rather complex concept, it can be summed up in the idea that exhausted geographies are "material manifestations of [...] territorialities and territorial claims that cannot sustain themselves."⁸⁴ [Exhausted geographies] emerge from political, economic, climatic, war or other crises dealing with the (im)possible politics of belonging and identification as material manifestations of territorialities and territorial claims that cannot sustain themselves."⁸⁵ With its socialist and war-torn past; the lingering presence of war; political shifts and changes due to different political and social regimes from the Yugoslav era until today (communism, socialism, capitalism, neoliberal global capitalism); and constant internal ethnonationalist conflict that comes to the surface in the lack of even slight welfare opportunities for the people, Bosnia-Herzegovina is an example of an exhausted geography.

Furthermore, in the text "Exhausted (Art) Geographies: An attempt to define the geopoliticity of contemporary art," Jelena Petrović applies Irit Rogoff's concept of exhausted geographies while examining the issues of contemporary art from the post-Yugoslav geopolitical space.⁸⁶ Petrović writes about political geographies of the post-Yugoslav space and explains how researching them within and through art today implies dealing with them temporarily and spatially.⁸⁷ According to Petrović, to research and write about contemporary

⁸³ Irit Rogoff developed this concept in public lectures and texts, such as a lecture named "Exhausted Geographies," in which she appeared as a keynote speaker at the Crossing Boundaries Symposium, organized by the Institute of International Visual Arts and the Royal Geographical Society in London in June 2010, and a text "Oblique Points of Entry" (2015). See Irit Rogoff, "Exhausted Geographies," filmed June 2010 at Crossing Boundaries Symposium, London, video, 7:42, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJOP9l0_nbl.; Irit Rogoff, "Oblique Points of Entry," in *Contemporary Art from the Middle East: Regional Interactions with Global Art Discourses*, ed. Hamid Keshmirshakan (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 37–39.

⁸⁴ Irit Rogoff, "Oblique Points of Entry," in *Contemporary Art from the Middle East: Regional Interactions with Global Art Discourses*, ed. Hamid Keshmirshakan (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 43.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁸⁶ Jelena Petrović, "Exhausted (Art) Geographies: An Attempt to Define the Geopoliticity of Contemporary Art," *Erste Stiftung Magazine*, April 27, 2018, <http://www.erstestiftung.org/en/exhausted-art-geographies/>. Here it is important to note that Petrović added the additional interlocutor *art* to the compound conceived by Irit Rogoff, i.e., exhausted (art) geographies. Petrović appropriated Rogoff's concept and developed it within the context of the art system and geography of the post-Yugoslav space. Furthermore, for the title of the present chapter, I have decided to write the word geography in its singular form (as opposed to Rogoff's and Petrović's use of the word geography in the plural) because I am focusing only on one particular geography, that of postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina. Additionally, as the footnote references make evident, in this chapter's introduction, I refer to two texts written by Petrović ("Exhausted (Art) Geographies: An Attempt to Define the Geopoliticity of Contemporary Art" and "Post-Yugoslav Art: Beyond Social Utopia"). In both texts, the author deals with art practices from the post-Yugoslav space and explores the concept of "exhausted geographies."

⁸⁷ Jelena Petrović, "Post-Yugoslav Art: Beyond Social Utopia," *Springerin*, 2019, <https://www.springerin.at/en/2019/1/postjugoslawische-kunst-jenseits-der-sozialutopie/>.

art in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a post-Yugoslav and simultaneously a postwar space, comes with a certain burden.⁸⁸ Petrović describes the rigor of the latter as follows:

This still undomesticated geopolitical zone between the center that has never been stronger (former West) and the post-transitional periphery (former East) has paradoxically been redefined in the so-called post-ideological terms: as Central, Eastern, or Southeastern Europe on the one hand, and the Balkan region on the other, whereby what the zone actually represents on the world map, in geopolitical terms, has never been given a clear political meaning. [...] Places of tribulation, destruction, and terror, war trauma and the 1990s genocide are the locations where Yugoslavia as a revolutionary creation lost its political articulation of the common past, as well as its social imagination of the common future. Politics of memory and the pacifist discourse of reconciliation, which have been generated since 1990s, have neutralized the need for political subjectivization based on revolutionary determination of Yugoslavia, as well as the need for the common historicization of the war. This was in fact a war in which Yugoslavia did not manage to overpower the nationalist signifiers of the oncoming so-called democratization of the society through neoliberal demands of the global, post-socialist, atomizing capitalism in which all newly established post-Yugoslav states merely become Balkanized periphery of the post-socialist Europe, each founded on its own war.⁸⁹

Bosnia-Herzegovina is thus torn between finding its determining identity: where it belongs in the geographical division of Europe and whether it is more post-Yugoslav or postwar B-H. And thus, to write about postwar art practices from B-H entails acknowledging all of the characteristics Petrović describes as belonging to the post-Yugoslav space and Bosnia-Herzegovina (with all its complex political, social, economic, and cultural peculiarities). Concurrently, addressing this particular topic, i.e., Bosnian-Herzegovinian's socioeconomic and cultural contexts, means finding a balance between two things that define Bosnia-Herzegovina's troubled identity—Yugoslavia and war. The latter becomes even more evident when we consider Dunja Blažević's remarks on symbolic points that exist in our memories and that mark either a beginning or an end of certain events. Blažević writes how

⁸⁸ Ibid. This feeling of burden was the strongest obstructing agent at the beginning of the writing process of this thesis. The difficulty was to write about contemporary art production from Bosnia-Herzegovina while refraining from placing it exclusively under one of the prevailing geopolitical umbrella terms such as art from the post-Yugoslav space, Eastern, Southeastern Europe, or the Balkans. At the same time, it was challenging to obtain a non-biased and objective writing position as I come from and have personal connections with B-H. The coping mechanism for dealing with this burden became Irit Rogoff's writings, which inspired me to construct a metonymic thesis structure. The latter opened up the possibility of approaching the artworks from several viewpoints instead of regarding them from fixed perspectives defined solely by war or geopolitical categories. In my opinion, this burden will appear for anyone dealing with the topic of Bosnian-Herzegovinian contemporary art practices as long as Bosnian-Herzegovinian society and culture continue to be regarded and represented only through the prism of the ethnonational conflict and war.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

“for an American or European such a symbolic point is the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. For an ex-Yugoslavian it is the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the war.”⁹⁰

The timeline of Bosnian-Herzegovinian art history can thus be developed around the event of the war as a referential symbolic point. In this case, Nermina Zildžo differentiates the prewar period, the war period, and the postwar period in B-H’s art history, explaining how she finds that “the most fateful events and shifts in Bosnian-Herzegovinian art and culture are actually centered around the war.”⁹¹ According to Zildžo, the prewar period in B-H was marked by a cultural movement called New Primitives, established in 1983.⁹² The war period was characterized by cultural resistance against the aggression in Sarajevo.⁹³ And the postwar period was determined by the “so-far unseen internationalization of the Bosnian scene and a renewed colonization of the country, torn apart by the war and peace agreement [...]”⁹⁴ Zildžo presented this periodization in 2006, eleven years after the war.

Today, twenty-five postwar years later, this periodization is still relevant. Nevertheless, to interrupt and depart, for a moment, from the ubiquitous war stigma when it comes to writing about contemporary art from B-H, I follow up Zildžo’s periodization with the one proposed in this chapter.

2.1. Periphery within Periphery

In light of the abovementioned perceived timeline, this subchapter contextualizes the Bosnian-Herzegovinian prewar art period within the art topography of Yugoslavia. It is necessary to write about this period for two reasons. The former, considering that the artists observed in this thesis were either born, brought up, or educated in Yugoslavia, and the latter, explaining that it was in this era that performance art practices started developing in Bosnian-Herzegovinian art history. More precisely, the evolution of performance art in Bosnia-Herzegovina began in the 1980s, Yugoslavia’s last decade before breakdown, which is the reason why this subchapter primarily focuses on the sociopolitical context and the performance art-related events within this particular time frame.

⁹⁰ Dunja Blažević, “Sarajevo: War and Peace,” in *Sarajevo 2000*, ed. Lóránd Hegyi (Vienna: Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, 2000), 53.

⁹¹ Zildžo, “Burying the Past,” 141.

⁹² New Primitives is the name of a specific cultural movement in Sarajevo in the 1980s. The movement embraced music, literature, theater, architecture, and the visual arts. See Zildžo, “Burying the Past,” 151.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 141.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

The history of Yugoslavia is more than seventy years long and characterized by recurring upheavals and uprisings.⁹⁵ It can be broken down into two significant moments: the period of the so-called First Yugoslavia (1918–45) and of the sequential Second Yugoslavia (1945–80).^{96,97} Yugoslavia's last decade (1980–91), characterized by the country's slow disintegration, began in 1980, a year marked by a startling shift following the death of Yugoslavia's President Josip Broz Tito.⁹⁸ The political leader, who was, oddly, expected to live until eternity, died and left Yugoslavians without their supreme hero and father figure. Marie-Janine Calic writes how after Tito's death, "Yugoslavia froze in its tracks" because it was extremely unprepared for the possibility of him dying."⁹⁹ After Tito's demise, the Yugoslav federation slowly disintegrated and singular national states arose with their "relatively hermetic cultures" (1980–91).¹⁰⁰ Yugoslavia gradually found itself amidst a political and economic crisis that ultimately turned into a horrific war reality in 1991. In the words of Miško Šuvaković, "[Yugoslavia] drew to a close during the 1990s with the dramatic post socialist wars between the pro-Serbian federal army and the nascent national armed forces. These were the wars in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the province of Kosovo."

As for Yugoslavia's art practice, Ješa Denegri explains how the concept of a Yugoslav art space implicates "the geographic area and political environment in which the polycentric and decentralized, yet at the same time unified and shared, art life of the second Yugoslavia (1945–91) emerged: polycentric and decentralized because it comprised several cultural environments and their capital cities, ex-republics of that former country, each now an

⁹⁵ Marie-Janine Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia* (West Lafayette, IND: Purdue University Press, 2019), 15.

⁹⁶ Calic explains that Yugoslavia became a reality twice in its history, in 1918 and 1945. "Each time with a thoroughly different political system: first as a centralized, constitutional, and parliamentary monarchy, then as a one-party socialist federation. Both models faced four fundamental long-term problems: the unresolved national question that challenged the identity and cohesion of the state; the underdevelopment and poverty in a predominantly peasant society; and the dependence on foreign political and economic powers. These three problems exacerbated the fourth, namely the enormous historical, cultural, and socioeconomic disparities between the various components of multiethnic Yugoslavia, which repeatedly raised anew issues concerning political legitimacy and a suitable constitutional order." See Marie-Janine Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia*, 10–18.

⁹⁷ Šuvaković notes that in this post-World War II Yugoslavia (also known as Tito's socialist Yugoslavia or Second Yugoslavia), there was a three-year-long period of connection with the Soviet political bloc (1945–48). After this came self-governing socialism and a complex, multiethnic federal state (1950–80). Politically, as Šuvaković observes, this state was positioned in-between the Eastern and Western blocs, developing and cultivating relations with the third world through the movement of nonalignment. See Miško Šuvaković, "Impossible histories," in *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes, and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918-1991*, ed. Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), 7.

⁹⁸ The president of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, died at the age of eighty-eight on May 4, 1980. See Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia*, 790–91.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 790.

¹⁰⁰ Šuvaković, "Impossible histories," 7.

autonomous state; unified and shared because it was interlinked by numerous personal and institutional ties among the many active participants on the Yugoslav art scene at the time.”¹⁰¹ Denegri further notes that “this art space was densely interspersed with uninterrupted daily links, exchanges, and contacts among the artists themselves as well as among the organizers of the art scene, heads of galleries and museums, critics and contributors to cultural columns in the media—in other words, all the key factors of the local “art world” or “art system” at the time.”¹⁰² According to Denegri, each of the Yugoslav states and thus their art communities too, had within their national and local frameworks their own problematic development and process.¹⁰³ “Each [state] possessing its own internal evolutionary continuities and crucial discontinuities, constructed separate art topographies,” writes Denegri, who further explains that each state simultaneously fostered its own traditions, and in distinct ways, incorporated itself into global cultural art events.^{104,105}

When it comes specifically to the Bosnian-Herzegovinian art community, Denegri describes it as a less developed art community.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, it was certainly less developed when compared to the art communities of the prevailing art centers—Zagreb, Belgrade, and Ljubljana—albeit meaningful and not impoverished of artistic ideas. Even though a periphery of the Yugoslav art geography, B-H still had meaningful artistic developments and several important momentums.

Two connected events that speak of the slow development of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian art scene are the establishment of the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo and the earliest examples of performance art (in particular, performance art in public space). Both events occurred significantly later when compared to what was already happening in Zagreb, Belgrade, or Ljubljana at the time.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰¹ Ješa Denegri, “Inside or Outside: Radical Views on the Yugoslav Art Scene, 1950–1970,” in *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991*, ed. Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), 171.

¹⁰² Denegri, “Inside or Outside,” 171. Ameli Tančica, email message to the author, March 6, 2019.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 172.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Additionally, Dunja Blažević writes how even though there were obvious differences in local traditions of art production in Yugoslavia, or “the different reception and interpretation of universal artistic trends and currents in arts,” it is “necessary to recognize that there was a common denominator. This common denominator was the system—the social political context that ‘produced’ the specific forms of art.” See Dunja Blažević, “Who’s That Singing Over There? Art in Yugoslavia and After... 1949–1989...” in *Aspects/Positions: 50 Years of Art in Central Europe 1949–1999*, ed. Lóránd Hegyi (Vienna: Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, 1999/2000), 85.

¹⁰⁶ Denegri, “Inside or Outside,” 171.

¹⁰⁷ Ten years before the first performances started emerging in B-H, performance art had already developed in Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia. For example, Tomislav Gotovac, Marina Abramović, Vlasta Delimar, and OHO Group were active in the domain of performance art in the 1960s and 1970s. See Amy Bryzgel, *Performance Art in Eastern Europe since 1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

Eleven years after the opening of the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo (1972), its six students formed the artist group Zvono in Sarajevo (1983).^{108,109} The group's founders were artists Biljana Gavranović, Narcis Kantardžić, Sead Čizmić, Satko Hadžihasanović, and Aleksandar Saša Bukvić (hereinafter Saša Bukvić), later joined by the photographer Kemal Hadžić.¹¹⁰

In the framework of Bosnian-Herzegovinian performance art history, Zvono holds a significant position because they were the first ones that organized performances in the domain of public space. Additionally, Zvono was among the first artists in B-H that dealt with performance art in general.^{111,112} However, after a decade of their artistic practice, Zvono stopped working together in 1992 when the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina broke out.¹¹³

As explained by Asim Delilović, within their art practice, “the Zvono group moved their works from intimate spaces (premises of their studios) to public spaces, thus bringing them closer to ordinary people. [...] the efforts of the Zvono group are considered important in the democratization processes in the 1980s, which opened new opportunities in the domain of culture and made Sarajevo one of the centers of contemporary art in Yugoslavia.”¹¹⁴ At the same time, Nermina Zildžo explains that Zvono's aim was to “attract attention to themselves

¹⁰⁸ Zildžo, “Burying the Past,” 141.

¹⁰⁹ The Zvono group chose their name after the café bar of the same name in which they used to meet and where they had their first exhibitions. See Husedžinović, “Body Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 41.

¹¹⁰ Delilović, *Museum in Exile: Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Modern Era*, 260. “Documentation about Zvono's work is available only from the time when photographer Kemal Hadžić joined the group. His documenting of the work of the group was his artistic contribution to the group's actions.” Husedžinović, “Body Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 40.

¹¹¹ Meliha Husedžinović mentions that the members of the Sarajevo artist group 1+1+1, artists Mustafa Skopljak, Edin Numanakadić, and Muradif Čerimagić, often said that they were the first ever to make a performance in Sarajevo. By this, they think of February 1972 when, at the opening of their group exhibition, 1+1+1, with the music of John Cage in the background, in the words of Husedžinović, “executed an action without any props by placing themselves in a particular situation, namely into executing clownish motions with the intention of having the spectator's surprise perform the role of artistic effect.” Husedžinović adds that their action, however, did not encourage and stimulate other artists to head in a similar direction. “Ten years were to pass before a substantial breach with the tradition, the conventions, and institutionalized art occurred. That was when the group Zvono appeared and soon after Jusuf Hadžifejzović [an artist known for his performances and as one of the organizers of the exhibition *Yugoslav Dokumenta* in 1989 in Sarajevo.]” Husedžinović, “Body Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 41.

¹¹² Art historian Meliha Husedžinović, when writing about body art in Bosnia-Herzegovina, explains how even though there are no extensive records on what was happening in B-H in terms of art in Yugoslavia, there were still phenomena of performing in B-H. For instance, she points to visits of artists from elsewhere, such as the Group OHO from Ljubljana, who, in the season 1979/1980, held a series of art workshops, exhibitions, and lectures entitled *New Artistic Practice*. Husedžinović also notes that the first body performance in Sarajevo occurred during one such workshop. It was titled *Signal* and performed on November 16, 1979, by American artist David Smith Greenwood (he came from Hope College, Great Valley University, where, at that time, he was head of the performance workshop).

¹¹² Meliha Husedžinović, “Body Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 40.

¹¹³ Zildžo, “Burying the Past,” 148.

¹¹⁴ Delilović, *Museum in Exile*, 260.

as a means of finding a way into the institutions of the art system.”¹¹⁵ While, as a group, Zvono focused mainly on making performances, the members individually never stopped working as painters and sculptors, each developing their own personal expression.¹¹⁶

The group was active in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and in smaller places in B-H such as Derventa or Počitelj.¹¹⁷ At the same time, they exhibited and performed outside of B-H in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana.^{118,119} Their performances in public spaces in Sarajevo and elsewhere, on streets and squares, in store windows and in cafés, contributed to the popularization of art among a wider public that was not exclusively tied to the frameworks of art institutions.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, Meliha Husedžinović notes that art historians and art critics rarely attended Zvono’s shows.¹²¹ In Husedžinović’s opinion, Zvono was considered an isolated and rather disorganized phenomenon.^{122,123} She further considers this isolation to be the reason for the scarcity of documentation, “which would enable a reconstruction of the ideas and realizations. The events now exist only in the memory of the participants themselves who are now scattered all over the world (USA, Canada, etc.).”^{124,125}

In the book considered one of the key sources on art and culture from the post-Yugoslav space, *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-*

¹¹⁵ Zildžo, “Burying the Past,” 148.

¹¹⁶ Husedžinović, “Body Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 40.

¹¹⁷ Zildžo, “Burying the Past,” 148.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Concurrently, Meliha Husedžinović wrote that Zvono’s most energetic performance, or in her words, “the performance in which the group invested the most energy and concentration,” was titled *The Shop-window* and was carried out in 1985 in the window of a department store in Belgrade. “The artists transformed the space by putting themselves in the position of both the object (mannequin) and the subject who is observing and being observed, who is inside and looks out from the inside. Every member of the group, dressed in their own clothes, assumed a certain position and maintained it until the end of the opening hours of the store.” See Husedžinović, “Body Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 41.

¹²⁰ Zildžo, “Burying the Past,” 148.

¹²¹ Husedžinović, “Body Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 40.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ In a conversation with one of Zvono’s members, Aleksandar Saša Bukvić, who lives and works in Sarajevo and takes care of Zvono’s legacy, I asked about the possible reasons behind Zvono’s erasure from the Yugoslav art canon of the 1980s. His response was that in the 1980s in B-H, Zvono was considered a group of unusual and playful artists who were just trying out things for the sake of fun. According to him, they did not have a big machinery of art historians behind them, which resulted in the lack of distribution of information about them. He added that, at the time, they had no institutional support, and only the art historian Aleksandar Adamović wrote about them (in the text accompanying Zvono’s exhibition at Collegium Artisticum in Sarajevo in 1986). Aleksandar Saša Bukvić, Facebook Messenger call to the author, July 22, 2020.

¹²⁴ Husedžinović, “Body Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 40.

¹²⁵ According to Aleksandar Saša Bukvić, Kemal Hadžić lives in Phoenix (Arizona), Sead Čizmić in San Diego, and Sadko Hadžihasanović in Toronto, while only Biljana Gavranović and himself are in B-H (she in Banja Luka and he in Sarajevo). Bukvić also migrated to Canada, where he lived and worked, but came back to Sarajevo. (I do not have exact dates of his moving away from and coming back to B-H.) See Aleksandar Saša Bukvić, “Ne dozvoljavam da se ‘Zvono’ zaboravi [I do not allow ‘Zvono’ to be forgotten],” interview by Budo Vukobrat, *Radio 27 Nedjeljom ujutro*, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, September 12, 2011, text, https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/bukvic_ne_dozvoljavam_da_se_zvono_zaboravi/24325037.html.

gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991 (2003), edited by Serbian art historians and theoreticians Miško Šuvaković and Dubravka Đurić, there is just a short paragraph written on art practices from Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1980s. It is a rather insufficient description of a painting made by the Zvono group.¹²⁶ This mixed media artwork, *Autoportret – portret IV* [Self-portrait – Portrait IV] (1987), can be understood as a misrepresentation of the group’s oeuvre in that Zvono made much more significant art performances than the single artwork that was represented in the book.¹²⁷ As Šuvaković writes, “conceptual art in Sarajevo was a late phenomenon within which analytical and political conceptual art was transformed into the eclectic and nomadic art of postmodernism, and urban behavior was treated as a medium of artistic expression.”¹²⁸ His observation begins and ends with this very general interpretation that could have been much more substantial if he took into account Zvono’s performance pieces. At the same time, the syntagma “urban behavior” may hint at their performances in the streets of the cities, but Šuvaković’s description remains partial.

In the text “Exhibition History Beyond the Western and Eastern Canon Formation: A Methodological Proposal Based on the Example of the Art Group Zvono,” art historian Sandra Bradvić recognizes this marginalization of Zvono’s artistic practice in publications that deal with the post-Yugoslav and Eastern European art geography and tries to elucidate why Zvono stayed on the sidelines of these art geographies. As Bradvić writes:

Despite the group’s avant-garde character, it has failed to find mention in the three most important published treatments of the artistic vanguard in the former state of Yugoslavia after 1945 (Arns 2003; Đurić and Šuvaković 2003; Piotrowski 2009).^{129,130}

Examining the possible reasons for this gap in the literature, Bradvić aims to “query this particular deficit and examine the extent to which this lacuna in the key authors is due to

¹²⁶ See fig. 1 in appendix 1.

¹²⁷ Miško Šuvaković, “Conceptual Art,” in *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991*, ed. Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), 242.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Sandra Bradvić, “Exhibition History Beyond Western and Eastern Canon Formation: A Methodological Proposal based on the Example of the Art Group Zvono,” in *Liminal Spaces of Art between Europe and the Middle East*, ed. Ivana Prijatelj Pavičić, Marina Vicelja Matijašić, and Martin Germ (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), 28–41.

¹³⁰ The publications Bradvić mentions are: Inke Arns, “Objects in the Mirror May be Closer than they Appear! Die Avantgarde im RückSpiegel! [Objects in the Mirror May be Closer than they Appear! The Avant-Garde in the Rear Mirror!],” (PhD diss., Humboldt University Berlin, 2003); Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, ed., *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003); Piotr Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and the Avant-garde in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009).

their adherence to a Western modern and object-oriented art term, thereby simply confirming a Western canon from an Eastern perspective.” In her analysis, Bradvić illustrates two matters—how Zvono used the exhibition as a mode of production and performance documentation videos as individual artworks, perceived separately from the performances. Furthermore, “[t]he distinct character of Zvono’s behavior as a group was their challenging of conventional presentational models, leading them to question exhibition formats and elements while simultaneously appropriating them.”¹³¹ According to Bradvić, the most prominent reason for the misconception of Zvono’s art practice in (post-)Yugoslav art circles seems to have emerged from the misinterpretation of their art by the Yugoslav critical apparatus. As she explains:

[...] the majority of critics compared Zvono’s work to that of the conceptual art scene of the 1970s and 1980s. What this interpretation failed to take into account, or for that matter recognize, was Zvono’s deliberate shift away from the work of art to their acting and exhibiting as a group. This misperception, along with a lack of basic or comprehensive research into singular actions, performances, and exhibitions, must be considered the main reason why Zvono as a group was not included in the institutional exhibitions of the 1980s, even though as individual artists, and as prominent representatives of the new image, they were regularly invited as participants.¹³²

What emerges from Bradvić’s analysis is that Zvono’s erasure from the annals of Yugoslav art history—and consequently post-Yugoslav and Eastern European narratives—is the overlooking of significant characteristics of their art practice: working as a collective and making performances and performance documentation that they would then turn into edited video works.

B-H stayed on the margins of Yugoslav art geography until 1984, when Sarajevo hosted the Winter Olympic Games and when artist Jusuf Hadžifejzović, alongside his peers Radoslav Tadić and Aleksandar Saša Bukvić, organized the *Yugoslav Documenta* exhibition in the same year.^{133,134} This exhibition was followed by two more of the same name—one in 1987 and the other in 1989. Soon after, the outbreak of war interrupted the artistic evolution of the 1980s, prompting the development of another art reality throughout the 1990s when B-H remained a

¹³¹ Bradvić, “Exhibition history,” 28.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ “The Heritage of 1989, Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents,” Museum of Modern Art Ljubljana, accessed January 22, 2020, <http://www.mg-lj.si/en/exhibitions/1997/the-second-yugoslav-documents-exhibition/>.

¹³⁴ After 1984, *Yugoslav Documenta* exhibitions took place two more times, in 1987 and 1989. The last two events are also known as the first and second *Yugoslav Documenta*.

geopolitical periphery of Europe but simultaneously came under the spotlight of world news and media coverage.

Zdenka Badovinac describes the *Yugoslav Documenta* from 1989 as “the last big art exhibition in Yugoslavia.”¹³⁵ It was curated by the artists Jusuf Hadžifejzović and Radoslav Tadić and organized in the Winter Olympic Center Skenderija in Sarajevo. According to Badovinac, “[...] this was the largest exhibition that bore the label “Yugoslav,” a label that, among other things, was meant to strengthen the ideology of brotherhood and unity in the socialist federal republic.”¹³⁶ She also states that while this “was one of the last cultural events to support the idea of a shared Yugoslav cultural space, it also departed from that model.”¹³⁷ Badovinac continues explaining the significance of the local context of *Yugoslav Documenta* exhibitions (1987, 1989) and describes how this concept started in 1984, “when three Sarajevo artists—Jusuf Hadžifejzović, Saša Bukvić, and Rade Tadić—put together the first in a series of independent exhibitions of Yugoslav artists at the Collegium Artisticum club, a venue that still exists today in the same basement rooms in the Skenderija Center.”^{138,139} According to Badovinac, the artists’ hope was to create an ongoing platform “for dynamic communications between artists, beyond any strictly local framework.”¹⁴⁰ Moreover, she explains that the title of the exhibition references the Kassel *Documenta* in an ironic and humorous way, as not many artists from Yugoslavia had ever been invited to the *Documenta* in Kassel.¹⁴¹ As Badovinac writes, “the artists seemed to have decided that if they can’t go to *Documenta*, then *Documenta* must come to them.”¹⁴² This initiative of the artists to “help local artists develop a suitable international context and not merely reinforce the official ideology” was, according to Badovinac, the real value behind the *Yugoslav Documenta* exhibitions, as such an event, in

¹³⁵ Zdenka Badovinac, “An Exhibition about an Exhibition: The Heritage of 1989. Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents,” in *The Heritage of 1989. Case Study: The Second Yugoslav Documents Exhibition*, ed. Ana Mizerit and Adela Železnik (Ljubljana: Moderna Galerija, 2017).

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ The name of this exhibition appears differently throughout the written materials mentioning it. In English written sources, it is called either *Yugoslavenska Documenta*, *Yugoslav Documenta*, or *Yugoslav Dokumenta*, while in Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian sources, it is mentioned as *Yugoslavenska Dokumenta*, *Yugoslavenska Documenta* or *Yugoslavenski dokumenti*. In my opinion, the confusion comes from the exhibition’s catalog from 1989, which is titled *Yugoslavenska Dokumenta '89* (Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian) and *Yugoslav Documents '89* (English). In its aftermath, different authors continued using different exhibition titles. Here, when writing about this exhibition, and when it is not the quoted text (like in the case of Zdenka Badovinac’s quotation above), I use the title *Yugoslav Documenta*. My choice is modeled on the rules of English language grammar. I am using Yugoslav as an adjective coming from the proper noun Yugoslavia and *Documenta* being the proper name of the original *Documenta* exhibition.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

which the most important and prominent Yugoslav artists and curators participated, “could have developed only in a climate of vital self-organized artist initiatives, such as were typical of alternative culture in the former Yugoslavia.”¹⁴³ This reasoning is an important place for me to finish this subchapter, as in the latter quoted sentence, Badovinac speaks of *Yugoslav Documenta*, an event initiated by B-H artists, as part of the general artistic impulse in all the Yugoslavia. Thus, not pinpointing *Yugoslav Documenta* as an excluded event in Sarajevo but rather including it in the general art historical discourse of Yugoslav art, or, in other words, framing it as part of Yugoslav art geography.

To conclude, as much as there are reasons to consider Bosnia-Herzegovina one of Yugoslavia’s art peripheries, it certainly still had a significant art evolution. Its art scene may have progressed more slowly and in lesser quantity than those of the so-called centers, but that does not mean that it was unsuccessful in terms of its art development.

2.2. Postwar B-H

The trajectory of this chapter intentionally jumps from a brief overview of the 1980s to the postwar time period in B-H. The reason for the latter is that during the war, art and culture sporadically became creative outlets and survival strategies of Sarajevo’s population and in B-H.¹⁴⁴ In this regard, I prefer not to treat specific examples of art production from wartime, as this would ask for a different structural and methodological approach.

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina broke out in 1992 and ended with the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995. One could say that the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement by the former presidents of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia (Alija Izetbegović, Franjo Tuđman, and Slobodan Milošević) is an example of a performative gesture.¹⁴⁵ The act of signing brought the war to an end, created political and social instabilities, and tailored the external and internal borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ For example, the war period was, in the artistic and cultural context, characterized by an exhibition *Witnesses of Existence*, which was organized in the ruins of one of Sarajevo’s art and cultural centers, Obala Art Centre [The Shore Art Center]. The exhibitors were artists Nusret Pašić, Edin Numankadić, Zoran Bogdanović, Mustafa Skopljak, Sanjin Jukić, and Radoslav Tadić. Furthermore, as Asim Đelilović notes, the gallery of the Art Academy in Sarajevo, which closed shortly after the war began, started working again; Enver Hadžiomerspahić initiated the foundation of the Museum of Modern Art (titled *Ars Aevi*); Susan Sontag visited Sarajevo and directed the play *Waiting for Godot*. Alongside Sontag, Annie Leibovitz, Antony Gormley, and Christian Boltanski also came to Sarajevo in this period. See Đelilović, *Museum in Exile*, 260; Husedžinović, “Body Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 40–42; Zildžo, “Burying the Past,” 141–54.

¹⁴⁵ See fig. 26 in appendix 1.

Compared to the prewar situation of art and culture in B-H, Dunja Blažević describes the postwar artistic reality as "materially, institutionally, and professionally" decayed.¹⁴⁶ And opposed to wartime art, Blažević remarks, the postwar art development lacked creativity.¹⁴⁷ She also notes how the postwar reality was characterized by an enthusiasm coming from artists eager to make new art.¹⁴⁸ While the war disrupted 1980s art development, reduced resources and the new reality of living between ruined buildings prompted artists to be creative and use found materials to make installations and exhibitions.¹⁴⁹ When the war ended, Blažević explains, the art started returning to schools, ateliers, and galleries.¹⁵⁰ In this new context, Soros Center for Contemporary Art in Sarajevo thus wanted to inspire artists to continue exploring the possibilities of creating and exhibiting in public space, to challenge their artistic practices, and to develop a dialogue with random passersby.¹⁵¹ The idea of creating and exhibiting art in a public space, or, as Meliha Husedžinović writes, the moving away from the "conventional exhibition space," began in the 1980s with the aspirations of the Zvono group and their art practice.¹⁵² In this regard, I interpret the endeavors of the SCCA as a continuation of the artistic undertakings from the 1980s. In other words, SCCA's practice and projects were bridging the gap caused by the war. However, not in terms of excluding the war experience, but incorporating it, all the while using the physically and metaphorically devastated public spaces in Sarajevo as exhibition and performance sites.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁶ Dunja Blažević, "Sarajevo: War and Peace," in *Sarajevo 2000*, ed. Lóránd Hegyi (Vienna: Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, 2000), 55.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 54.

¹⁵⁰ Blažević, "Before," 9.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Meliha Husedžinović, [A text without title], in *Meeting Point: First Annual Exhibition of the Soros Center for Contemporary Art*, ed. Dunja Blažević (Sarajevo: Soros Center for Contemporary Art, 1998), 14.

¹⁵³ In terms of postwar art and culture development in B-H, the gallery Duplex 100m² is an art institution that, next to SCCA, worked on promotion, documentation, and representation of contemporary art in B-H. Duplex 100m² started working in 2004 under the name Duplex 10m² as a private initiative founded and run by artist and curator Pierre Courtain. The importance of Duplex 100m² lies in its focus on local artists, to whom it gave space and resources to create, produce, perform, and exhibit. Duplex 100m² organized numerous exhibitions of Bosnian-Herzegovinian artists locally, but also represented them internationally (in France, the USA, Hungary). The further significance of this gallery is that it was a meeting point, or, better said, a *welcoming* point, where artists and curators would gather and exchange ideas. Nevertheless, thirteen years after he opened the gallery, in December 2017, Pierre Courtain decided to close it as he could no longer provide funding. As he explains, Duplex 100m² is still working but without an official space. There are also other significant art institutions dealing with contemporary art in B-H that I, nevertheless, chose not to mention in this chapter, as it does not fit the thesis's framework. See Réka Deim, "Uneasy Transformation. The Critical Potential of Contemporary Art in Sarajevo," *artPortal*, March 18, 2019, <https://artportal.hu/magazin/uneasy-transformation-the-critical-potential-of-contemporary-art-in-sarajevo/>.

2.3. Post-Transitional B-H?

In this subchapter, I appropriate the term “post-transition” from the catalog accompanying Danica Dakić’s project, *Zenica Trilogy*, for the 2019 Venice Biennale.¹⁵⁴ The text in the catalog explains that in *Zenica Trilogy*, Dakić explores several topics such as post-transition, privatization, unemployment, pollution, and human will and persistence to temporarily defeat or overcome existing problems and (even) transcend reality.¹⁵⁵ The use of the term “post-transition” in the description of the project represented on the global biennale stage prompts the following question: What does post-transitional mean in the context of B-H society and its contemporary art practice? Similarly, how does the post-transition fit into the postwar framework, and does the post-transition possibly mark the end of the postwar?

In this regard, the artwork *Viva la Transicion* (digital print, 2015) by Bojan Stojčić (b.1988, Sarajevo) serves as an example of an artwork playing with the topic of transition. This image depicts one side of Sarajevo’s typical yellow dilapidated trams, inscribed with a slogan in capitalized black letters, saying “VIVA LA TRANSICION!” which Stojčić wrote on it.¹⁵⁶ The symmetrical composition shows an empty tram in front of the railway station in Sarajevo and represents, in my reading, the actual state of B-H’s society to which Stojčić’s ironic inscription alludes. “Viva la Transicion,” written on the old, slow-moving tram, hints at the ongoing, never-ending process of transition that B-H has been experiencing since the dissolution of Yugoslavia. On this matter of transition, Srećko Horvat and Igor Štiks note that

[a]fter the disappearance of the state socialist regimes [...] across the former Yugoslavia, a period of violence, conflict or general instability and economic misery has been followed by a seemingly endless transition to liberal democracy and neoliberal economy. During this process some countries have joined the European Union (Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia), further marginalizing the ‘latecomers’ and ‘laggards’ in the long process of ‘European integration’ (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania), all of which are now encircled by the EU border.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Danica Dakić represented Bosnia-Herzegovina at the Venice Biennale 2019 with her multimedia exhibition *Zenica Trilogy*. In this project, Dakić examines “the utopian potential of the cultural and industrial heritage of Yugoslav modernism against the background of post-war reality of the Bosnian town of Zenica.” See Senka Ibršimbegović, “Forward,” in *Danica Dakić: Zenica Trilogy* (Venice: The Pavilion of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the 58th International Art Exhibition: La Biennale di Venezia, 2019), 9.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ See fig. 2 in appendix 1.

¹⁵⁷ Srećko Horvat and Igor Štiks, “Radical Politics in the Desert of Transition,” in *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism: Radical Politics After Yugoslavia*, ed. Srećko Horvat and Igor Štiks (London: Verso, 2015), 14.

Consequently, I am not completely sure that B-H, i.e., one of the “latecomers,” has already reached its post-transitional status and cannot fathom what that would even mean for the development of society, art, and culture. At the same time, the question arises of if the answer to this is even a necessary one in the context of cultural development in B-H. The contemporary situation of arts and culture in B-H is significantly impoverished compared to that of the late 1990s and early 2000s, as there is currently no institution for contemporary art that operates successfully and financially autonomous of state support or, in that regard, with state support. The existing art institutions that are fully or partially supported by the state (on the state, cantonal, municipal, or city level) still do not operate effectively, i.e., they are often in need of funds and grants provided by foreign donors and, in most of the cases, the state officials are just in part or not at all concerned with the encouragement and production of contemporary art.¹⁵⁸

It seems that the terms postwar, transitional, post-transitional, and the implications these notions carry have come to the point of total exhaustion, thus mirroring the exhaustion of Bosnian-Herzegovinian society and its development. It is as if this exhausted art geography arrived at the point where it needs to start redeveloping and reinventing itself. One of the possibilities for this reinvention is the revisiting of art practices from the late 1990s and early 2000s, their recontextualization, and, ultimately, historicization.

¹⁵⁸ For example, in 2012, a cultural crisis erupted in B-H. Namely, the state-level cultural institutions in the Federation of B-H (such as the National Museum in Sarajevo) were abruptly closed. The closure was a consequence of the lack of funds needed for basic operating costs. More precisely, the unregulated policy regarding the funding and support for state-level institutions in the DPA, which I explain in the introduction, was the cause of this cultural crisis. As Azra Akšamija, an artist and architectural art historian, notes: “[o]n October 4, 2012, after 124 years of existence, Bosnia’s National Museum closed down due to a funding crisis. Six other state-level institutions, including the National Art Gallery and the National and University Library, were also about to become permanently inaccessible to the public, isolating and endangering invaluable heritage collections.” See “CultureShutdown/Solidarity Day,” Azra Akšamija, accessed July 28, 2021, <https://www.azraaksamija.net/museum-solidarity/>. Three years later, in 2015, the cultural institutions reopened when the state conceived the Financing Memorandum and promised to finance the National Museum in Sarajevo and six other cultural institutions in the upcoming three years. Nevertheless, this memorandum did not solve the actual problem of the support of art institutions on the state level, i.e., the policy that was not regulated by the DPA. This remains a blind spot in the B-H political, art, and cultural system. See “Zemaljski muzej ponovo otvoren, pravni status ostaje neriješen [The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina open again, the legal status remains unresolved],” Aida Đugum, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, last modified September 15, 2015, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/zemaljski-muzej-ponovo-otvara-vrata/27248791.html>.

3. Performative Gestures

The aim of this chapter is to present the theoretical framework vital for an understanding of the notion of performative gesture and to propose its definition and historicization within the wider context of performativity and gesture theory. To fulfill this objective, I combine the performativity theory of John Langshaw Austin (hereinafter J.L. Austin) and Judith Butler with Luce Irigaray's interpretation of gestures in psychoanalysis.

The terms "performative" and "gesture" are extensively used throughout various disciplines. As a compound, the term "performative gesture" is very common in contemporary art discourse, from exhibition catalogs and essays to critical texts. Nevertheless, the research behind this master's thesis showed no comprehensive definition of this specific term. This lack suggests that a performative gesture might be a platitude used in the context of talking, writing, and thinking about contemporary art. Furthermore, from the conducted research, it appears that the notion of performative gesture has become part of a generalized art discourse and is understood to be self-explanatory and self-sufficient. Therefore, in this chapter, I examine the term, propose its meaning, and explain how it can be useful in the reading of contemporary performative art practices of postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina.

What *is* a performative gesture?

The simplest way to answer this question is by inverting it and asking what a performative gesture is not. In the framework of this thesis and the context of the artworks, I do not perceive the term performative as an adjective solely describing that which is of the performance or performativity as the quality of any given performance.¹⁵⁹ As I aim to show, the "performativity" of the artworks observed in this thesis depends on the geographical context in which a certain gesture is being constructed. Similarly, it is important to mention that my understanding of the term "gesture" does not relate to the traditional use of the gestural in art history, i.e., in the context of abstract expressionism and action painting, where the painters' bodily gestures recognized in the brushstrokes or specific color dripping on the canvas served

¹⁵⁹ Judith Butler, "When Gesture Becomes Event," in *Inter Views in Performance Philosophy: Crossings and Conversations*, ed. Anna Street, Julien Alliot, and Magnolia Pauker (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 171–92.

as vehicles of interpretation for their artworks. Thus, I do not comprehend the term gesture in the context of interpretation of the bodily gestures inherent to the painting process.

To closely understand and define the notion of the performative gesture, this chapter deconstructs the compound. It begins with the elaboration of the concept of the “performative” and gradually develops into the examination of the “gesture.” The chapter aims toward the reintegration of the two and elucidation of the meaning underlying the concept of performative gesture.

The concept “performative” derives from literary studies and was introduced by J.L. Austin. In the series of lectures entitled “How to do things with words” (1955), Austin defined the term “performative utterance” as the “utterance that acts,” i.e., utterance that performs a certain action.¹⁶⁰ However, as Austin himself pointed out in the text *Performative Utterances* (1961), the word performative “is a new and ugly word, which might not mean anything very much.”¹⁶¹ More than half a century later, the word performative is not new anymore but is still very perplexing and commonly used in and beyond art discourse. According to Austin, when someone is saying the performative utterance, they are actually doing something and not merely saying something.¹⁶² An example of such an utterance is when a person in a wedding ceremony says: “I do.” That person is not reporting on a marriage but indulging in it.¹⁶³ In saying what they do, they actually perform that action.¹⁶⁴ However, these utterances need to be performed in a context where they are understandable, i.e., when the action they carry can come into being.¹⁶⁵ Saying “I do” in the middle of the street, without the wedding officiant, does not mean entering into marriage, but just stating these two words out loud.¹⁶⁶ This specific context that an utterance needs in order to be performative, Austin calls a convention.¹⁶⁷ A convention invoked by the utterance must exist and be accepted, and the circumstances in which the utterance is performed must be appropriate with its invocation in order for the speech act to be effective.¹⁶⁸ If the performative utterance does not comply with the already existing

¹⁶⁰ Marija Ratkovic, “The Biopolitical Character of Performativity in Public Space,” in *Performative Gestures, Political Moves* (Ljubljana: Erste Stiftung, 2014), 124.

¹⁶¹ J.L. Austin, “Performative Utterances,” in *The Semantics-Pragmatics Boundary in Philosophy*, ed. Maite Ezcurdia and Robert J. Stainton (Peterborough, CA: Broadview Press, 2013), 21.

¹⁶² Austin, “Performative Utterances,” 22.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 23.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

and accepted convention and with the appropriate circumstances for its invocation, then the act that we mean to perform would not be valid—such an act would become a misfire.¹⁶⁹ Judith Butler, who followed up on Austin's understanding of the performative acts in her critical theory, summarizes how Austin distinguishes illocutionary from perlocutionary speech acts:

The former [illocutionary] are speech acts that, in saying do what they say, and do it in the moment of that saying; the latter [perlocutionary] are speech acts that produce certain effects as their consequence; by saying something, a certain effect follows. The illocutionary speech act is itself the deed that it effects; the perlocutionary merely leads to certain effects that are not the same as the speech act itself.¹⁷⁰

Additionally, in the book *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (1997), Butler explains how language has performative power.¹⁷¹ In my understanding of Butler, certain speech acts are performative because they can hurt someone physically or psychologically.¹⁷² An insult as a speech act can insult a person and hurt their feelings, but it can also bring to the physical dispute as a counterreaction to the speech act.¹⁷³ Furthermore, Butler explains that speech acts do not necessarily need to be said or performed in a certain context in order to be performative, which expands Austin's comprehension of performative acts that are conditioned by a specific context or convention.¹⁷⁴ In Butler's understanding, the term "performative" means "of an action"—it is something that affects the reality in which it is being performed.¹⁷⁵ Besides, according to Butler, performative acts can transform or change reality, or, better said, performative acts have the possibility of affecting or causing the possibility of a certain transformation.¹⁷⁶ In the context of artworks, Butler explains how "we can refer to a 'performative' dimension of an artwork to foreground how an artwork performs, suggesting that it acts, that it intervenes upon and transforms a space, that it seems to exercise its own agency and affect."¹⁷⁷ The artworks, i.e., performances examined in the chapters *Water* and *Concrete*, can thus be generally characterized by what the body (of the artist) does, how it does, and where it does. For example, Gordana Anđelić-Galić sews and stitches the river shores, Kurt&Plasto pave the river with boards, Danica Dakić sets her video installation

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 3.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 12.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 15.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 16.

¹⁷⁷ Judith Butler, "When Gesture Becomes Event," 172. [Exclamation marks in the original quotation.]

between the walls of a narrow tunnel, Suzana Cerić and Anela Šabić perform a walk, and Ameli Tančica performs his blue-colored body in front of the camera.

In light of Butler's definition of an artwork's performativity, I suggest that the body itself is the performative language of the artworks in question. However, this language includes a few peculiarities based upon the characteristics of the body's *doing* in space.¹⁷⁸ This doing can be interpreted as an action (sewing, paving, walking) or the result of the specific action, i.e., the specific constellation of the objects in the performing site. In both ways, the body intervenes in and upon the public space, either with the process or result of the body's, i.e., artist's, action (or both). The performativity of this action is further defined by the context and corresponds to where the body does what it does. The performative force of each artist's acts is context-specific; in the artworks, geographic context and performative gestures are mutually inclusive. While the artworks intervene within and upon the specific surfaces of public space, their performative force is still dependent on the context and spectatorship. One needs to be familiar with the context in order to understand the specific gesture.

As much as the word "performative" is both common and used in various contexts, so is the word "gesture." The interest in the meaning of the notion of gesture is rather significant and extensive across disciplines. As Carrie Noland and Sally Ann Ness write in the introduction of the book *Migrations of Gesture*, "gesture has collected considerable critical attention in a variety of scholarly domains and yet has remained dramatically undertheorized as a cross-disciplinary vehicle."¹⁷⁹ In the framework of this thesis, the role of gesture as a cross-disciplinary vehicle can be recognized in its interlocutory position, where it bridges performativity theory and concepts of geography within the context of art history.

The *Oxford Dictionary* defines the noun "gesture" as "a movement of a limb or the body; an expression of thought or feeling; the use of such movements as a rhetorical device; an action to evoke a response or convey intention."¹⁸⁰ In further elaboration of the performative gesture, this thesis constructs its arguments around the third definition: gesture as "an action to evoke a response or convey intention." It corresponds to the characteristics of the artworks

¹⁷⁸ My understanding of this is limited to a certain extent due to the existing performance documentation of the artworks examined in the thesis. For most of the artworks, I had only photographs at my disposal, so I am not able to interpret the specifics of the artists' moving bodies. This limitation comes from the fact that there is currently no institution in Bosnia-Herzegovina that could have provided me with the video documentation. At the same time, the artists were not a credible source, as they, too, do not possess video documentation.

¹⁷⁹ Carrie Noland and Sally Ann Ness, ed., *Migrations of Gesture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 10–11.

¹⁸⁰ *Illustrated Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), s.v. "gesture."

addressed in this thesis, where the body of the artist produces an action in public space and thus evokes a response or conveys intention.

The word “gesture” is derived from the Latin verb *gerere*, which means to carry, act, or do.¹⁸¹ It is important to stress that its etymological meaning corresponds with the notion of performative acts, as the word “gesture” in its ontology bears the notion of the action. To additionally complicate and thus strengthen the relationship between the two terms—performativity and gesture—this chapter refers to two texts. The first one is Judith Butler’s “When Gesture Becomes Event” (2014/2017), in which she interprets Walter Benjamin’s understanding of the use of gestures in Brechtian Theater.¹⁸² The second is Luce Irigaray’s writing on “Gesture in Psychoanalysis” (1989), in which she examines gestures in psychoanalytical practices (the encounter between the analyses and the analyst) and gestures that informed some of Sigmund Freud’s crucial thinking.¹⁸³

In her text, Butler conceptualizes the relationship between social embodiment and speech act.¹⁸⁴ She asks if the performative aspects of language can be wholly separated from the speech act. In this regard, she suggests that the gesture is an ethically consequential decomposition of the speech act characteristic of epic theater and that it shares certain features with the performativity of gender.¹⁸⁵ Butler further expands Austin’s notion of performativity in the linguistic sphere and thus poses the question: “How do bodily acts reenter the scene of the [linguistic] performative?” She suggests that “gesture, as a citational act, traverses the

¹⁸¹ Noland and Ness, ed., *Migrations of Gesture*, 10–11.

¹⁸² Prior to the appearance of Judith Butler’s text in the publication *Inter Views in Performance Philosophy: Crossings and Conversations* (2017), she gave a speech bearing the same name as her text “When Gesture Becomes Event.” The speech was part of the international conference entitled “Theater, Performance, Philosophy: Crossings and Transfers in Contemporary Anglo-American Thought” that took place at the University of Paris-Sorbonne from June 26 to June 28, 2014. See Judith Butler, “When Gesture Becomes Event,” filmed June 2014 at the International conference “Theater, Performance, Philosophy: Crossings and Transfers in Contemporary Anglo-American Thought,” University of Paris-Sorbonne, video, 59:06, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuAMRxSH—>. As the editors of the abovementioned publication, Anna Street et al. note in the introduction, “[m]any of the enclosed contributions developed from a bilingual international conference held at the University of Paris-Sorbonne on June 26–28, 2014, entitled “Theater, Performance, Philosophy: Crossings and Transfers in Contemporary Anglo-American Thought,” co-organized by Julien Alliot, Flore Garcin-Marrou, Liza Kharoubi, and Anna Street, with the constant support of Elisabeth Angel-Perez. During these three days, several hundred scholars from all over the world gathered to explore the increasingly porous intersections between academic disciplines and performance practices by way of presentations, performances, and workshops on topics ranging from ethics, gender studies, and economics to the digital revolution and social activism.” See Anna Street, Magnolia Pauker, and Julien Alliot, “Introduction: Genealogies of Performance Philosophy,” in *Inter Views in Performance Philosophy: Crossings and Conversations*, ed. Anna Street, Julien Alliot, and Magnolia Pauker (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 5.

¹⁸³ Hillary Robinson, *Reading Art, Reading Irigaray: The Politics of Art by Women* (New York: I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd., 2006), 125.

¹⁸⁴ Judith Butler, “When Gesture Becomes Event,” 171.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 171–72.

domain of language and performance, and that this dual sense of the performative proves important not only for understanding the dynamic of gender performativity but for understanding how gesture, conceived as both citation and event, might also be understood as a critical practice that seeks to bring to a halt forms of violence accepted as quotidian.”

The significance of Butler’s text lies in her understanding of gesture as a critical practice, thus making gesture independent of language and enabling it to be performative in and of itself. The artworks examined in this thesis cite (repeat) certain gestures and thus create events in public space that indirectly comment on the forms of violence accepted as quotidian. In the immediate postwar context in B-H, these forms of violence, or, better said, forms of certain irregularities the artists feel the need to address, can be recognized in the issues of ethnonational and personal identity politics or specific dissatisfactions in connection to society. Instead of speaking about them or addressing them verbally, the artists chose the language of the performative gesture to indirectly respond to some of these issues.

At the same time, Butler explains that the embodiment presupposed by gender and performance relies “on the ways that institutional structures and broader social worlds make their impression upon the body.”¹⁸⁶ She adds that we cannot talk about a body without knowing what supports that body and, in her words, “what its relation to that support—or lack of support might be. In this way, the body is less an entity than a relation, and it cannot be fully dissociated from the infrastructural and environmental conditions of its living.”¹⁸⁷ Thus, I insist on the context specificity of performative gestures. They cannot be fully comprehended if we do not know what supports or does not support that gesture. Performative gestures are constructed by means of an embodied action or constellation of objects in public space, i.e., artists’ acting upon the space. Therefore, performative gestures, too, cannot be fully dissociated from the context they have been constructed in.

Furthermore, in her text “Gesture in Psychoanalysis,” Luce Irigaray elaborates on Sigmund Freud’s interpretations of a child’s dealing with the loss of a mother or the situation when the mother temporarily leaves the child out of her presence. This text proves to be helpful for the close reading of the artworks by Danica Dakić and Gordana Anđelić-Galić. Irigaray explains the performativity of gestures, specifically in the behaviors of girls once they are confronted with the loss of their mother. In Freud’s analysis, a child (Freud’s nephew named Ernst) repetitively throws a toy on the floor when his mother leaves.¹⁸⁸ Irigaray elaborates how

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 179.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Irigaray, “Gesture in Psychoanalysis,” 134.

this described child can always and only be a male because girls (women) act differently when they have to cope with the loss of a mother.¹⁸⁹ She claims that girls in these situations are performative; they either spin, dance, or repeat certain actions in order to outline the space around them.¹⁹⁰ Irigaray's thinking is applicable to the analysis of the performative gestures by Danica Dakić and Gordana Anđelić-Galić, artists who were born in Yugoslavia and whose identities went through a process of abrupt transition from the familiar Yugoslav to a new sense of identity. In line with Irigaray's thinking, Yugoslavia represents a notion of a motherland. Concurrently, performative gestures that both artists use to define the space around themselves become mechanisms of coping with the loss of the motherland.

Reintegration of the performative and gesture side by side brings forward several conclusions. A performative gesture thus intervenes upon a space, i.e., it interferes with the site where it is being performed by the artist. Yet, the context does not affect the performativity of these gestures, or, as Butler points out, the context is not necessary for an act to be effective. These visible acts can be constellations of objects in space, or durational or fleeting artistic actions that occupy and physically transform the space. In both cases, the artists articulate a nonverbal expression.¹⁹¹

Additionally, the selected performative gestures correspond with Irit Rogoff's questions of location and performativity, or in her words:

If location is by definition the site of performativity and criticality rather than a set of naturalized relations between subjects and places, how then within this shift can we address issues of a necessary and critical cultural location; of the place from which we speak, in which we ground our positionality, from which we understand meaning and in which we might be able to foresee and effect?¹⁹²

The issues Rogoff discusses can be addressed with the examination of performative gestures in connection to the specific geographical context. However, issues relating to a certain geography can be made visible but do not have to be necessarily resolved by the artistic mechanisms of performative gestures. Performative gestures bring about the possibility and

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 137.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 134.

¹⁹¹ For example, in the artwork *Sewing* (2000) by Gordana Anđelić-Galić, the artist ties together the shores of the River Neretva in Mostar and thus metaphorically sews the river. With the gesture of sewing, Anđelić-Galić intends to mend the postwar wounds of Mostar, a city characterized by the division between the Bosniak (Muslim) and Croat (Catholic) population. In order to understand the meaning of the action of sewing, the spectator needs to be familiar with the particular problematic of the city of Mostar.

¹⁹² Irit Rogoff, "Geo-Cultures: Circuits of Arts and Globalizations," *Open* no. 16 (2009): 105–16.

potentiality of disrupting, critiquing, or just indicating the issues within established structures of power. Moreover, as I interpret in the close readings of the artworks, performative gestures can be understood as artistic strategies within the mediums of performance, action, or installation art.

4. Water

The central focus of the current chapter is two performances that the artist Gordana Anđelić-Galić and the artist duo Almir Kurt and Samir Plasto (known as Kurt&Plasto) performed on two bodies of water. The chapter begins with the examination of water as a topos in the context of Bosnian-Herzegovinian performance art history and continues with the exploration of the geopolitical role of rivers in the framework of Bosnian-Herzegovinian, post-Yugoslav, and postwar geography.

The chapter is divided into two subchapters titled *Rope* and *Boards*, in which I introduce and analyze the performances *Sewing* (2000) by Anđelić-Galić and *500 Meters is Half a Kilometer* (1998) by Kurt&Plasto. Both artworks were carried out on the river—*Sewing* between the riverbanks of the River Neretva in Mostar and *500 Meters is Half a Kilometer* on the Miljacka in Sarajevo. In the former, Anđelić-Galić performed the sewing of the riverbanks, and in the latter, Kurt&Plasto laid boards on the river surface, imitating the process of paving roads. To analyze the relationship between a certain performing site and the construction of performative gestures, I combine writings by Irit Rogoff and Luce Irigaray and pose the following questions: How does water as a performing site appear in these artworks, and how does it affect the understanding of the performative gestures constructed by Anđelić-Galić and Kurt&Plasto? What does the water represent, and what does it mean to perform on the river in Sarajevo in 1998 and Mostar in 2000? Likewise, what does it mean to address these artworks and write about them from today's perspective?

In the context of Bosnian-Herzegovinian contemporary art, the notion of water has two roles. The first one illustrates the body of water as a performing site. The second one highlights the geopolitical context and the bordering lives of rivers. In the north of the country, the River Sava forms a natural border between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia. In the east, the Drina divides Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia, while within the country, the River Neretva, running through the city of Mostar, represents a line of division between its east (Bosniak) and west

(Croat) bank.¹⁹³ There is something almost paradoxical in thinking of rivers as borders—the role they are assigned by power-holding humans. On the one hand, borders are fixed physical and political positions. As such, they are in contrast to the perpetual flux of rivers. On the other, rivers as flowing bodies of water can be understood as metaphorical representations of borders and their uncertainties and discontinuities.¹⁹⁴

Water as a topos in the context of Bosnian-Herzegovinian art history appears in the 1980s in performances by Zvono. The group had several performances in the natural environment—in and under the water—in the capital city of Sarajevo and in the peripheral parts of Bosnia. The rivers Miljacka, Ukrina, and Neretva were their chosen performing sites in *The Family at the Weekend* (1983), *Contact* (1985), and *Breakfast Under the Water* (1987).¹⁹⁵ In the performance, *The Family at the Weekend*, two Zvono members, Aleksandar Saša Bukvić and Narcis Kantardžić, alongside Bukvić's son and Kantardžić's girlfriend, who all together came to the River Ukrina to spend a few days in nature, wrapped themselves in thick layers of toilet paper.^{196,197} Bukvić describes this performance as a spontaneous action.

¹⁹³ One of the consequences of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina is the estrangement between people of different national and cultural origins. This situation was very palpable in Mostar in 2000, when Anđelić-Galić performed the sewing action, but also today, twenty-five years after the war ended. As Giulia Carabelli writes, in the postwar period of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Mostar has become known as a divided city between its two largest ethnonationalist communities, the Bosnian (Muslim) and the Croat (Catholic). These communities have resettled in two separate parts of Mostar—the east and the west sides. However, as Carabelli explains, the ethnic groups have always existed in prewar and postwar Mostar, and one should not romanticize the idea of a prewar Mostar as the city of peace and tolerance in stark contrast to the postwar city of hatred and division. Here, I would like to paraphrase Carabelli and state that I do not feel comfortable in classifying people in Mostar as Muslim, Croat, and Serb (or mixed) because I, too, share the opinion that these ethnographic national categories have limits and “power to flatten complex dynamics into stereotypical representations of which group lives where, or wants what. These ethnic categories are both important and misleading.” See Giulia Carabelli, *The Divided City and the Grassroots: The (Un)making of Ethnic Divisions in Mostar* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007%2F978-981-10-7778-4>.

¹⁹⁴ In the context of rivers in B-H, it is quite interesting that they have their own section in the DPA that explicitly gives instructions on what has to be done if something happens on one of the rivers that simultaneously runs through the Federation of B-H and Republika Srpska. As it is stated in Article III (Rivers) of the DPA: “Where the Inter-Entity Boundary Line follows a river, the line shall follow natural changes (accretion or erosion) in the course of the river unless otherwise agreed. Artificial changes in the course of the river shall not affect the location of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line unless otherwise agreed. No artificial changes may be made except by agreement among the Parties. [In addition to that], in the event of sudden natural changes in the course of the river (avulsion or cutting of new bed), the line shall be determined by mutual agreement of the Parties.” This section of the DPA shows how even rivers and natural occurrences on the rivers are not excluded from the absurd strategies of operating in B-H that depend on the coming together and agreement of the two Parties, i.e., political representatives from the Federation of B-H and Republika Srpska. See “The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), accessed February 19, 2020, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/e/0/126173.pdf>.

¹⁹⁵ I confirmed the date for the series of performances *The Family at the Weekend* from one of Zvono's members, Aleksandar Saša Bukvić, as I was not able to find it in the written sources that mention Zvono's art practice. Aleksandar Saša Bukvić, Facebook Messenger call to author, July 22, 2020.

¹⁹⁶ Aleksandar Saša Bukvić does not remember the name of Kantardžić's partner.

¹⁹⁷ Aleksandar Saša Bukvić, Facebook Messenger call to author, July 22, 2020.

Its span marked the duration of wrapping in and wrapping out of the toilet paper.¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, Bukvić also explains how they came from an urban surrounding (city) to a wild, natural landscape around the River Ukrina, where they slept in tents to try out the possibility of living in pure and untouched nature.¹⁹⁹ However, this change in lifestyle, i.e., their experience of nature, came as a shock to them and prompted them to create this performance.²⁰⁰ As Bukvić reveals, they arrived at the River Ukrina “wrapped in civilization.”²⁰¹ By living in tents around the river (in and with nature), they aimed to free themselves from the grip of urban life.²⁰² They wanted to adapt to life in nature as much as possible.²⁰³ In my understanding of this spontaneous performance, the toilet paper symbolized civilization and refinement. By wrapping their bodies in toilet paper, as Branka Vujanović writes, Bukvić and Kantardžić (with the help of Bukvić’s son and Kantardžić’s partner) sought to show the estrangement of an urban woman and man in nature, their failure to adapt and conform to it.²⁰⁴ Moreover, the tearing of the toilet paper, i.e., the gesture of unwrapping, suggested a moment of liberation from civilization and urban life.²⁰⁵

In other works around the Ukrina, they situated their bodies in appropriate compositional relation to water, rocks, and vegetation, which suggests certain mental, even meditative connections toward nature.²⁰⁶ In the performance *Contact* (1985), they constructed a line out of colored stones, which they placed one after another on the riverbed. A line of stones led to a lying male nude. The laying of the stones continued in the same motion and tempo, except that the stones were being aligned onto the axis of the body, beginning at the feet and ending on the neck. After the body was marked with a stone line, the line continued tracing the riverbed. This body lay on a higher point of the riverbed, emerging out of the water. It seemed that the river was very low at that part, and the bulging portion of the land was in the middle of the stream, creating an island-like structure. The laying body was in a perpendicular position to the flowing water and represented a connecting point of the divided streams. In the video of the performance, after the male nude has been outlined, a female body appears. Only

¹⁹⁸ Aleksandar Saša Bukvić, Facebook Messenger call to author, July 22, 2020.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Branka Vujanović, “Zvono: Poziv na ozbiljnu igru [A call to serious play]” (Bihać: City Gallery Bihać, 2010), 3–5.

Aleksandar Saša Bukvić, Facebook Messenger call to author, July 22, 2020.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

the upper part of the female body is shown, and the artist is dressed in a bathing suit. The hands, probably of one of the other members of the group (maybe the same ones that were laying stones on the male body), are now taking strands of her hair, one by one, in a meditative, repetitive rhythm, in order to form a crest-like shape around her head and to mark the ends of the hair strands with the colored stones. In *Contact*, as the title suggests, the notion of connection gets its corporeal shape in the bodies of the artists. The reposing bodies, marked with colored rocks, are connecting points between two streams—between the body and water, i.e., the body and nature.²⁰⁷ And thus, in this poetic performance, the artists' bodies become parts of the river's anatomy.

It is intriguing to think about this dialectic between the river and the human body because the latter can also be understood as a body of water as it consists mostly of the element of water. From this point of view, water coalesces with water, just in two different forms. One is in the form of the flowing river, of constant movement, and the other one in the form of the human body. However, this coalescence is, at the same time, a collision and an interruption. The artists' bodies interrupt the natural state of the river with their performance, and the viewer becomes the witness of two parallel flows—the flow of the river and the flow of the artistic performance and its specific choreography (movements of the artists' bodies and placement of the colored stones). In this sense, the river becomes determined by the artists as a performance site, and thus its role shifts from a natural to a theatrical one. At the same time, their play with (and embeddedness within) the river anatomy raises questions about notions of gender that are at play here. A nude male, a semi-nude female body, and the quasi-neutral river. The river is a site with its own logic, yet, it can correspond to human classifications via the notion of language. In the grammatical norm of the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian language, the river is gendered female—*she* or *rijeka*—which also corresponds to the name of the River Ukrina, as the *a* ending determines the female gender of the words. In the context of this gendered river, the male performer is shown in his bare unclothed state, while the female performer appears semi-nude with a bathing suit covering her breasts and vagina. In my interpretation, the female body is censored, as if the female body cannot be entirely free even in nature and, concurrently, cannot be recorded nude by the filming camera, i.e., female nudity has to be censored in order to be part of the performance and its documentation as such.

²⁰⁷ See figures 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 in appendix 1.

In *Breakfast Under the Water* (1985), performed under the surface of the River Neretva, near the small medieval village of Počitelj, a poetic atmosphere is still palpable, but with a touch of Monty Python humor.²⁰⁸ Two artists in swimming briefs jump into the river, diving one after another, and arrange crockery on the riverbed. After setting up the breakfast scenery, they commence eating, or, better said, they pretend to serve themselves and to eat. While one of them moves his hand in such a way that the movement simulates fish and places the “fish” on the plate, the other one pretends to eat that fish and uses his hands as pretend fork and knife.²⁰⁹ *Breakfast Under the Water* has obvious connotations of the impressionist painting *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* [The Luncheon on the Grass] by Édouard Manet (1863). In the painting, Manet depicts a central figural composition of two clothed men sitting next to a nude woman. In the background, another female figure, wearing a white dress, is visible. The frontal three figures are sitting on the grass with scattered leftovers from the luncheon positioned next to them.²¹⁰ In Zvono’s version, the artists stage the pretend luncheon under the water and position a female bust next to them.²¹¹ The video of the performance ends with the scene showing the abandoned breakfast scenery, the thrown down bust and crockery left on the bottom of the river.²¹²

²⁰⁸ Počitelj is a medieval historic village located in the south of Bosnia-Herzegovina, built on a rocky cliff sloping steeply down to the left bank of the River Neretva, close to Mostar and Međugorje. During the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Počitelj was severely damaged. It was reconstructed and revitalized after the war. The Bosnian/Herzegovinian Commission to Preserve National Monuments describes Počitelj as a historic urban site and designates it as a National Monument of B&H. See “Počitelj, the historic urban site,” Bosnia and Herzegovina Commission to Preserve National Monuments, accessed July 27, 2021, http://old.kons.gov.ba/main.php?id_struct=50&lang=4&action=view&id=780.

Furthermore, Počitelj is not only significant for its historic and touristic value but also because it is the home of the Počitelj International Art Colony, founded in 1964 by the Association of Fine Artists of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Udruženje Likovnih Umjetnika (ULUBiH)). The property in Počitelj belonging to the colony was also devastated in 1993 during the war. According to Denis Jeina, the manager of ULUBiH, it was restored in 2001 and 2002 when the colony started to work again after the rupture caused by the war. Denis Jeina, Facebook Messenger call to the author, November 2019.

²⁰⁹ Shobaseric, “Grupa Zvono – Doručak pod vodom – Pocitelj – 1987” [Group Zvono – Breakfast under the water – Počitelj / 1987], filmed 1987, video, 2:02, posted July 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N9Xz6TVtCY&t=2s>.

²¹⁰ Close analysis of Manet’s painting *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863) is not provided in this thesis, nor do I provide a more insightful parable between the painting and Zvono’s performance than the one briefly outlined in the text.

²¹¹ See figures 11, 12, 13 in appendix 1.

²¹² The video documentation of both described performances, *Contact* and *Breakfast Under the Water*, can be currently found online, uploaded by the artist Nebojša Šerić Šoba to his YouTube channel: shobaseric. In the context of the video documentation of these performances, it is important to mention that Zvono had a very specific engagement with the video documentation and its production. They edited the filmed material in the manner that the video documentation could be regarded as a separate video artwork, i.e., they cut and edited the videos and added specific music, opening, and closing sequences. Moreover, they had a specific filming manner that can be recognized in the zooming in and zooming out camera motion, i.e., accentuation of specific parts of the performance. The production and postproduction use of these videos in their exhibitions is very significant and thus deserves closer research. However, the latter is not provided in this thesis, as its examination would not fit within its scope.

In conclusion, these performances show that water as a topos in B-H performance art history already appears in the 1980s. Nevertheless, in Zvono's context, water had a different connotation than in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when Gordana Anđelić-Galić performed "sewing" and Kurt&Plasto "paving" of the river—two performances I examine in the following subchapters.

4.1. Rope

Rope investigates Gordana Anđelić-Galić's performance *Sewing* (2000), which took place in the city of Mostar between the riverbanks of the River Neretva. This subchapter begins with an explanation of the logic behind the use of rope as a metonymic topos and continues with a short presentation of the artist and her artistic practice, contextualization, and, finally, a close reading of the artwork.

In *Sewing*, the artist Gordana Anđelić-Galić used rope with the aim to metaphorically sew the riverbanks. In this context, the rope becomes a metaphor for connection, nearness, and care. However, the connotations surrounding the notion of a rope go beyond those of closeness. The rope also represents a certain burden and heaviness, which is, for example, very literally expressed in the performance and installation *Welcome* (2005) by another Bosnian-Herzegovinian artist, Mladen Miljanović, in which he used rope to construct a noose and outline the contours of the territory, i.e. the map of Bosnia-Herzegovina on the wall of a gallery.²¹³ The map represented the noose under which the artist placed himself standing on a chair.²¹⁴ In this constellation, the rope very literally reads as a suicidal suffocation by the borders and postwar geopolitical situation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is the notion of the rope as a burden that comes to the fore not only in Miljanović's artwork but also, even though in a more subtle way, in the one by Anđelić-Galić. As much as the gesture of sewing resonates with the idea of caring for someone (or something), it also represents a feeling of burden felt in a

²¹³ See fig. 15 in appendix 1.

²¹⁴ Mladen Miljanović (b. 1981) is a Bosnian-Herzegovinian artist born in Zenica. *Welcome* (2006) was performed and installed in the exhibition *Real Presence* in Belgrade (Serbia) in 2006. The exhibition was organized by the ICA (Independent Cultural Association) from Belgrade and curated by Biljana Tomić and Dobrila Denegri. See "Irfan Hošić: Mladen Miljanović—The Artist and The Issue of Context," Mladen Miljanović, accessed July 28, 2021, <http://www.mladenmiljanovic.info/mladen%20miljanovic%20on%20artist%20IRFAN%20HOSIC.htm>; "Real Presence," International Platform for Young Artists and Art Students, accessed July 28, 2021, <http://www.ica-realpresence.org/participants.html>.

society that finds itself in limbo between stitching up, fixing, reconstructing, reconciling but also just looking ahead and wishing to leave the war past behind.

Gordana Anđelić-Galić was born in Mostar in 1949. She completed a degree in history at the Department of History (Faculty for Philosophy in Sarajevo) in 1975 and graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo in 1988.²¹⁵ Today, the artist lives and works in Sarajevo. In her artistic practice, she uses different media, such as installation, video, photography, performance, and intervention in public space.²¹⁶ Anđelić-Galić, alongside Danica Dakić, belongs to the older generation of Bosnian-Herzegovinian contemporary artists who in their artworks engage, among other things, with topics of post-conflict trauma through collective memory and shared experience.²¹⁷ It is common for Anđelić-Galić to examine aspects of the Yugoslav past in her artworks but also respond to the problems of globalization and transition, paying special attention to the creation of new stereotypes and individual and collective identities.²¹⁸ In her artistic practice, she explores topics such as political disputes and miscommunication in order to point out the complexity and conflict within B-H.²¹⁹

Gordana Anđelić-Galić performed *Sewing* on the water, i.e., between the shores of the River Neretva in Mostar in 2000.²²⁰ This artwork was part of the *Unique Sign – Unique Location* artistic program, described as an international visual arts workshop, and its photographic documentation can be found in the publication accompanying the project.²²¹ *Unique Sign – Unique Location* lasted for two weeks, between August 1 and 15, 2000, a time

²¹⁵ “Gordana Anđelić Galić,” Oktobarski Salon, accessed May 15, 2019, <http://www.oktobarskosalon.org/en/kolekcija-umetnik/gordana-andelic-galic/>.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ From an interview with art historian Dunja Blažević. The interview accompanied the exhibition *Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe* (mumok – Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, November 13, 2013–February 14, 2014, initiated and supported by the Erste Foundation), where Gordana Anđelić-Galić’s *Mantra* (2006, flag installation, video 5’12”) was exhibited. See “Interview with Dunja Blažević on her Research in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe*, Erste Stiftung, accessed July 31, 2019, <http://gender-check.erstestiftung.net/bosnia-and-herzegovina-dunja-blazevic/>.

²¹⁸ “Gordana Anđelić Galić,” Oktobarski Salon, accessed May 15, 2019, <http://www.oktobarskosalon.org/en/kolekcija-umetnik/gordana-andelic-galic/>.

²¹⁹ Irfan Hošić, *Art and Terrorism: Bosnian Herzegovinian Artwork Post 9/11* (Bihać: City Gallery Bihać, 2009), 34.

²²⁰ The performance was part of the project *Unique Sign – Unique Location*, organized and funded by the Cultural City Network Graz in August of 2000. The aim behind the project was to create “a sign on the spot where the Old bridge linked the rocky banks on the Neretva.” The project was made around the idea of emphasizing the two lines—the course of the river and the path over the destroyed bridge—by using two different artistic actions: installing artworks on the river and positioning banners with quotations from international authors along the paths leading to the Old Bridge, both from the east and the west side. These passages in Bosnian, English, and German were intended to guide people toward the historical interface, and the artistic interventions were to be created by artists directly on-site in Mostar within the framework of an international workshop. See Max Aufischer, *Unique Sign, Unique Location* (Mostar: Cultural City Network from Graz and Vienna, 2001), 22.

²²¹ Photographic documentation of this artwork used to be present on the artist’s home page too. However, this web page is currently not accessible (<http://gordanaandjelicgalic.com>).

period that included the preparation and execution of various artistic installations that were a part of the program. The presentation of the finished projects occurred on August 13 alongside the annual bridge jumping manifestation (traditional male jumping in the River Neretva from the height of the Old Bridge in Mostar).²²² Since then, *Sewing* has not been reperformed. Nevertheless, Gordana Anđelić-Galić has expressed the wish to reenact the performance in other places that need to be healed.²²³

Sewing took place in close proximity to the site where the Old Bridge (also known as the Mostar Bridge) used to stand. This bridge is one of the most significant historical attractions in Mostar and in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It was built by the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the sixteenth century and destroyed in 1993 during the war. The devastated bridge was rebuilt between 2001 and 2004, meaning that during the time frame of Anđelić-Galić's performance, it was still in a ruined state. The rehabilitation of the Old Bridge is known to be one of the major examples of international reconstruction, notes Maria-Adriana Deiana, who adds that the rebuilt bridge represents a great contrast to many other areas in Mostar, where the reconstruction of buildings and public places has been rather slow and considerably contested.²²⁴ At the same time, Mostar is prominently known for its pseudonym "the divided city." As illustrated by Giulia Carabelli:

Since the end of the wars following the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), Mostar has become known as a divided city. After the wars, the two largest ethno-national communities, the Croat-Catholic and the Bosniak-Muslim, have resettled in two separate parts (the east and west sides) divided by a four-lane street, the Bulevar.²²⁵

Besides the Bulevar [Boulevard], the River Neretva also represents the spatial line of division between the segregated sides.²²⁶ Further to this, Azra Hromadžić, who remembers

²²² Aufischer, *Unique Sign, Unique Location*, 22.

²²³ Gordana Anđelić-Galić, Facebook message to author, February 23, 2019. It is also interesting to mention that the artist posted the image of this artwork on her Facebook profile (her Facebook username is Gordana Andjelic-Galic) on January 4, 2020, with an image description: "I am saddened by the fact that my artworks are, twenty, thirty years after they have been created, thematically still relevant." [Original sentence: Rastužuje me činjenica da su moji radovi i 20-30 godina nakon što su nastali, tematski još uvijek aktuelni. Written in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and translated by the thesis's author.] Facebook, January 4, 2020. This shows how the artist still finds the artwork pertinent to the current geopolitical situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is characterized by the rule of nationalist political parties.

²²⁴ Maria-Adriana Deiana, *Gender and Citizenship: Promises of Peace in Post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 185.

²²⁵ Giulia Carabelli, *The Divided City and the Grassroots: The (Un)making of Ethnic Divisions in Mostar* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 22.

²²⁶ *Bulevar* is the Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian word for boulevard.

attending the opening ceremony of the Old Bridge in Mostar in 2004, describes it as a big celebration with an organized entertainment program on and around the bridge.²²⁷ However, as Hromadžić writes, when she decided to take a walk along the other side, i.e., the Croatian side of the city, she came to realize there was nobody enjoying the opening party.²²⁸ In regard to this, Hromadžić drew the conclusion that the ceremony of honoring the new Old Bridge was not bringing people together but rather dividing them even more.^{229,230}

In the context of Mostar's sociopolitical situation at the time, Gordana Anđelić-Galić offered a performative gesture of sewing the River Neretva. The action of sewing was realized by the artist attaching a long rope to each side of the riverbank. According to photographic documentation, Anđelić-Galić navigated between the riverbanks with a team of four to eight helpers using a rubber motorboat as a vehicle for water transportation.²³¹ The available photographs let us assume that they had steered in a zigzag motion and, in my understanding, mimicked the movement of the hand stitching the thread and the needle through the material. The artist attached parts of the rope to the metal hooks, which were then hammered to the rocks on the River Neretva's shores.²³² The result was an approximately 600-meter-long stitch-like constellation with a significant amount of free space between the crisscrossed rope threads.²³³ The photographic documentation of the performance shows Anđelić-Galić pulling and tying the rope to the metal hooks. As the artist was dressed in a black short-sleeved t-shirt, we notice her arm muscles being strained from the efforts needed for the rope pulling and tying in one of the images.²³⁴ The photographs also reveal the difficult topography of this river landscape, characterized by its steep shores and large spiky rocks.²³⁵ Such a rough natural environment, in addition to the hot continental summertime climate specific to this geographic region, must have made the whole process of sewing both difficult and strenuous. At the same time, the labor of navigating this topographically challenging area seems to contrast the result—a poetic and airy rope constellation above the picturesque emerald river.²³⁶

²²⁷ Azra Hromadžić, *Citizens of an Empty Nation: Youth and State-Making in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 20.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Hromadžić's main subject in the book is the Mostar Gymnasium, which is one of the fifty-four examples of two schools under one roof in Bosnia-Herzegovina. See Hromadžić, *Citizens of an Empty Nation*, 2015.

²³¹ Aufischer, *Unique Sign, Unique Location*, 2001.

²³² This understanding comes from the performance documentation. See fig. 19 in appendix 1.

²³³ Aufischer, *Unique Sign, Unique Location*, 2001.

²³⁴ See fig. 19 in appendix 1.

²³⁵ See fig. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 in appendix 1.

²³⁶ Ibid.

Gordana Anđelić-Galić describes this artwork in an idealistic, sensitive, and almost utopian statement, as follows:

I had no intentions to tie the banks as this for me is directly linked to compulsion. It would mean that I force people to live together independent of their will. But as this state of affairs is a result of calculating and arrogant policy with aim to divide and rule, which in fact was the final score, I decided to sew. Like a conscientious and devoted housewife, I decided to take the “torn sweater” and make maybe not a new one out of it, but one, which would be with proper care and a lot of love wearable for a long time. As a surgeon, I wanted to sew that wound on the body of my city and to help it heal without leaving great scars. Given that there are many such wounds and torn places on this mother-earth of ours my concept is to go from one to another and sew.²³⁷

In the first sentence of her statement, Anđelić-Galić acknowledges the existence of the conflict in Mostar and the fact that it has to be resolved by mending broken social relationships and not by forcefully imposing a reconciled form of living together. In this regard, Ugo Vlaisavljević also states that the conflict in B-H cannot be reconciled as there are no actual sides to be conciliated.²³⁸ What Vlaisavljević hints to is that the peoples of B-H, whether Bosniak, Croat, or Serb, all have historical ideas of belonging right there where they are.²³⁹ These ideas, according to him, stem from a long lineage of ancestors who had been living and working on the same territory for years.²⁴⁰ For to be reconciled in this sense would mean that one of these sides or all of them have to acknowledge that the geographical context they live in is not just their territory. As each of the peoples have the same strong sense of belonging to the geography they were born in, the mentioned acknowledgment is not possible, thus making the aim for reconciliation rather absurd. Moreover, the impossibility and the absurdity of the reconciliation idea lies in the problematics of the DPA upon which B-H politics still operate today and in the mere fact that B-H has a three-member presidency and a constitution that supports the fragmentation of the country according to the ethno-national belonging. Thus, we could say that in the context of Mostar and B-H in general, in the postwar period, reconciliation appears to be an absurd solution that should transform into something else. Having Anđelić-

²³⁷ Aufischer, *Unique Sign, Unique Location*, 36. [The artist's statement in English as published in the publication had several language mistakes that were proofread and corrected by this thesis's proofreader.]

²³⁸ Ugo Vlaisavljević, *Rat kao najveći kulturni događaj: Ka semiotici etnonacionalizma* [War as the Greatest Cultural Event: Towards the semiotics of ethnonationalism] (Sarajevo: Maunagić d.o.o. – Mauna-fe, 2007).

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

Galić's act of sewing as an example, this something else could be mending, treating, soothing, and healing.

For something to be sewn together, it needs to be torn apart first. For the wound to be healed, that wound has to be treated first. In *Sewing*, Gordana Anđelić-Galić personifies two roles: a housewife that sews up the holes in a torn sweater and a surgeon that stitches up the wounded body. In a certain sense, the artist equally evokes and performs two gender roles—the female, maternal one of a caring and devoted housewife; and the male, paternal one embodied in the image of a surgeon. It is precisely the gesture of sewing that embodies the key characteristics of both roles. As a housewife, the artist acts as a caring mother and treats the river as an object (a torn sweater belonging to her child or another family member) in need of repair. At the same time, Mostar's river, more a psychological than an actual physical border, is also her child, or any other family member, or a neighbor that needs to be healed and comforted by a mother's touch. In this act of sewing, Anđelić-Galić enacts a simple, nearly essentialized act of caring when pure deeds show love and compassion. She does not perform kissing or hugging. She sews instead, thus proactively manifesting her care. In the surgical role, the river represents a wounded body that is being stitched and hopefully healed. However, in surgeon's hands and on an operation table, the river as a wounded body becomes a distant and depersonalized clinical object. However, even though treated differently, these bodies (and objects) still obtain the needed care and repair.

Moreover, while embodying this palimpsest of roles in *Sewing*, Anđelić-Galić is disrupting them at the same time. These roles do not exclude each other but rather exist simultaneously, and they all responsibly treat their matter of concern with care. A seamstress is a housewife as much as a surgeon is a housewife and the other way around. At the same time, they are both family members, mothers, daughters, sisters, cousins, neighbors, and parts of the society and community. Therefore, in *Sewing*, Anđelić-Galić posits the habitually discredited role of a housewife on the same status as a socially acceptable and desirable surgeon and vice versa. Concurrently, while exposing the action of sewing in an open, visible place, shifting it from private (domestic) to public space, Anđelić-Galić performs a so-called subversive stitch.²⁴¹ What is supposed to be done in a private space by women is now in an exaggerated form—a rope instead on a 600-meter-long surface—exposed to the public. This performance hence reads as a suggestion that all levels of society—housewives, artists,

²⁴¹ Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: The Women's Press Ltd., 1984).

surgeons, seamstresses, and everyone else—should be in charge of caring for society. In the context of the government such as the Bosnian-Herzegovinian one, the act of actually caring for society (and its mending, healing, and improvement) is, indeed, in the hands of the people and less so in the hands of the government. The current political situation in B-H led by the inert government signifies an act of home breaking. Ignorant governmental policies break the homeland of their people through the powers of elitism and corruption. This notion of a home breaker elicits one of a homemaker. The latter, however, stands opposed to the role of a housewife. The homemaker evokes the actions of an empowered (even desired) building of her home, while the housewife has connotations of someone perhaps trapped or relegated to her house. Thus, with this additional layer of roles that do not reside on the same stature, the tension between the passive and active roles—homemaker and housewife, caring citizen and ignorant government—comes into play. I compare this tension to the population's sentiment toward their homeland (and motherland). In my reading, the population is nearly torn by the tension intensified between the need for action (building and mending) and the impossibility to act, create, improve, and change.

Additionally, the artist's biographical trajectory plays a meaningful role in understanding this artwork. For the artist born in Mostar, the action of sewing can be understood as a quite intimate act of personal concern. And as such, it also transpires as political. In this regard, if we take into consideration that Yugoslavia was the artist's motherland, the origin of her primary identity, then an abrupt transition from Yugoslavia to independent Bosnia-Herzegovina can be interpreted as the loss of the motherland. Generations who knew Yugoslavia, i.e., were born and raised Yugoslavs, were abruptly forced to adapt and transform their identities. To cope with such an unexpected event and with the loss of a motherland, Anđelić-Galić turns to acting upon a familiar and meaningful space, the River Neretva. On this subject, Luce Irigaray explains how girls (women) cope with the loss of their mothers through their engagement with the space and reiteration of performative gestures in the space. Or, in her words:

Girls enter language without taking in anything (except empty space). They do not speak around an introjected object, male or female, but rather *with* (sometimes in) a silence and with, in any case, the (m)other. They can find no replacement for her—unless it be nature as a whole, or appeal to the divine, or doing-the-same-as-her.²⁴²

²⁴² Irigaray, "Gesture in Psychoanalysis," 134.

In *Sewing*, Anđelić-Galić thus compensates and elaborates on the loss of a mother through the repetitive gesture of stitching. The absence of the motherland makes the artist delineate and define the space around her with rope. The artist is *doing the same as her* (nature) by embodying the maternal role of a caring homemaker. Based on a maternal instinct for nourishing and helping, Anđelić-Galić constructs a metaphorical space where conflicts create wounds that can be healed. The river (Neretva), an exhausted geographic signifier of division, hostility, and dissent, becomes reimagined through the almost naive gesture of sewing. Through this caring gesture, the river turns into a mended space prepared for the healing process. The gesture of sewing—healing, nurturing, fixing—thus acknowledges the exhaustion of Mostar’s people and transforms the river (a contested space) “back to some formless state of connectedness that does not adhere to the planners; and architects’ vision of what is utilitarian or prudent or acceptable, but is instead grounded in forms of relatedness to what once was and what might once still be again.”²⁴³ Nevertheless, Neretva as that which once was and might be again is still a distant, and maybe never achievable, idea. In the postwar reality, its watery body is perceived as a border, an unnatural boundary between Mostar’s Bosniak and Croat inhabitants. A border Monika Palmberger does not perceive as a physical one but rather one constructed by economic, political, and cultural forces and manifested in everyday social practices.²⁴⁴

At the same time, the outcome of the artist’s *doing* in space, i.e., the installation of the woven rope, reminds me of the myriad of little borders intertwined together. In this sense, I interpret the rope lines as visual representations of the border—a reading that brings about an oxymoronic aspect of this artwork. While Anđelić-Galić performs the conceptual sewing of the river (and an actual bridging of the riverbanks with the rope), she simultaneously visualizes and materializes an idea of a border. Thus, Anđelić-Galić’s performative gesture evokes another dialectic in tension, that of mending and treating the vulnerability caused by a division and that which constitutes that division—borders.

Sewing and tailoring as an artistic response to the political creation of borders can be traced as a recurring motif in Bosnian-Herzegovinian contemporary art practices. A year before Anđelić-Galić’s *Sewing*, in 1999, in the Collegium Artisticum Gallery in Sarajevo, the artist

²⁴³ Irit Rogoff paraphrasing Toni Morrison. See Rogoff, “Oblique Points of Entry,” 44.

²⁴⁴ Monika Palmberger, “Practices of Border Crossing in Post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Case of Mostar,” *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 20, no. 5 (Spring 2013): 544–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2013.822799>.

Maja Bajević performed a seven-hour-long performance named *Dressed Up*.²⁴⁵ In the course of the performance, Bajević tailored a dress following the measurements of her own body. Significantly, the textile material used by Bajević had a printed image of the map of Yugoslavia.²⁴⁶ As art historian Asja Mandić describes, the artist cut fabric printed with a map of former Yugoslavia and then tailored the cut to herself, indicating metaphorically the tailoring of the borders and partition of the country.²⁴⁷ Mandić further compares the seams of the dress to scars on the newly-formed territories and new countries and argues that this performance is not just a political act but also an emotional, autobiographic process of experiencing the disintegration of one's country. Or, as articulated by Bajević:

Tragedies like war and the disintegration of a country are usually seen as political matters. But, in reality, they are personal, intimate events in our lives which we wear like a dress.²⁴⁸

As the artist remarks, these political events have a direct personal consequence, which is also recognizable in the sentiment of Anđelić-Galić's artist statement. It becomes apparent that the problematic of borders is an ongoing burden for Bosnian-Herzegovinian artists, and it is quite compelling that both female artists reacted to this issue with sewing. In their performances, the artists exercised publicly their personal relation toward the conflict and chose to show scars and accept them as a natural process of healing.

Twenty years after its performance, Anđelić-Galić's *Sewing* on the River Neretva is still relevant in the framework of today's geopoliticity of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mostar remains a divided city, and ruling political parties still put forward ethnonational traits as key components of society. At the same time, from the perception of the neoliberal capitalist ideology of fast production, consumption, and exchange instead of repair, Anđelić-Galić's gesture of sewing appears as a subtle albeit relevant response to this capitalist dynamic because it underlines the importance of fixing an object rather than immediately exchanging it with a new one.

To summarize, in *Sewing*, poetic, performative gesture transpires in the artist's act in and upon a specific public space. The physical outcome of her performance—the rope

²⁴⁵ Maja Bajević, *Dressed Up*, 1999. The seven-hour performance was documented on video (60'55") and exhibited later on as part of the exhibition *MINIMUM*, organized by SCCA in the City Gallery Collegium Artisticum in Sarajevo in 1999. The curator was Dunja Blazević.

²⁴⁶ See fig. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 in appendix 1.

²⁴⁷ Asja Mandić, "Maja Bajević," in *Ars Aevi Exhibition: Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Venice Biennale 1993–2003* (Sarajevo: Ars Aevi Museum, 2007), 159.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

constellation above the river flow—is a performative gestural event that indirectly responds to the issues pertaining to the specific geographical context of Mostar and B-H.

4.2. Boards

In *Boards*, I focus on another artwork that explores one of the issues tied to postwar politics in B-H, the performance *500 Meters is Half a Kilometer* (1998) by the artist duo Almir Kurt and Samir Plasto, popularly known as Kurt&Plasto.²⁴⁹ After introducing the notion of the boards to the analysis of this artwork, I address the artists' biographies and the characteristics of their art practice and gradually turn to the formal presentation and close reading of the artwork.

The word “board” has a twofold meaning in the context of this artwork—it refers to a flat piece of material that Kurt&Plasto use in their performance and intervention on the River Miljacka in Sarajevo, and it refers to a certain (governing) body that holds the institutional power of decision-making.²⁵⁰ In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the postwar period was marked by decision-making processes of normalization of everyday politics and authoritative navigation of the bodies by the state on the one side and non-governmental organizations on the other. In other words, many things in need of a postwar revitalization were in the hands of specific boards. That is what Kurt&Plasto try to pinpoint in *500 Meters is Half a Kilometer*. They address and express their concern about the problem of the wavering reconstruction processes in postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Both Almir Kurt and Samir Plasto were born in Sarajevo, Kurt in 1971 and Plasto in 1970. They started working as an artistic duo in 1996. According to Samir Plasto, they have not been collaborating for the last decade.²⁵¹ Today, they live and work in Sarajevo.^{252,253} Almir Kurt studied graphic design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo and works today as a graphic designer, but also as an actor, comedian, and musician.²⁵⁴ Samir Plasto started studying

²⁴⁹ Almir and Samir are their first names, and Kurt and Plasto their surnames.

²⁵⁰ The word “board” does not have the same double meaning in the Bosnian language. In Bosnian, it translates as a flat surface of a material (*daska*). It is also used in everyday language; for example, in situations when we want to describe someone who is a bit crazy, we can say, “she/he lost few boards in her/his head” (*fali joj/mu daska u glavi*). In this regard, if I were to write this thesis in the Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian language, I would still use the word “board” (*daska*) as its double meaning can allude to the crazy, or better yet, absurd political situations in postwar B-H.

²⁵¹ Samir Plasto, WhatsApp call to the author, August 10, 2019.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Samir Plasto works today in the marketing department in a representative office of an international company. Samir Plasto, WhatsApp call to the author, October 11, 2019.

²⁵⁴ Samir Plasto, WhatsApp call to the author, August 10, 2019.

product design at the Academy of Fine Arts in 1991 but had to stop very soon afterward due to the war. In their work together, Kurt&Plasto were making socially engaged poster art, interventions, and performances in public space, through which they addressed and critiqued political and social issues of Bosnia-Herzegovina.²⁵⁵ Their *modus operandi* was characteristic for the use of the strategies of irony and humor.

500 Meters is Half a Kilometer was part of an annual exhibition at the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, *Beyond the Mirror*, which took place between August 22 and September 20, 1998. The performing site was the riverbed of the River Miljacka in Sarajevo, and the duration of the performance approximately three to four hours (from nine o'clock in the morning until three or four o'clock in the afternoon).²⁵⁶ This piece has not been reperformed, and the photographic material available on the SCCA's website documents the live event. In the work, Kurt&Plasto temporarily altered the surface of the River Miljacka with a linear constellation of white rectangle boards made of lightweight Styrofoam material. During the performance, the artists, dressed in white one-piece suits, placed the white boards one after another and constructed a line in the middle of the riverbed. The boards had metal weights on the bottoms that served as an anchoring mechanism keeping them vaguely arrested in stable positions. As seen in the documentary material, photographed from above, the boards seem like floating materials in the middle of the river.²⁵⁷

Kurt&Plasto aligned the boards at an approximate distance of 500 meters between the two prominent bridges in the center of Sarajevo, known as the Čobanija and Skenderija bridges. This location is significant as it is in the center of the city, close to the Academy of Fine Arts, main Post Building, University of Law, and The National Theatre. The weather conditions specific to the Bosnian-Herzegovinian continental climate and the months of August and September, which are usually characterized by lack of rain, played an important role in the execution of the performance. Due to the latter, the water flow was low enough, and the artists were able to walk on the riverbed. The installed boards were originally supposed to stay on the river until the end of the exhibition when the artists would dismantle and take them away. However, the unexpected weather conditions interrupted the plan. About fifteen days after the performance and installation of the boards, heavy rain increased the water level. As a consequence, the water streams induced by the river current swept the boards away.²⁵⁸ In the

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Samir Plasto, WhatsApp call to the author, October 20, 2019.

²⁵⁷ See fig. 27, 28, 29 in appendix 1.

²⁵⁸ Samir Plasto, WhatsApp call to the author, October 20, 2019.

end, the artistic intervention had a direct negative impact on water pollution and the environment, as the boards were, according to Plasto, never taken out.²⁵⁹ In this environmental regard, Kurt&Plasto's *500 Meters is Half a Kilometer* is reminiscent of an earlier artwork from the 1980s, the installation *Bathing in The Miljacka*, created by the Zvono group within the framework of the youth manifestation *Poetry of The Space* in 1984. The installation consisted of bather figures made from Styrofoam material with swimming rings, air mattresses, and floating boats. Zvono's intention was to identify the issue of water pollution, i.e., the polluted River Miljacka, which had been a place where people used to fish or bathe.²⁶⁰ Interestingly, in both artworks, the body of water in the city center was chosen as the site. In Zvono's instance, it has a direct relation to the artwork itself, whereas, in Kurt&Plasto's performative installation, the centrally positioned river (around the main cultural and administrative institutions and one of Sarajevo's main roads) offers maximum visibility and spontaneous spectatorship.²⁶¹

During their performance, Kurt&Plasto wore one-piece white suits, welding glasses, and black caps and gloves, a clothing ensemble that was their specific uniform at the time. As Samir Plasto says, the late 1990s were their phase of the white uniform, i.e., the working uniforms for the execution of the performances. In contrast to the white working uniforms, they also wore official black-tie outfits (black suits with tailcoats, white shirts, and bowties) for some of their other performances. The choice of clothing was a strategy to manipulate the masses, Plasto explains. They would dress in their fancy outfits and visit events where they appeared in contrast to other informally dressed people.²⁶² This dress code would put them in the limelight at the party or event. According to Plasto, their aim was to show how appearances affect the interpretation and perception we create about people.²⁶³ In reality, they were not more significant than the other guests, but the formal and elegant attire instigated different perceptions that resulted in Kurt&Plasto being treated as important guests.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Vujanović, "Zvono: Poziv na ozbiljnu igru" [Zvono: A call to serious play], 5.

²⁶¹ These performative gestures in public space demonstrate a certain continuity of the notion of environmental awareness in prewar and postwar artistic practices in B-H.

²⁶² An example of such an artistic action is Kurt&Plasto's performance, *At the reception on the occasion of the Swiss National Day*, on July 28, 1999. This performance was organized as part of SCCA's third annual exhibition, *Under Construction*, which took place from July to September 1999 in Sarajevo. See "Under Construction/Oprez!Radovi!," Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed July 28, 2021, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/under-construction-oprez-radovi/>. In this performance, they appeared dressed up at the reception and took Polaroid pictures with other guests, pretending to be important people. They would then hang the Polaroid images on the wall in one of the rooms at the venue where the reception was held. My short description of this artwork comes from the photographic documentation and personal conversation with Samir Plasto. Samir Plasto, WhatsApp call to the author, October 20, 2019. See "Kurt & Plasto At the reception...", Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed July 28, 2021, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/under-construction-oprez-radovi/kurt-plasto-at-the-reception/>.

²⁶³ Samir Plasto, WhatsApp call to the author, October 20, 2019.

Their white working attire, used for daytime performances rather than evening events, has an uncanny resemblance to the uniform Tomislav Gotovac (1937–2010), a prominent figure of Yugoslav, post-Yugoslav, and Croatian performance art, wore in 1997 in his *Trg Maršala tita, ja te volim* [Maršal Tito Square, I love you!] performance.²⁶⁴ Gotovac's performance was part of an annual exhibition program organized by Soros Center for Contemporary Art in Zagreb. In it, Gotovac performed his love toward specific parts of Zagreb's public space by aligning his body alongside various objects, from fountains and building corners to streetlamps and benches. Gotovac's ensemble included an orange-colored one-piece working suit, white gloves and shoes, black socks, and a cap. The performing garments worn by Kurt&Plasto and Gotovac are different in terms of color and accessories yet carry the same fundamental idea—the embodiment of a figure of a worker who expresses concern and love for his city and the objects and spaces within it.

By impersonating gestures of construction workers, Kurt&Plasto constituted a space of laboring activity on the water. In the absurdity of paving the river, their intention was to provoke and critique governmental structures—boards in charge—for the lack of progress in the reconstructing and rebuilding of postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina.²⁶⁵ The provocation is evident in the playfulness and simplistic humor of the artwork's title—*500 Meters is Half a Kilometer*—which can be read as a deliberately naive stating of the obvious. At the same time, while employing such a title, Kurt&Plasto engage the language typical of a bureaucrat—a language characteristic for syntagms and sentences with vague content that does not say nor solve anything. This does not necessarily have to be a trait reserved only for a bureaucratic language but the language of anyone else who becomes a representative of this way of thinking (when one merely states the facts rather than inspires and creates the conditions of—and for—change). The connotation behind it resembles a dog chasing its tail. It is a kind of bureaucratic affirmation one cannot get out of unless the whole system changes, or, in other words, unless the system starts speaking another language, the language of motivation, listening, caring, i.e., the active agency of responding to others. Nevertheless, this statement also mirrors the lethargy that Bosnian-Herzegovinian society found itself in, not only in the immediate postwar situation but also five, ten, fifteen, twenty years after.

In this public space intervention, Kurt&Plasto exposed the perpetual problematic of Bosnian-Herzegovinian postwar geography—one of stagnation and insufficient governmental

²⁶⁴ See fig. 44, 45, 46 in appendix 1.

²⁶⁵ Danijela Dugandžić, "Politics between Art and Space: Sarajevo after 1995," *Peace and Memory Working Paper* no. 2 (July 2018): 9, <http://peaceandmemory.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Working-Paper-no-2.pdf>.

support for reconstructing public spaces. Compared to the situation in contemporary Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kurt&Plasto's provocation is still relevant, as the reconstruction of devastated objects across Bosnia-Herzegovina has yet to be completed, especially in the small communities, villages, and towns. This incompleteness of restoration processes stands in stark contrast to the ongoing development of multifunctional luxury skyscrapers and shopping centers in Sarajevo and other bigger cities in B-H. Such a situation exemplifies the unchanged status of postwar reconstruction on the one side and neoliberal capitalist development on the other. Furthermore, the image of white boards forming a broken line in the center of the water, dividing the riverbed in half, also evokes a symbolic highway (as the description on SCCA's website explains). In my interpretation, the idea of a highway is just a mirage, as is its symbolism, because this lane on the water, seen in a downstream direction from the Skenedrija to Čobanija Bridge, seems endless. Nonetheless, its endlessness is topographically limited to 500 meters. This limitation speaks yet again of the bureaucratic way of dealing with things and issues when boards in charge, or, in the case of B-H, leading politicians, propose a temporary solution just for appearances.

To conclude, in Anđelić-Galić's and Kurt&Plasto's interventions, a river running through the city environment became a performance site. In terms of performativity through visibility, such a location opens up the possibility of a nonselected and spontaneous array of spectators. At the same time, to perform on the river asks for technical readiness and bodily strength to navigate the natural terrain, and in the case of Kurt&Plasto, to walk through the river undisturbed by the river flow. Moreover, while the River Neretva embodies a metaphorical border within the city, the River Miljacka stands for quite the opposite. In this regard, if we imagine the shift of the performative gestures and thus end up with the sewing of the River Miljacka, the primary concept of mending and fixing would be lost. Both artworks follow a similar pattern of the artist creating a temporal installation on the water. The emphasis in these artworks is not on the artists' bodies per se but on what their bodies make. In this context, the performative gesture is recognizable in the constellations of the objects—rope and boards—on the body of water. The gesture is still performative as it transforms the physical dimension of the representational space and transmits a message, i.e., subtly hints at and poetically resolves the specific problematics tied to the geographic contexts of Mostar and Sarajevo.

5. Concrete

In this penultimate chapter, I analyze artworks by Danica Dakić, Suzana Cerić, Anela Šabić, and Ameli Tančica that were exhibited or performed in public space in Sarajevo in 1997 and 1998. More precisely, I individually examine the artworks *Madame X* (1997, Dakić), *Promenade* (1997, Cerić and Šabić), and *Homage to Yves Klein* (1997, Tančica) in the forthcoming subchapters *Mouth*, *Walk*, and *Paint*.

The metonymic framework for this chapter is built around the notion of concrete as a representation of something that exists in a physical form and as a building block for the construction of edifices and streets. In this regard, I relate the idea of concrete to that of a corporeal body and perceive it simultaneously as a metonymy for the city and postwar processes of revitalization and development. The latter can happen through the reconstruction processes of the physical dimension of public space and concurrently through the means of artistic practices executed in this public space. To further elaborate, I look to Elizabeth Grosz's text "Bodies-Cities" and her formulations for the categories of the body and the city. According to Grosz, the body is "a concrete, material, animate organization of flesh, organs, nerves, muscles, and skeletal structure which are given a unity, cohesiveness, and organization only through their physical and social inscription as the surface and raw materials of an integrated and cohesive totality."²⁶⁶ At the same time, Grosz explains the notion of a city as "a complex and interactive network which links together, often in an unintegrated and de facto way, a number of disparate social activities, processes, and relations, with a number of imaginary and real, projected or actual architectural, geographic, civic, and public relations."²⁶⁷ Using these two notions, I apply these terms as categories that help me create a framework for the close readings of the artworks by Dakić, Cerić, Šabić, and Tančica. My main idea comes from the relation between the body and the city in their artworks, i.e., between the artists' (performers') bodies and a city as a performance site and as a symbolic and interactive landscape in these artworks. Parts and contexts of the city network where the examined performative installation (Dakić) and performances (Cerić, Šabić, and Tančica) were performed and exhibited have an active role in the creation of the interpretative matrix.

Dakić's *Madame X* and Tančica's *Homage to Yves Klein* were both part of SCCA's annual exhibition *Meeting Point* (July 24–September 12, 1997). The exhibition was conceived

²⁶⁶ Elizabeth Grosz, "Bodies-Cities," in *Places through The Body*, ed. Heidi J. Nast and Steve Pile (London: Routledge, 1998), 32.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

as a three-month-long artistic workshop on the premises of the historically and architecturally distinct summer garden named Ćulhan.²⁶⁸ This garden is located in Baščaršija, Sarajevo's historic Old Town, in the ruins of the Turkish Hammam from the sixteenth century.²⁶⁹ A group of young artists gathered around the SCCA and initiated this project, which included collaborations with regional and international artists, curators, theorists, and art critics.²⁷⁰

In both *Water* and *Concrete*, the artworks were performed or exhibited within the framework of a city. Nevertheless, in the photographic documentation of the performances examined in the chapter *Water*, the imagery of the city is not as stark as in the artworks examined in this chapter. *Concrete* thus aims to investigate the body-city dialectic through the interpretation of artworks by Dakić, Šabić, Cerić, and Tančica in order to see how the body performs itself within the city, how the relationship between the body and the topography of the city develops in these artworks, and if and how the location affects the performativity of these specific gestures.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to get acquainted with the specific locations in which the artworks were performed or exhibited. As already mentioned, Dakić's and Tančica's artworks were part of the *Meeting Point* exhibition in the Summer Garden Ćulhan, located within Sarajevo's historic nucleus, Baščaršija. The word *Baščaršija* is a compound of two Turkish words: *baš* [*baş*] meaning head, main, summit, or line; and *çaršija* [*çarşı*] standing for market, center, or a built-up street in which manufacturing and trade occur.²⁷¹ The old Baščaršija was conceived as a square for the exchange of goods. It was a continuation of the first bazaar from the Middle Ages.²⁷² Until 1908, this square functioned as the main marketplace, as can be recognized in its name.²⁷³ Baščaršija is still an important pedestrian location in Sarajevo, placed at the intersection of several of the area's thoroughfares and passages and consisting of many little streets with versatile shops, restaurants, cafés, and cultural and touristic organizations. One of Baščaršija's middle passageways with a direct exit onto the Baščaršija square is Ćulhan.²⁷⁴ This exit can be described as a walkway lane, curved and covered by roofs of the

²⁶⁸ Amila Puzić, "Exhibition as Social Intervention: Annual SCCA-Sarajevo Exhibitions: 'Meeting Point' (1997), 'Beyond the Mirror' (1998), 'Under Construction' (1999)," *Peristil* no. 59 (Summer 2016): 138, <https://doi.org/10.17685/Peristil.59.11>.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ "Ćulhan," in *Meeting Point*, ed. Dunja Blažević (Sarajevo: Soros Center for Contemporary Art, 1998), 7.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

neighboring shops.²⁷⁵ Ćulhan already existed as a thoroughfare at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Its name derives from the Turkish word for a stove-house, i.e., the place where water was heated for the old public bath, built in 1509 in this area.²⁷⁶ Today, Ćulhan is considered to be a unique location due to the visible traces and ruins of the old bath's stove-house. In 1997 (and to this day), Ćulhan's function was that of a city café, an everyday gathering spot in Sarajevo.²⁷⁷ For the duration of SCCA's *Meeting Point* project, it became the Art Center Summer Garden Ćulhan. I interpret this exhibition site as a palimpsest of ruins and revitalizations—Ćulhan's remains from the sixteenth century transformed into a meeting spot, which was affected by the devastation of the war in the 1990s, only to become revitalized again via the means of artistic practices.²⁷⁸ All of these layers transpire as simultaneous reactions to several kinds of losses and processes of rehabilitation.

The third artwork treated in this chapter, *Promenade* by Cerić and Šabić, was not part of SCCA's exhibition framework.²⁷⁹ As a performance site, Cerić and Šabić chose one of Sarajevo's main pedestrian and traffic lanes, Tito's Street (Titova Ulica), recognized for its prime examples of Austro-Hungarian and modernist architecture; tramroad; and buildings of cultural, economic, administrative, and gastronomic importance. In a broader perception of Sarajevo's downtown, we could say that Baščaršija and Titova Street operate as antipodean parts of the city center, Titova being its beginning and Baščaršija its ending point (or vice versa).

5.1. Mouth

The case study of the present subchapter is Danica Dakić's video installation entitled *Madame X* (1997). After the introductory paragraph clarifying the notion of the mouth as a metonymic topos, information about the artist, and description of the artwork, the subchapter turns to a close examination of this video installation.

Madame X is a silent black-and-white video work showing an enlarged nose, chin, and lips characterized by an opening and closing movement, i.e., the speaking motion. The use of

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

²⁷⁹ Alas, while researching for this thesis, it was difficult to obtain exact information on if this performance was organized as an individual instance or as an element of a particular artistic project or exhibition program. Nevertheless, this limitation does not hinder the artwork's analysis.

the word “mouth” in the title of this subchapter comes from this thesis’s understanding of the mouth being the substantial and encompassing part of the body’s speaking apparatus. In this context, the installation’s imagery becomes the visual entity of the speaking mechanism. Thus, we could say that the mouth plays a significant role in conveying the entirety of one’s identity, a topic frequently explored in Dakić’s art practice.

Danica Dakić was born in 1962 in Sarajevo.²⁸⁰ She studied painting in the early 1980s, first at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo, then in Belgrade. In 1988 she moved to Düsseldorf, where she studied under Nam June Paik and explored the medium of video.²⁸¹ Dakić’s experience as a painter but also her interests in architecture, music, and theater are central points of reference in her artistic practice, in which she frequently treats topics of identity, homeland, and culture.²⁸² Dakić uses her artistic work to examine language as well as the way of representing different roles in society and their significance in relation to processes of social transformation, globalization, and war.²⁸³ In her artworks, the artist intertwines geographical, political, cultural, and personal identities from the perspective of someone whose individual geography is marked by the migrant experience.²⁸⁴ Dakić’s video installations are characterized by close involvement with the spatial features and architectural motifs of the specific exhibition sites.²⁸⁵ Her preoccupation with architecture and the specificity of an exhibition site comes forward in the public space video installation *Madam X* (1997), a silent single-channel video projection in black and white, with the duration of twenty-four minutes and forty-two seconds.²⁸⁶ The video installation consisted of a video picture projected onto a transparent screen, which was mounted in a narrow passage coming out of the Ćulhan Garden and leading toward one of Bašćaršija’s pedestrian laneways.²⁸⁷ By placing a projection screen in a rather particular spot in this public space, the artist temporarily hindered the practicality and functionality of the passageway.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁰ Danica Dakić, ed. Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Generali Foundation Vienna, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb (Köln: Walther König, 2009), 6.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Ibid., 5.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Director of photography and editing Egbert Trogemann. See *Danica Dakić*, 141.

²⁸⁷ The artwork was realized in Sarajevo, in 1997, as part of the *Meeting Point* exhibition organized by the Soros Center for Contemporary Art. See *Danica Dakić*, ed. Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Generali Foundation Vienna, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb (Köln: Walther König, 2009), 136.

²⁸⁸ The artwork *Madame X* is described and indexed as part of Dakić’s oeuvre in the catalog accompanying her 2009/10 exhibition *Role-Taking, Role-Making*, which was realized as a collaborative project between Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Generali Foundation Vienna, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb. As per explanation from the catalog, *Madame X* was not one of the exhibited artworks in the *Role-Taking, Role-Making* exhibition. This is understandable, as the artwork was a site-specific video projection. However, a display of photographic

Madame X shows a frontal close-up of a woman's face, reduced to a lower part of her nose, mouth, and chin. As spectators, we are, thus, confronted with a face of an unknown person.²⁸⁹ The specificity of this moving imagery is in the mouth exercising the action of opening and closing as if it were speaking. However, the installation remains inaudible, deceiving the spectator through the dichotomy of expectation and suspension of vocal articulation. Instead of sound, the viewer is presented with a silent visual experience of the facial expression as a visible trace and outcome of the laryngeal mechanism. It is up to the one standing in front of the installation to try and decipher the movement of the mouth and see if some words can be recognized in its shifting shape. At this point, the spectator confronted with the oxymoron of the speaking, yet silent mouth can also begin projecting their sentences into the inaudibility of the sequence. Thus, continuously creating new interpretations and associations and adding, in this way, new personal content and context to the installation.²⁹⁰

According to the accompanying text from the catalog of Dakić's exhibition *Role-Taking, Role-Making* (2009/10), the woman whose section of a face we see projected on the screen is the artist herself.²⁹¹ This information makes the installation rather personal, as it marked the first time Danica Dakić placed herself in her hometown after she left in the late 1980s.²⁹² Thus, by situating the fragmented self-portrait into the narrow passage as an extended limb between the walls, Dakić integrated part of her body into the architecture and performed a symbolical—albeit mute—return to her city.

Furthermore, if we take a closer look at the artwork's title—*Madame X*—we can comprehend that the artist's intention was not to make it quite clear who the projected woman was. This calls to mind an artwork of the same name from 1883/4 painted by John Singer Sargent, in which Sargent depicted Madame Pierre Gautreau, an American woman living in Paris at the time.²⁹³ When Sargent sold the painting to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in

documentation, in addition to the explanatory text, is a possible method for showcasing site-specific artworks within exhibitions, which is usually a perk of a cluster of curatorial decisions. Nevertheless, due to its scope and limitations, this thesis does not go into an examination of the exhibition's curatorial decisions and focuses only on the artwork. See *Danica Dakić*, ed. Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Generali Foundation Vienna, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb (Köln: Walther König, 2009).

²⁸⁹ See fig. 30, 31, 32 in appendix 1.

²⁹⁰ *Danica Dakić*, 6.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 136.

²⁹³ Madame Pierre Gautreau (the Louisiana-born Virginie Amélie Avegno, 1859–1915) was a famous figure in the artistic milieu of Paris, and Sargent hoped to enhance his reputation by painting and exhibiting her portrait. Working without a commission but with his sitter's complicity, he emphasized her daring personal style, showing the right strap of her gown slipping from her shoulder. However, at the Salon of 1884, the portrait received more ridicule than praise. Sargent repainted the shoulder strap and kept the work for over thirty years. When he eventually sold it to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, he commented, "I suppose it is the best thing I have done," but asked the Museum to hide the sitter's name. See "Madame X (Madame Pierre Gautreau)," The

New York, he asked for the name of his sitter to stay disguised, and thus *Madame X* was born. I am not aware if Dakić deliberately appropriated this painting's title; however, this art historical context can serve to spark some further associations regarding the installation. While the sitter in the painting is a priori anonymous, Dakić similarly wishes to become anonymous. The roles shift—from being indifferently nameless to actively wishing anonymity. Thus, the question arises: Where does Dakić's desire to be unknown come from? It is known that with this installation, the artist situated herself in her hometown for the first time after less than a decade of being away, and that this time interval between leaving and returning was charged with abrupt political shifts. In one way or another, these changes affected her hometown and most probably influenced her perception of it. It may be that Dakić wishes to stay anonymous because she still has not grasped her transfigured identity. She is somewhere in between, concurrently present and absent, returning home but also comprehending what that home exactly is and how she fits into it now after being away. In her own words, Dakić touches upon the notion of home as follows:

My concept of home has utterly changed. In both cities [Sarajevo and Düsseldorf] I am a little at home, but also a little bit a stranger. My distance from both places has afforded me the position of a critical observer, a position that can be very fruitful for an artist. Learning to live with the difference and to speak from within this difference: that is the potential in incongruence.²⁹⁴

The traits of Dakić's identity are delivered fragmented to everyone in front of the projected video. With such a representation, providing the spectator just enough but not the whole image, the artist lets the viewer question and imagine and invites them to play the game of who and why. But the question also emerges: Is it at all important that we know or guess whom the fragmented face belongs to? In this sense, *Madame X* can be every other person, who finds themselves in the position of impossibility to produce a voice, or who deliberately does not want to speak. Thus, voiceless and traceless, this fragmented portrait becomes a depersonalized image embodying a general face that can be a reflection and projection of every passerby regardless of their background story. At the same time, *Madame X* relates to all citizens of Sarajevo who stayed through the war but who also feel displaced or alienated from it because of changes and trauma. The concept of home may have equally changed for those who left and for those who stayed.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed August 20, 2019, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/20012492>.

²⁹⁴ *Danica Dakić*, 136.

Luce Irigaray writes how girls, when faced with the loss of a mother, act by describing “a circular territory around themselves, around their bodies. [...] Often, they do it in silence, or else they will be laughing, chattering, chanting nursery rhymes.”²⁹⁵ In this regard, Dakić’s reiteration of the action of an opening and closing mouth (an act that goes in a circle) may be interpreted as an act of describing a circular territory in which the performed fragmented body copes with the moment of loss. If we go back to Dakić’s biographical trajectory, this loss can be understood as a loss of her motherland of Yugoslavia—a loss of one element that used to define her identity. To cope with this loss, the artist uses her artistic practice to create the looped rhythm of silence (not laughing, chattering, or chanting) constructed by the opening and closing mouth. At the same time, the lips being the representational part of the mouth in this artwork calls to mind Irigaray’s specific understanding of women’s lips:

The mystery of women’s lips: their opening to create the universe, and their closing to touch each other again, so that the self-identity of the feminine individual may be perceived—this mystery may be the forgotten secret of the perception and creation of the world.²⁹⁶

Thus, in the moment of embedding her sectioned self into the armature of the city, the artist or the unknown Madame X creates a new world for herself and the passersby. She produces this world through the opening and closing movement of the mouth, visually characterized by the lips. For the imagined Madame X, this is a world where she speaks in an inaudible language and does not want to be recognized. For the artist, this new world is her old but transformed hometown. While for the viewers—the inhabitants of Sarajevo—the familiar space of a passageway is transformed into a temporary new home of a voiceless representation. In the postwar atmosphere, this process of being confronted with and experiencing the artificial reiteration of silence might become a healing and therapeutic event for viewers. With the latter in mind, I imagine the spectator standing in front of the installation, indulging the poetics of the sensory image and immersed in the repetitive dynamics of the installation. This rhythmical repetition slows down the time flow and acts as a hypnotic remedy. Synchronously, apart from the mouth, Madame X shows us her nose too. Combined with the mouth’s openings and closings, Dakić’s installation thus manifests the process of breathing and creates another

²⁹⁵ Irigaray, “Gesture in Psychoanalysis,” 134.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 135.

therapeutic momentum for those in front of it. *Madame X* is breathing, meditating, proving to be alive in spite of the era of postwar desolation.

At the same time, in this observation and mediation of silence, the viewer is the one with the sense of sight, while *Madame X*, an eyeless depiction, cannot return the glance. Roles shift again; *Madame X* was the first to intervene with the passageway and create a sort of personal space that is now intruded on by the gaze of the viewer. Or, if we contemplate the exchange of glances in a more symbolic manner, the roof of the passageway becomes the place where *Madame X*'s eyes should be, thus leading us to think that she looks through the eyes of the surrounding architecture and sees us through the city, its ruins and revivals.

Furthermore, when speaking of silence in the postwar context, we must be aware of all its connotations, such as it being a reaction to a traumatic event, a therapeutic process, but also a cause for frustration. According to Dino Abazović:

[...] to understand the current socio-political dynamics of Bosnia- Herzegovina, it is not enough to see it as a war-torn, post-conflict, disoriented society entrapped in so-called transition. Its specific societal processes must be attended to, in particular the pervasive social tensions around different ways of dealing with the past, where denial, silence/silencing and drive to confront it are among the prominent ones.²⁹⁷

Thus, silence can be perceived as a form of denial, of not speaking about the war in a clear manner but rather a contested way based around the propagation of ethnonational politics.²⁹⁸ In this sense, the anticlimactic inaudibility of Dakić's *Madame X* also becomes a cause for the spectator's dissatisfaction increased by the "waiting for Godot" moment performed in the reiterated opening and closing movement of the mouth.^{299,300}

²⁹⁷ Abazović, "Reconciliation, Ethnopolitics and Religion in Bosnia-Herzegovina," 42.

²⁹⁸ "Although the armed violence has ended, the conflict is not over in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Nevertheless, a number of options are available for its management and settlement, including those that consider religion a potentially valuable, but critically underutilized peace-building tool. Still, in spite of numerous efforts by 'Western' governmental and nongovernmental organizations engaged in conflict resolution and peace-building – including interreligious dialogue that encompass expatriate and domestic religious communities and faith-based organizations – the overall results and achievements have been very limited thus far. [...] Bosnia-Herzegovina's organized religions have so far chosen the course of 'eloquent silence,' responding to significant speech acts with silence." See Abazović, "Reconciliation, Ethnopolitics and Religion in Bosnia-Herzegovina," 47–50.

²⁹⁹ Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* has a symbolic meaning for Sarajevo. In 1993, Susan Sontag came to Sarajevo and adapted and directed this play for Sarajevo's International Theater and Film Festival MES. See Đelilović, *Museum in Exile*, 298. This festival, which was founded in 1960 and conceptualized as a yearly festival of Yugoslav theaters in Sarajevo, stopped operating when the war began. However, in 1993, the festival organized the first film festival in the besieged Sarajevo, which kept being organized despite and in spite of the wartime conditions as a form of cultural resistance against the war state. Today, the festival is still operative. See "About MESS Festival," MESS Festival, accessed July 28, 2021, <https://mess.ba/en/about-mess-festival/>.

³⁰⁰ In this sense, silence as performative artistic strategy was also deployed by Nebojša Šerić (b. 1968, Sarajevo; popularly known for his nickname Shoba) in his 1997 performance *No Lyrics, No Music, No Country*,

In conclusion, I recognize the performative gesture in Dakić's artwork in the specific acting upon the space, i.e., a temporal transformation of the passageway. At the same time, I read the gesture of an opening and closing mouth as performative because it produces silence, which can then be further perceived, interpreted, and contextualized according to individual associations of the passersby. With this artwork, Danica Dakić evokes the questions of fragmented identity, home, healing, and frustration. Who are we when we reenter a specific place of personal or not personal value to us? How do we adapt? Do we first speak, or move, or both? How do we make ourselves at home? How do we deal with the familiar yet unfamiliar?

5.2. Walk

In 1997, one year after the siege ended, two female artists, Suzana Cerić and Anela Šabić, held a performance of walking along one of Sarajevo's main streets, Tito's Street (Titova Ulica). My aim in this subchapter is to frame their artwork, titled *Promenade*, within two contexts, one being the significance of walking as an artistic strategy, and the other its meaning in postwar B-H. By addressing this artwork in my thesis, I highlight its importance and recurring relevance in our present time.

Rebecca Solnit writes how "walking, ideally, is a state in which the mind, the body, and the world are aligned, as though they were three characters finally in conversation together, three notes suddenly making a chord. Walking allows us to be in our bodies in the world without being made busy by them. It leaves us free to think without being wholly lost in our thoughts."³⁰¹ At the same time, in Tim Edensor's understanding, "[t]hough embedded in the average human body's physical capacity to move about, and part of unreflexive praxis in the world, walking is also an irreducibly social and cultural practice that is learned, regulated,

Nothing... performed in Ljubljana and Sarajevo. In this artwork, Šerić performed as a street musician dressed in a casual city cowboy outfit (wearing a hat, shirt, leather vest, jeans, and sneakers). He carried a guitar in his arms in a position typical for guitar players and had a small white rectangular plate hanging on a white thread from his neck to his chest. Characteristic of this performance is that he pretended to be singing and playing. He opened his mouth, but his voice did not come out. At the same time, his guitar had no strings, but he pretended to play it. Concurrently, the white plate should have obviously been a name tag or some other sort of information tag, but it was blank with no inscription. In front of the artist was a can marked with the inscription in capital letters: "USA; Not to be Sold or Exchanged; USAID," and people who were passing by threw money into it. See Meliha Husedžinović, "Body Art in Bosnia and Herzegovina," in *Body and the East: From the 1960s to the Present*, ed. Zdenka Badovinac (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998), 40–42.

³⁰¹ Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (New York: Penguin Group, 2000), 20.

stylized, communicative and productive of culturally oriented experiences.”³⁰² An ordinary gesture of walking is thus one “from which the extraordinary can be derived,” to quote Solnit again, who also notes that walking can be associated with various cultural spheres, including an artistic one.^{303,304} In *Promenade*, Cerić and Šabić connected the practice of walking with the artistic sphere. Nevertheless, walking is deeply embedded in performance artistic practices from Dadaism until today. Or, as Solnit writes, since the late eighteenth century, walking has “sometimes been an act of resistance to the mainstream,” which in the 1960s became a part of a new realm, the one of walking as art.³⁰⁵ On this subject, in his text “Walking in the City,” Michel de Certeau writes about the city as an urban structure that is constructed and constituted through spatial practices.³⁰⁶ He explains that walking as a spatial practice is a process that defines a city.³⁰⁷ According to him, without pedestrians, without people with their dreams and memories, a city is just a concrete grid, and a cartographic map.³⁰⁸ In my understanding of de Certeau’s text, the act of walking, thus, gives meaning and symbolism to the city and disrupts the planned urban grid and the norm the grid regulates.

Cerić and Šabić walked Titova Street, a street that bears the name of the former president of Yugoslavia, has buildings in Austro-Hungarian and modernist architecture, an anti-fascist struggle memorial, and is one of the main promenades in Sarajevo. With their performance of walking, Cerić and Šabić gave another symbolic meaning to this street, and it is my aim to investigate this meaning and see how they, with their walk, disrupted the regulated norm. At the same time, I would like to point out that de Certeau writes about walking as an unconscious action, whereas Cerić’s and Šabić’s walk was conscious, planned, staged, and temporally and geographically limited artistic walk. In this regard, I show through the analysis of *Promenade* that walking does not necessarily have to be an unconscious action to give meaning to the city and disrupt a regulated norm within it. As an artistic practice, or in this

³⁰² Tim Edensor, “Walking in Rhythms: Place, Regulation, Style and the Flow of Experience,” *Visual Studies* 25, no. 1 (March 2010): 74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725861003606902>.

³⁰³ Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (New York: Penguin Group, 2000), 486.

³⁰⁴ This should not refer only to bodies that walk but also to bodies without the ability to walk and to bodies with any other kind of physical or psychological impairment and immobility. In the context of the postwar Bosnian-Herzegovinian society, where impaired bodies are a casualty of the war, an exploration of impaired bodies in and through art practices is a necessary subject that requires further research. Due to the scope of this thesis, such a topic would need a different approach and methodology. Nevertheless, I can certainly see it as a focus of my future research and a possible extension of this thesis.

³⁰⁵ Solnit, *Wanderlust*, 483.

³⁰⁶ Michel de Certeau, “Walking in the City,” in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 91-110.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

case, a performative gesture, it can be regarded as a conscious spatial practice with a performative force.

Suzana Cerić and Anela Šabić were both students at the Academy of Fine Arts Sarajevo, who often worked together. Cerić was born in Benghazi (Libya) in 1971, grew up in Sarajevo, and lives and works in Antwerp.³⁰⁹ Šabić was born in Sarajevo in 1970 and lives and works between Sarajevo and London.^{310,311}

In *Promenade* (1997), the two young artists dressed in regular winter-like clothes in dark tones walked next to each other.^{312,313} The peculiarity of their walk was that they had hired police officers to govern a specific part of the road and to stop the traffic so they could perform. According to the existing video documentation—an edited news reportage from the Bosnian-Herzegovinian National Television—the artists engaged Sarajevo’s police officers to govern approximately 100 meters of the street.³¹⁴ The television presenter explains in the reportage that the traffic was stopped at noon and passersby were instructed to walk only on the sidewalk while the artists walked along the middle axis of the road.³¹⁵ The television reportage (one minute and two seconds long, in Bosnian) shows the moments of the walk but also the general

³⁰⁹ “Ars Aevi Collection Artists” in *Ars Aevi Collection 1992-2006*, ed. Enver Hadžiomerspahić (Sarajevo: Ars Aevi, 2006), 399, 401.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ There is no more biographical information available about these two artists in the existing literature. Moreover, I have not managed to have a conversation with them, as both artists kept being unreachable during my research and writing process. The presented information is from 2006, and at the time of writing, I am not able to confirm if they still live and work at the mentioned places and if they are still active as artists. I assume that they were in Sarajevo during the siege, as they were students at the Academy of Fine Arts, and they performed *Promenade* just a year after the war and siege ended. I acquired the information that Cerić lives in the United Kingdom and Šabić in Belgium from the web page of the art group Maxumim, of which Cerić and Šabić were members in the period from 1997–2000. See “Maxumim: Exhibitions,” Maxumim, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://maxumim.com/umjetnici.html>.

³¹² See fig. 33 and 34 in appendix 1.

³¹³ From June 24, 2021, until October 10, 2021, *Promenade* was shown in the exhibition *Realize! Resist! React! Performance and Politics in the 1990s in the Post-Yugoslav Context* at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova in Ljubljana (Slovenia).

³¹⁴ The performance documentation could have been accessed and downloaded from the web page of the art group Maxumim (<http://maxumim.com>). I used to access this web page regularly while working on this thesis. However, in June 2023, when I wanted to visit the linked page again, I noticed that it does not exist anymore. In my interpretation, this means that nobody continued taking care of the website’s maintenance. At the same time, according to my prior research, there was no additional information about the time and date of the video upload on the web page that used to have the video of the performance *Promenade*. It is also important to note that I previously downloaded the video documentation from the named web page and have it in my possession.

³¹⁵ Pamela Blotner mentions in her text “Art out of the Rubble” that Cerić and Šabić walked up and down the boulevard for two hours. See Pamela Blotner, “Art out of the Rubble,” in *My Neighbor My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*, ed. Eric Stover and Harvey M. Weinstein (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 280.

atmosphere at that particular time in the street—traffic noises and city buzz.³¹⁶ In the midst of the city’s afternoon commotion, Cerić and Šabić performed a walk in a slow-paced nonchalant tempo, enacting the vocabulary of pedestrian movements. The dynamic of their walk was anticlimactic in contrast to the bustling atmosphere around them.

Furthermore, the television reportage has a specific aesthetic, with the camera zooming in and zooming out, focusing on the artists but also on the situation around them. It is edited with fun elements and melodies, presumably to gain the attention of the public sitting at home in front of the television. The creator of the reportage added music and scenes like the one in which we see a left hand with a watch showing twelve o’clock and a finger of the right hand tapping onto the watch, probably to hint that the performance is about to begin. Next to being a video documentation of the performance, this reportage is also significant because it shows how media and passersby perceived this performance, or as the presenter, journalist Senad Hadžifejzović, described it, this cultural event. Moreover, the reportage video has one remarkable moment when the camera is lowered down to foot level and, in an upward motion, focuses on the up-close shot of the artists’ legs. This instance is important because it emphasizes that basic albeit substantial gesture of walking—moving legs.

In the reportage, the presenter says the following about the performance:

Today, exactly at noon, the center of Sarajevo, around the Eternal Flame, was blocked. Cars had to stop, one could not pass through Tito’s Street, and pedestrians could only walk on sidewalks. Sarajevo Police secured some hundred meters of the road from the National Bank to the Eternal Flame. And all that for only one reason, so that two girls could have a walk on that road section without interruption. Suzana and Anela are students of the Fine Arts Academy. Today they gave a task to Sarajevo to figure out what their walk meant while the entire city stopped. [...] It’s not a custom to explain artistic vision but let’s clarify this a little. How many times have radio and all TV stations and newspapers reported of a cultural event that was not an event of any kind? Well, today nothing happened as well.³¹⁷

The presenter’s enunciation is interrupted with shots of the performance or parts where we can hear the comments of passersby. Some of them perceived the performance in an enthusiastic manner. Comments included: “This is fantastic, this is the victory of the spirit” and “I don’t get it, but I feel this really ...” and more toned-down comments such as “Spontaneously, no

³¹⁶ The video documentation of the performance, i.e., the news reportage, has subtitles in English. I assume that the subtitles were added by the artists.

³¹⁷ See fig. 35, 36, 37 in appendix 1.

happenings ...” and “Nothing happened now, but they succeeded to stir the mud.”³¹⁸ As much as the performance was perceived by the public as a lack of action, something did happen. Two young female artists interrupted the everyday norm of how this place functioned, making their performative gesture significant for two reasons.³¹⁹ Namely, the collaboration with the police officers involved as governing bodies and the timing of the walk just a year after Sarajevo stopped being a besieged city (and people from Sarajevo stopped being besieged bodies). The role of the police was to regulate the traffic for the performers to have an empty space to walk. Through collaboration with the police, *Promenade* gave visibility to the power structure and the law that regulated obedience and disobedience in the city and revealed the police as the governing body able to be of service to the art and artists. This gave visibility to what else the power of the governing law can do besides its regulation of obedience and disobedience. At the same time, one must imagine what would have happened if a defiant act were to occur during the performance (either by the performers or the passersby). In this case, the governing body would have to act according to the law to suppress disobedience. But, more importantly, it should be clear that there is always just a thin line between the law's interpretation of obedience as good or bad. If we imagine that the performers acted in noncompliance with the norms of the law, the police would not be in the service of the artists anymore.

Just a year earlier, this same performance site and the city were ruled by another law, the law of the siege, which gave visibility to what happens when the inhuman law of war powers takes over the governing of places and people. Or, as Achille Mbembe explains:

[...] in its desire for eternity, the besieged body passes through two stages. First, it is transformed into a mere thing, malleable matter. Second, the manner in which it is put to death — suicide — affords it its ultimate signification. The matter of the body, or again the matter, which is the body, is invested with properties that cannot be deduced from its character as a thing, but from a transcendental *nomos* outside it. The besieged body becomes a piece of metal

³¹⁸ As Cerić and Šabac performed a walk without a prior public explanation, thus surprising the passersby, they left the opportunity for viewers to create their interpretations of the action of walking.

³¹⁹ This notion of disruption and commotion caused in the public space by artists is reminiscent of one of Zvono's performances. Namely, their action titled *Mondrian* (1986), when Zvono members pulled out a long horizontal Piet Mondrian mock-up on paper from a passageway leading to the promenade (just several meters away from the location where the performance *Promenade* happened). They pulled it out and let it stay in the middle of the walking area, thus creating a blockade for passersby. Zvono then started going *through* this paper installation. In order to go through, they were tearing it with their bodies and hands while creating holes one could pass through. The passersby then started going themselves through the holes, crossing to the other side of the promenade, then continuing their walk. Even though different in execution, I connect the performances *Promenade* and *Mondrian* as they both created commotion in the city and disrupted the everyday walking routine and the norm of the promenade. See “Grupa Zvono – Akcija ‘Mondrian’ – 1986 – Sarajevo” [Zvono Group – Action “Mondrian” – 1986 – Sarajevo], shobasheric, accessed July 30, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dAIT2Ed01cE>.

whose function is, through sacrifice, to bring eternal life into being. The body duplicates itself and, in death, literally and metaphorically escapes the state of siege and occupation.³²⁰

In the case of Sarajevo, many of the besieged bodies ultimately managed to surpass these two stages and came out of the siege alive. Still, by surviving, they did not escape the state of siege, occupation, trauma, and anxiety. In Cerić's and Šabić's performance, I read the gesture of walking as a symbolic representation of a body that continues to move, no matter the heaviness of the post-traumatic baggage it carries. There is a local Sarajevo story, a legend, about a man named Nurija Pecikoza who, during the war and the siege, used to run through the streets of Sarajevo with a lemon in his mouth.^{321,322} As much as his ritual would call for a deeper interpretation, I would like to focus just on one basic similarity of Cerić's and Šabić's and Pecikoza's gesture of movement—both actions were controlled by a *nomos* outside of their bodies. Pecikoza's peculiar ritual was conditioned by the circumstances of the siege, whereas Cerić's and Šabić's performance relied upon the collaboration of the police. At the same time, in the photographic documentation showing Pecikoza running, a member of the United Nations Protection Force, which was supposed to govern the people, is also visible. In both instances, the moving body was governed, but the logic of discipline was different. Pecikoza and all other citizens of Sarajevo were, during the siege, under martial law, and even though Pecikoza's running ritual seems liberating, his right to move was still conditioned by the war and siege circumstances.

In *Promenade*, the artists confront the members of the public—those who used to be under martial law, the survivors of the siege—with another logic of discipline. In this logic, even though entailing the freedom of movement, their walk still had to be regulated by the police. This suggests that even the most innocent and basic act of being in the city still required vigilance. Furthermore, the first seconds of the performance's video documentation show military vehicles passing along the traffic route where Cerić and Šabić performed their walk. These video shots of tanks show that the language of martial law was still very present and that the atmosphere of war discipline was still very tangible in the city, thus, making me think that even though the matter of the body surpassed the siege, it—the artists, the viewers, the police,

³²⁰ Achille Mbembé, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 37.

³²¹ "Sarajevo Legend Nurija Pecikoza Passed Away," *Sarajevo Times*, July 3, 2021, <https://sarajevotimes.com/sarajevo-legend-nurija-pecikoza-passed-away/>.

³²² See fig. 49 in appendix 1.

the passersby—is still on many levels confronted with martial law. Even though in this new reality and new discipline, the body surpassed the death, it has yet to surpass the feelings of the traumatic experience of the siege and learn how to exercise the conditioned postwar freedom.

When asked what they were doing, Pamela Blotner notes that the artists answered, “Nothing, just walking.”³²³ However, by reading nothing, I immediately translate it to everything. Because Cerić and Šabić were doing a lot of things with their walk, symbolically but also logistically (from the collaboration with the police to stopping the traffic and temporary occupation of Tito’s Street). In any case, even though it is a negation, or, better said, simplification, of their action, this ambivalent answer—as nonchalant as their walk—gives even more weight to the gesture itself because they let their walk speak for itself. Cerić and Šabić walked and stated with their walk, not only that it is a public space they walk in, but also the artistic space. I understand the artists’ answer also as part of the performance, seeing that with it, Cerić and Šabić potentiate the symbolic importance of walking. Compared to their answer, I find the interpretation from the television reporter, who, to a broader public, deduced the performance to a cultural event where nothing happened, rather complicated, as it, in a certain way, diminishes Cerić’s and Šabić’s action of walking. Concurrently, the presenter’s interpretation shows that the performative gesture of walking had yet to be contextualized and learned to be interpreted as an artistic action.

At the same time, the presenter introduces the artists as two girls, whereas they could have been introduced just as two artists or two art students. They did not have to be reduced to their gender. Calling them two girls seems to be very nominal and defining, as they are more than just two girls (artists, students, cultural workers). Simultaneously, in *Promenade*, the relationship between female agency and the patriarchal body also becomes visible. In this sense, the police represent the patriarchal body that is in the service of female agency. The police, as part of the state patriarchy, are making the expression of female agency possible. However, even in this collaborative constellation, power structures are present. The state patriarchy is still in charge and has executive power to stop being in the service or act upon female agency.

With *Promenade*, the artists Cerić and Šabić inscribed themselves in the lineage of walking in performance art, characterized by artistic figures such as Robert Long, Francis Alys, Vlasta Delimar, or Tomislav Gotovac. Cerić’s and Šabić’s walk had not left any physical trace,

³²³ Blotner, “Art out of the Rubble,” 280.

yet they disrupted the routine street flow, extending it beyond practicality. It was a walk of artistic significance, conveying the importance of culture and showing the feasibility of conceiving a dialogue between the authorities and artists—and public (passersby). At the same time, for the duration of the performance, Cerić and Šabić reclaimed public space that was previously governed by the war's politics and the law of the siege, i.e., a state of exception. Thus, their simple yet extraordinary gesture of walking emphasized the possibility of the preservation of life and culture in the postwar era.

5.3. Paint

In this last subchapter, *Paint*, I analyze a piece from 1997 titled *Homage to Yves Klein* and performed by the artist Ameli Tančica in the streets of Sarajevo. The subchapter's title refers to the blue paint that Tančica used to color his skin and clothing garments. The use of the paint further resonates with a similar *Toplo-Hladno* [Warm-Cold] (1982–92) performance by the Zvono group.^{324,325} In *Toplo-Hladno*, Zvono members painted one-half of their faces blue, the other red, and mingled like this in the Zvono Café, intending to provoke and see café visitors' reaction to people with their faces covered in paint.³²⁶ I regard paint, or in a broader sense, the gesture of covering oneself with something, as an easily accessible performative tool, regardless of the socio-economic situation.

Ameli Tančica was born in 1970 in Ljubuški (the region of western Herzegovina in B-H). From his first year of life until May 1995, he lived in Sarajevo, after which he left the city and went to Split (Croatia). Tančica stayed in Split until January 1997, when he emigrated to Sydney (Australia). Before the war began, Tančica studied product design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo. The beginning of the war, however, terminated his studies. Between

³²⁴ Zvono's *Toplo-Hladno* [Warm-Cold] performance was an action the group repeated several times. As I have not acquired the exact dates of these performances nor the actual number of times they occurred, I am dating them with the approximate years 1982–92, i.e., the duration of Zvono's existence. Additionally, Branka Vujanović mentions how the *Toplo-Hladno* performances began shortly after Zvono's first street exhibitions. With their first street exhibition being on Vase Miskina Street in Sarajevo in 1982 (September 8, 1982), I conclude that the more exact year of these performances might have been 1982. See Vujanović, *Zvono: Poziv na ozbiljnu igru*, 5.

³²⁵ See fig. 42 in appendix 1.

³²⁶ According to one sentence in Branka Vujanović's text, Zvono also had a performance titled *Na lijepom plavom Dunavu* [On the beautiful blue Danube], where during the opening of an exhibition by Sadko Hadžihasanović in Banjaluka, they dressed in formal suits and with colored faces and waltzed in order to encourage visitors to start dancing. See Branka Vujanović, "Zvono: Poziv na ozbiljnu igru" [Zvono: A call to serious play], 5.

1998 and 2000, Tančica studied (and finished) multimedia design at the Computer Graphics College in Sydney. In 2009, he started teaching the digital visualization course at Technical and Further Education (TAFE) in the Fashion Design Studio department, also in Sydney, and, in 2019, he acquired his Master of Arts degree in drawing at the University of New South Wales. Currently, he lives and works in Sydney, where he still teaches the digital visualization course at the Fashion Design Studio at TAFE.³²⁷ As he explains, he still practices art, but he does not exhibit regularly. *Homage to Yves Klein* was his first and last performance. The only record of the performance that Tančica has is the catalog of the SCCA's 1997 exhibition *Meeting Point*, which was the curatorial framework for the piece.³²⁸

In 1997, for the *Meeting Point* exhibition, Ameli Tančica conceived the artwork titled *Trilogy: Coffee, Dreamtime, and Homage to Yves Klein*.³²⁹ In the initial piece, *Coffee*, raw coffee beans were roasted in the ambience of the Ćulhan Garden.³³⁰ According to the description of the artwork available on the SCCA's home page, *Coffee* was imagined as a kind of a synesthetic experience, i.e., the smell of the roasted beans was supposed to trigger an associative process of visualization in the collective consciousness where it would stimulate the sensory transformation of the smell into an image.³³¹ In the second part, *Dreamtime*, at the brink of dusk and night, Tančica projected an image of a eucalyptus tree onto a screen mounted on one of the walls in the Ćulhan Garden. At the same time, opposite the projection, a printer produced an image of a eucalyptus leaf.³³² The last part of this trilogy was a performance,

³²⁷ Ameli Tančica, email message to the author, August 22, 2020.

³²⁸ The artist also mentioned how he gave an interview immediately after the performance to an editor of a then-active art website Art Conceptual and Minimal Only (this is the title of the website as remembered by Tančica). According to Tančica, this was one of the first online magazines for contemporary art in B-H. However, it seems that today the website is inactive and nonexistent. In the course of the thesis research, I have not acquired any additional information about this specific website. Ameli Tančica, email message to the author, March 6, 2019.

³²⁹ The performance was organized on the occasion of the already mentioned second annual exhibition, *Meeting Point*, organized by the SCCA in Sarajevo in 1997.

³³⁰ Ćulhan Garden was a temporary exhibition site occupied by the artists gathered around the program of the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art. Additional references to Ćulhan can be found in the introductory passages of the chapter *Concrete* (see p. 91–92).

³³¹ "Ameli Tančica, 'Trilogy: coffee, dreamtime and Homage to Yves Klein'," Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed October 15, 2019, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/meeting-point/meeting-point-ameli-tancica-trilogy-coffee-dreamtime-and-homage-to-yves-klein/>.

³³² I do not have the information on whether the eucalyptus print was in color or in black and white. As the focus of the thesis is on the last part of the trilogy, Tančica's performance *Homage to Yves Klein*, I do not go into a detailed description and analysis of the first two parts of the trilogy. The presented descriptions of the first two parts of the trilogy are paraphrased from the description provided on the SCCA's website. I do not know if these original descriptions came from the artist, curator, or somebody else whose task was updating the SCCA web page. This interpretation of the first two parts of Tančica's trilogy could be further elaborated on, but since the thesis focuses only on the trilogy's third part, I do not deem it critical to expand this interpretation within the current thesis framework. The third part, *Homage to Yves Klein*, due to its different execution and performativity, can be regarded as independent of the first two parts.

Homage to Yves Klein, in which the artist covered himself at dawn with blue paint and commenced a walk through the city of Sarajevo. Here, I deliberately focus only on the third element of the trilogy, as due to its different performativity and topic, it can be regarded autonomous of the first two and treated as a singular artwork. In terms of performance documentation, I focus on the four images obtained from the SCCA's informative website. The trilogy is briefly mentioned in the SCCA's catalog texts accompanying the *Meeting Point* exhibition.³³³ *Homage to Yves Klein* was not reperformed after the live event in 1997, nor was its photographic documentation part of a later exhibition.³³⁴

As Ameli Tančica remembers, the performance happened at the break of dawn and lasted three to four hours, somewhere between 4 and 7:30 in the morning.³³⁵ This time of the performance, i.e., between twilight and dawn, is very important to Tančica as it represents a specific moment when night turns into day. Tančica perceives this in-between moment as a portal into the void, a concept resonating with Yves Klein's photomontage *Le Saut dans le vide* [Leap into the Void], 1960.^{336,337} Furthermore, Tančica mentions that there were around eight

³³³ I have invested a part of the thesis research process to asking several acquaintances from Sarajevo's art scene where this documentation could be, albeit unsuccessfully. The only lead was the Library of the National Gallery of B-H in Sarajevo, whose librarians told me in July 2019 that they had received all the material from SCCA. By material, they mean SCCA's books and catalogs. Aida Šarac, email message to the author, March 2019.

³³⁴ In this regard, it is necessary to mention that alongside the performance documentation published on the official SCCA website, I have also stumbled upon the photographs of this artwork on three other Internet pages. I discovered these three websites via a random Google search of the artwork and Ameli Tančica. According to their content and design, which seem as if nobody updated them for a long time, these websites seem to be inactive. I was not able to get in touch with the owners of the websites, and thus, I did not acquire information on how they became familiar with Tančica's performance and where they found performance images. I consider these Internet pages relevant because they showcase some of the performance photographs that do not appear on the SCCA's official website. However, since these websites are not official sites belonging to art institutions or Tančica, and resemble personal blogs, I decided not to use the performance's photographic material in this thesis. The language of the website content is different on each web page. The first one, entitled *Réplica 21*, is in Spanish; the second one, *Green Color Live Journal*, in Russian; and the third one, *Art Conceptuel*, in French. According to my fair understanding of these languages and the help of the Google Translate tool, none of the websites describe Tančica's performance in particular nor mention it extensively in the textual content. They only focus on the images of the performance, indexing of the artist's name and surname, and title (or date) of the artwork. These random instances are significant because they speak of an alternative reception of Tančica's performance that does not come from the Bosnian-Herzegovinian annals of art history or an institutional framework and perspective. They historicize this artwork within the global worldwide web as a sort of alternative art geography. List of the three mentioned websites: *La Belleza y sus Contradicciones* [Beauty and Its Contradictions], *Réplica 21*, *Obsesiva Compulsión por Lo Visual* [Obsessive Compulsion for the Visual], accessed February 11, 2020, https://www.replica21.com/archivo/articulos/g_h/135_galindo_belleza.html. "Art Conceptuel: Les Artistes [Conceptual Art: Artists]," Art Paris, accessed February 11, 2020, <http://www.parisparis.com/artparis/down/porte/art-mo14e.html>. "Yves Klein," *Green Color, LiveJournal*, last modified March 14, 2009, <https://green-color.livejournal.com/126659.html>.

³³⁵ Ameli Tančica, email message to the author, March 6, 2019.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Photographers Harry Shunk and Janos Kender were hired by Yves Klein to document his action in the Parisian suburb of Fontenay-aux-Roses in October 1960. Shunk and Kender took one picture of the artist taking his leap into a tarpaulin held taut by his friends and another of the empty street. Klein then montaged the pictures together. The resulting photomontage shows Klein suspended in mid-air above the pavement, with arms outstretched. See "Ciprian Muresan Leap into the Void, after Three Seconds," summary by Juliet

spectators during the performance, with somewhat positive reactions, and remembers hearing one comment from the public that said, “I love this kind of performances.”³³⁸

The performance site was the old town of Sarajevo, around the Ćulhan Garden, in Baščaršija (Sarajevo’s Old Town).³³⁹ During the performance, a photographer followed Tančica and documented his actions. Simultaneously, as part of the dramaturgy of the performance, Tančica himself was documenting the walk with a Polaroid camera. He would stop at specific places and pose in front of the Polaroid, or he would use it to take images of the surrounding scenery. After the Polaroid photo session was over, he would leave the snapshots at the places where the picture was taken and continue his walk.³⁴⁰ More precisely, in the images documenting the performance, we can see Tančica standing and posing in specific places within the topography of Sarajevo’s Old Town.³⁴¹ The first image depicts Tančica placing an undeveloped Polaroid image on a wooden door.³⁴² In the second photograph, the artist is standing in an empty area in front of a building with a devastated façade, his eyes gazing toward the sky. In the third one, Tančica is hugging a corner of a building that has visible shrapnel holes, while the fourth image shows the artist standing and frontally looking into the camera.³⁴³ According to Tančica, the Polaroid locations, i.e., places where the artist decided to take a Polaroid snapshot, were not planned before the performance but improvised, just like the poses.

Tančica’s walk is symbolic in many ways. He roamed through the locations of Sarajevo’s Old Town, painted in the color of the sky and water, which, to me, symbolize vastness, openness, borderlessness, and freedom, as if he were a symbolic figure of the new opportunities, beginnings, and liberty. In this sense, the artist’s decision to perform early in the morning, while the streets were still empty and the day had just started, additionally supports

Bingham, Tate Gallery, last accessed January 17, 2020, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/muresan-leap-into-the-void-after-three-seconds-p20523>.

³³⁸ Ameli Tančica, email message to the author, March 6, 2019.

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ The artist collected the Polaroids after the performance ended. However, today he does not know where these Polaroids are. Ameli Tančica, email message to the author, March 6, 2019.

³⁴¹ During the performance, Tančica wore a long sleeve button-up shirt and a skirt-like bottom garment, resembling the dresses and skirts artists like Gustav Klimt used to wear. To me, his clothes and slick hair showed a figure of a man who wants to be perceived as nonchalant yet confident in his appearance.

³⁴² Wooden doors are a characteristic of the architecture of Sarajevo’s Old Town.

³⁴³ See fig. 38, 39, 40, 41 in appendix 1. I described the images following the order of the numbers in the names of the files that I downloaded from the web page of the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art. The names of the files are: “Ameli Tancica-Trilogija-Meeting_Point-13”; “Ameli Tancica-Trilogija-Meeting_Point-15”; “Ameli Tancica-Trilogija-Meeting_Point-19”; and “Ameli Tancica-Trilogija-Meeting_Point-21.” See “Ameli Tančica ‘Trilogy: coffee, dreamtime and Homage to Yves Klein’,” Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed October 15, 2019, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/meeting-point/meeting-point-ameli-tancica-trilogy-coffe-dreamtime-and-homage-to-yves-klein/>.

the symbolism of the new beginnings and possibilities very much needed for the citizens of postwar Sarajevo and B-H.

While the performance is navigating the terrain of the city, it is also navigating the body's relation to the city. This navigation then culminates in tension developed between the phenomenological experience of walking and the way the walking is imaged in the media, i.e., in photographs and photographic documentation of the performance. However, there is a challenge in comprehending the performance of photographic imagery as the photographs make places and people within these places visible but do not manifest the relations between depicted people and places. It is as if, through the photographic mechanism, the depicted places turn into symbolic icons. Nevertheless, in this performance, both come to the fore. While the blue artist placed within the city becomes a symbolic icon, we are also able to perceive his relationship with the city, i.e., the relationship of the body navigating the city and the city, through some of the images where the artist hugs and touches the walls of the buildings with shrapnel holes in them.

Furthermore, a correlation between the notions of dematerialization and materialization develops in this performance. On the one hand, there is a materialization of the body in space. The performer's body materializes itself through Tančica's walking, posing, and performing in distinctive parts of the city. On the other hand, parallel to this materialization, a process of dematerialization of the (Polaroid) image unfolds in the performance. While the body is being materialized in the space, the image is being dematerialized in the sense that the images do not become fully exposed during the performance. Thus, the logic behind the performance hinders the materialization process of the Polaroid images. As if the idea and action of taking a snapshot of city signposts is more significant than the actual result of the developed Polaroid image. At the same time, a dematerialization of the performance subject occurs in the sense that it becomes an idea of healing, new beginning, and freedom. In my interpretation, the idea of what Tančica—the performance subject—represents and symbolizes is equally important as what and how he does it (by walking, hugging, posing, taking Polaroid snapshots). Through photographic documentation, all the places where Tančica posed became parts of the symbolic imagery. I understand these symbolic signposts—walls with shrapnel holes and empty streets—as immaterial representations of a city at a very specific moment in its history. Through the artist's action of tending to the *wounded* building, or *wounded* spaces, this very material reality transforms into a representation of wounded and scarred people and society. However, simultaneously, all these spaces are not only symbolic imagery, but they are also spaces containing traces of long histories within them, and showing material reality and

consequences of the war and siege that severely aggravated the basic conditions of everyday life in the city in a material sense—from the devastation of physical spaces to the hindering of the different institutions and parts of the society to operate in normal conditions.

Moreover, Tančica's performance evokes the tension between the material and immaterial experience of the urban terrain. He experiences it materially by walking through the Old Town, taking time to stop, photograph, and pose by touching and hugging the walls. At the same time, immateriality arises from the Polaroid images that are left exposed to develop and from the viewers' experience of the photographic documentation where both the body and the city become symbolic icons. While being the one behind the Polaroid camera, Tančica also embodies the reporters and photographers who roamed through the war and postwar Sarajevo and created images for the world. In this context, the artist also navigates this tension between the media gaze upon the city and the way its inhabitants, including Tančica, experience it.

It is significant that Tančica used the Polaroid mechanism in this performance as this, too, bears a symbolic meaning. Polaroids, equivalent to present-day mobile telephone cameras, are something that anyone can take part in and have the result immediately. Tančica, thus, consciously puts himself in the position of the person being photographed by and taking photographs with the Polaroid camera.

The Polaroid mechanism, representational of instant image creation and development, is, in its nature, equivalent to present-day image production via mobile telephone cameras. Both tools are something that anyone, not only designated artists and photographers, can use and have the result immediately. In the performance, Tančica consciously constructs two positions—the position of a subject taking the photograph and being in the photograph. With this, he embodies the role of an amateur, thus showing us that we can all—artists, photographers, or just regular people—create content. By posing for the camera and being behind the camera, we can also freely produce an image of and about ourselves. In the current social media arena, this invention and reinvention of ourselves, our personalities, and our performative personas became an everyday leisure or even business-generating practice. I can easily imagine that, if the performance were to happen today, the artist could, in addition to or even instead of the Polaroid camera, easily use social media tools to commemorate instances of the performance and produce another layer of his persona.

Concurrently, the notion of the artist's walk being followed through the city and recorded with the camera suggests three specific things. First, the notion of foreign photographers recording Sarajevo and its inhabitants; second, the notion of the globally

televised and spectacularized event of the war; and third, the idea of surveillance cameras that, in the present time, follow our professional, wanderlust, and phenomenological walks.

For a better understanding of Tančica's homage and intention, I compare his artwork with another kind of homage to Yves Klein by the Romanian artist Ciprian Muresan (b. 1977, Dej, Romania). In the artwork *Leap into the Void, after Three Seconds* (black-and-white photograph, gelatin silver print on paper, 2004), Muresan appropriates the idea of jumping into the void. Muresan imitates Klein's jump, or, in other words, stages a photograph very similar to Klein's.³⁴⁴ The scenery of Muresan's photograph is in his native Romania, in a street in the historic center of Cluj-Napoca (a city in the northwest of Romania; a site that is, as Juliet Bingham nicely puts it, "not that far from that of the Romanian revolution, during which President Nicolae Ceausescu's communist regime was overthrown in 1989").³⁴⁵ The photograph represents Muresan's body lying on the street, underneath the window, from which the spectator can assume that the artist jumped. The street Muresan chose to document is very similar to the street that can be seen in Klein's original image. In the photograph, Muresan is lying on the street, directly on top of the concrete. He was not caught levitating towards the sky but rather shown at the conclusion of the leap, or, in other words, after the fall. His artwork, as the title already indicates, shows the outcome of the leap, an artist falling on his face.

Muresan explains that he "created a parallel world that was specific to Romania, which represents how the situation looked for an artist in Cluj in 2004: nobody cared for the arts. Forty years after Klein made his seminal image of the emancipation of the artistic impulse in Paris, our stone streets could be anywhere in Europe, even in Paris [...] but the difference between my world and the world Klein represents is embodied in those three seconds between the leap and the fall [...] In Romania, there is no institution or place for art. There is no other end for a leap into the void but this end."³⁴⁶ The sentiment of Muresan's statement can be connected to the art situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina today, where there is no functioning institution for the development of contemporary art. At the same time, in the context of 1997 in Sarajevo, the situation of contemporary art was different because it was supported by the

³⁴⁴ See fig. 47 and 48 in appendix 1.

³⁴⁵ "Ciprian Muresan Leap into the Void, after Three Seconds," summary by Juliet Bingham, Tate Gallery, last accessed January 17, 2020, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/muresan-leap-into-the-void-after-three-seconds-p20523>.)

³⁴⁶ "Strange Days: An Interview with Ciprian Muresan," Artist Interview by Emily Nathan, ArtNet, last accessed January 18, 2020, <http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/features/nathan/ciprian-muresan-7-20-11.asp>.

engagement of the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, and artists had support to take their creative leaps.

When we compare Tančica's homage to the void with Muresan's response to Klein's void, it becomes obvious that Tančica's execution is rather symbolic, and it is not comprehensible from the photographic documentation, nor from the title, as it is in the case with Muresan's artwork. However, several parallels can be drawn between these two artistic instances that happened seven years apart. Both artists went through a certain kind of transition, from one nation-state to another or, specifically in Tančica's case, from Sarajevo to Split and Sydney. The notion of the void can also be linked to the undeveloped Polaroid images, Tančica engages with in his performance. In the performance documentation, these Polaroids are visible and still undeveloped, and as such, still empty. In the process of becoming an image, these Polaroids can be regarded as a certain kind of void. A temporary empty space before an image develops. However, compared to Muresan's artwork, Tančica's void stays hidden and so purely symbolic that it fails to go beyond the symbolism and convey further meanings.

At the same, there is a relationship between Tančica's blue-painted body (and his homage to Yves Klein) and Klein's painted bodies in his series of *Anthropometries* (1960–62), in which he instructed nude female models to cover their bodies in International Klein Blue and make imprints on paper with their bodies. In these performances, Klein was the one (the artist) to conceptually navigate the process of the artwork and instruct the models (the workers) on what to do. He did not paint the models nor himself. This contrasts with Tančica's performance, as in his homage, there is an elision between the object and the subject, the artist and the model, the artist and the worker, the artist and the citizen. In Sarajevo, in the geography of B-H, the artist has to play every role. There is a thin line between the artistic work and physical labor, a line that usually disappears, and the artists just end up doing both. In regard to this, Tančica's gesture of painting himself blue to perform this homage also communicates the artist's desire to be marked by the Klein Blue and to, in a symbolic way, position himself, his concrete body, within the canon of art history to which Klein belongs. Tančica, as well as artists from B-H in general, have to work, model, and be the object and the subject in order to maybe one day become parts of the prevailing canon. The issue is, however, that the structures of power coming from traditional understandings of geography still dominate art historical discourses. At the same time, the lack of systematic and institutional care for art research and documentation within B-H adds to this problem, as is visible in the case of Amy Bryzgel's book *Performance art in Eastern Europe since 1960*, which does not include Ameli Tančica's or Zvonko's performances with painted bodies/faces. Nevertheless, within the framework of B-

In performance art history, one can trace a continuation of painted bodies and the use of paint as a strategy to convey performative gestures. While Zvono painted their faces in the 1980s to provoke and see the public's reaction to people with their faces covered in paint, Ameli Tančica painted himself blue to perform an homage to Yves Klein, and through this to create a performative gesture built on tensions between processes of dematerialization and materialization, immaterial and material, spiritual and real, to commemorate spaces wounded by the war and to symbolically heal them.³⁴⁷

6. Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to elucidate and historicize the notion of performative gesture within the scholarly framework of contemporary art while using examples of postwar performative art practices from Bosnia-Herzegovina (1997–2000) as case studies. Concurrently, this thesis contextualized artworks by Gordana Anđelić-Galić, Almir Kurt,

³⁴⁷ Thirteen years before Tančica's homage to Yves Klein, in 1984, the artist Radoslav Tadić (1946–2013) also performed an homage to the French artist in *Homage to Yves Klein* (1984) during his stay in the Počitelj Art Colony. Art historian and curator Ivana Udovinčić notes that Tadić was among the first to engage with performance art in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian art scene and explains in the following: "Tadić's performance represented as *Homage to Yves Klein* will probably remain the most radical product of the Počitelj Art Colony. [...] Unfortunately, Tadić's performance was not recorded in any colony chronicle, apart from a few photos, nor even in the author's catalogues." Tadić also chose to paint his body in the color blue (see fig. 40 in appendix 1). The picture shows Radoslav Tadić's blue-covered head and torso. On the upper body part visible in the photograph, he is not clothed. Ameli Tančica said to me that he was not aware of Tadić's performance. Nevertheless, in my additional research, to find out more about Tadić's performance, I talked to the artist Jusuf Hadžifejzović, as he was an active part and participant in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian (performance) art scene in the 1980s, who then advised me to talk to Aleksandar Saša Bukvić, one of the members of the Zvono group, who lives and works in Sarajevo and takes care of Zvono's legacy. In our phone conversation, Bukvić acted rather agitated when I asked him about Tadić's performance and if he possibly knew something more. Bukvić explained to me how it was never solely Tadić's performance, but Zvono's performance in which Tadić also took part. Bukvić continued that Zvono started these painted bodies/faces performances in Sarajevo in the Cafe Zvono. More precisely, Bukvić started with Sadko Hadžihasanović (also one of the Zvono members). Radoslav Tadić asked them if he could also join, and they said yes. Hadžihasanović colored himself in yellow, Bukvić in blue, and Tadić in red. Later, on Tadić's insistence, they repeated this action in Počitelj. However, Bukvić underlined that this was never Tadić's performance. It was Zvono's because they wanted to see and test the reaction of the public to their painted faces in the everyday quotidian surrounding. Bukvić's insight and commentary about Tadić's performance made me think about the credibility of the information provided by the curator Ivana Udovinčić. Due to time restrictions, I am not in a position currently to further research the ontology of Tadić's artwork. Moreover, this would ask for a new and different methodology that would primarily focus on the interviews and data collecting via the mechanisms of oral art history. And this is something I did not want to undertake when I started my research; my intention was to focus only on the existing written material about art from B-H. This showed me to what extent the field of B-H art history is under-researched. Nevertheless, I also do not want to base my writing on speculation, as I am currently divided between the dialectics of the artist's word versus the curator's word, and this exceeded the necessities of my research and my thesis. I still chose to use Tadić's artwork as a reference for Tančica's performance in the footnote. Furthermore, this gap in Bosnian-Herzegovinian art history illustrates its internal, ongoing obstacle, i.e., the lack of organization, communication, and working together between art institutions, curators, art historians, and artists. See Ivana Udovinčić, "Radoslav Tadić," in *Artefacts: Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Venice Biennale 1993–2003* (Sarajevo: Ars Aevi, 2007), 115.

Samir Plasto, Danica Dakić, Suzana Cerić, Anela Šabić, and Ameli Tančica within a genealogy of Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav performance art history with the emphasis on the artworks performed or exhibited in public space. At the same time, by doing so, this thesis contributed to the poorly developed and under-researched field of contemporary Bosnian-Herzegovinian performance art history.

In this regard, I established two methodological frameworks: metonymic structure and geographic paradigm. The metonymic structure inspired by Irit Rogoff's methodological approach originating from her book *Terra Infirma* helped frame the complicated position of Bosnian-Herzegovinian art within the wide post-Yugoslav, Eastern European (Southeastern European, or Balkan) framework. In addition, the metonymic vocabulary contributed to the navigation of arguments about Bosnian-Herzegovinian society, politics, culture, and contemporary art. It thus created the possibility of forming a writing position that does not adhere to any of these geopolitical categories and that is firmly embedded in the prevailing art historical discourse.

Furthermore, this thesis developed an analysis of the artworks and an elaboration on the notion of performative gesture through the prism of geography. With this, it opened up a rich pathway toward interpreting artistic practices in Bosnia-Herzegovina beyond the logic of binaries such as center/periphery, war/postwar, and conflict/reconciliation.

At the same time, in the case of Bosnian-Herzegovinian art group Zvono from the 1980s, i.e., with the comparison of Zvono's art practice to the analyzed artworks, I outlined a trajectory of continuity in the development of Bosnian-Herzegovinian performative art practices in public space from the 1980s onward. In this sense, *A Geography of Gesture* also contributes to the quite scant scholarly materials specialized in performative art practices from Bosnia-Herzegovina and hopes to serve as a starting point for future research and vistas on this topic. The plight of artists coming from and working within the boundaries of Bosnia-Herzegovina is the truncated Yugoslav and postwar art history, marked by scattered artistic documentation. Thus, this thesis contributes to the contextualization of one small yet significant part of B-H art history.

Lastly, this thesis demonstrated that performative gestures are artistic strategies that can be used to expose or address lacks and gaps, vulnerabilities and invisibilities, and displacements and losses tied to a specific geographical context. Or in other words, this thesis shows how the repetition and reiteration of certain performative gestures become spatial practices with a possible performative force.

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Appendix 1: Illustrations



Fig. 1

Zvono, *Autoportret – portret IV* [Self-portrait – Portrait IV], 1987, mixed media. Exhibited in the Collegium Artisticum Gallery in Sarajevo as part of Yugoslav Documenta, 1987.

Source: Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvakovic, eds., *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003), 242.



Fig. 2

Bojan Stojčić, *Viva la Transición*, 2015, digital print.

Source: “Bojan Stojčić,” Art Collection Telecom, December 10, 2019, <https://art-collection-telekom.com/en/digital-art/s/bojan-stojcic>.



Fig. 3

Zvono, *The Family at the Weekend*, 1983, performance at the River Ukrina, Sarajevo.

Source: Branka Vujanović, *Zvono*: “Zvono: Poziv na ozbiljnu igru” [Zvono: A call to serious play], in *Zvono* [The Bell] (Bihać: City Gallery Bihać, 2010), 4.



Fig. 4

Zvono, *Kontakt* [Contact], 1985, performance, River Ukrina, Derventa (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the video documentation of the performance, published on YouTube.

Source: shobaseric. “Grupa ‘Zvono’ - Kontakt, Ukrina, 1985” [Group “Zvono” - Contact, Ukrina, 1985]. YouTube video, 2:02. Posted [June 2011]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B14sK_BpfR0.



Fig. 5

Zvono, *Kontakt* [Contact], 1985, performance, River Ukrina, Derventa (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the video documentation of the performance, published on YouTube.

Source: shobaseric. "Grupa 'Zvono' - Kontakt, Ukrina, 1985" [Group "Zvono" - Contact, Ukrina, 1985]. YouTube video, 2:02. Posted [June 2011]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B14sK_BpfR0.



Fig. 6

Zvono, *Kontakt* [Contact], 1985, performance, River Ukrina, Derventa (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the video documentation of the performance, published on YouTube.

Source: shobaseric. "Grupa 'Zvono' - Kontakt, Ukrina, 1985" [Group "Zvono" - Contact, Ukrina, 1985]. YouTube video, 2:02. Posted [June 2011]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B14sK_BpfR0.



Fig. 7

Zvono, *Kontakt* [Contact], 1985, performance, River Ukrina, Derventa (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the video documentation of the performance, published on YouTube.

Source: shobaseric. "Grupa 'Zvono' - Kontakt, Ukrina, 1985" [Group "Zvono" - Contact, Ukrina, 1985]. YouTube video, 2:02. Posted [June 2011]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B14sK_BpfR0.



Fig. 8

Zvono, *Kontakt* [Contact], 1985, performance, River Ukrina, Derventa (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the video documentation of the performance, published on YouTube.

Source: shobaseric. "Grupa 'Zvono' - Kontakt, Ukrina, 1985" [Group "Zvono" - Contact, Ukrina, 1985]. YouTube video, 2:02. Posted [June 2011]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B14sK_BpfR0.



Fig. 9

Zvono, *Kontakt* [Contact], 1985, performance, River Ukrina, Derventa (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the video documentation of the performance, published on YouTube.

Source: shobaseric. "Grupa 'Zvono' - Kontakt, Ukrina, 1985" [Group "Zvono" - Contact, Ukrina, 1985]. YouTube video, 2:02. Posted [June 2011]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B14sK_BpfR0.



Fig. 10

Zvono, *Kontakt* [Contact], 1985, performance, River Ukrina, Derventa (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the video documentation of the performance, published on YouTube.

Source: shobaseric. "Grupa 'Zvono' - Kontakt, Ukrina, 1985" [Group "Zvono" - Contact, Ukrina, 1985]. YouTube video, 2:02. Posted [June 2011]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B14sK_BpfR0.



Fig. 11

Zvono, *Kontakt* [Contact], 1985, performance, River Ukrina, Derventa (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the video documentation of the performance, published on YouTube.

Source: shobaseric. "Grupa 'Zvono' - Kontakt, Ukrina, 1985" [Group "Zvono" - Contact, Ukrina, 1985]. YouTube video, 2:02. Posted [June 2011]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B14sK_BpfR0.



Fig. 12

Zvono, *Doručak pod vodom* [Breakfast under the water], 1987, performance, Počitelj (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the video documentation of the performance, published on YouTube.

Source: shobaseric. "Grupa Zvono - Dorucak pod vodom - Pocitelj - 1987" [Group Zvono – Breakfast under the water – Počitelj / 1987]. YouTube video, 2:02. Posted [July 2011]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N9Xz6TVtCY&t=2s>.



Fig. 13

Zvono, *Doručak pod vodom* [Breakfast under the water], 1987, performance, Počitelj (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the video documentation of the performance, published on YouTube.

Source: shobaseric. "Grupa Zvono - Dorucak pod vodom - Pocitelj - 1987" [Group Zvono – Breakfast under the water – Počitelj / 1987]. YouTube video, 2:02. Posted [July 2011]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N9Xz6TVtCY&t=2s>.



Fig. 14

Zvono, *Doručak pod vodom* [Breakfast under the water], 1987, performance, Počitelj (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the video documentation of the performance, published on YouTube.

Source: shobaseric. "Grupa Zvono - Dorucak pod vodom - Pocitelj - 1987" [Group Zvono – Breakfast under the water – Počitelj / 1987]. YouTube video, 2:02. Posted [July 2011]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N9Xz6TVtCY&t=2s>.



Fig. 15

Mladen Miljanović, *Welcome*, installation, 2005, rope, chair. Installation view at the *Real Presence* exhibition, Belgrade (Serbia), 2005.

Source: “Welcome,” Mladen Miljanović, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://www.mladenmiljanovic.com/Welcome>.



Fig. 16

Gordana Anđelić-Galić, *Sewing*, 2000, photographic performance documentation, Mostar (B-H).

Source: *Mostar: Unique Sign, Unique Location*, Cultural City Network Graz (CCN), 2000.

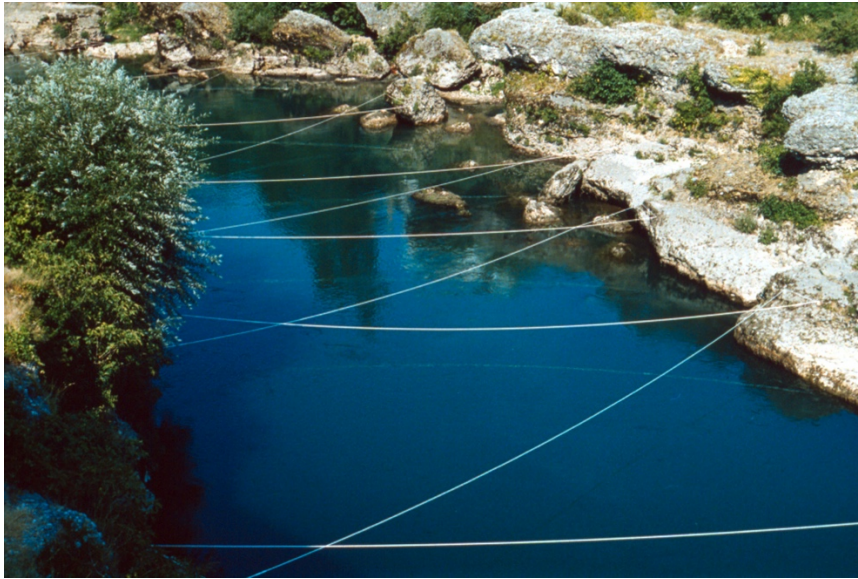


Fig. 17

Gordana Anđelić-Galić, *Sewing*, 2000, photographic performance documentation, Mostar (B-H).

Source: *Mostar: Unique Sign, Unique Location*, Cultural City Network Graz (CCN), 2000.



Fig. 18

Gordana Anđelić-Galić, *Sewing*, 2000, photographic performance documentation, Mostar (B-H).

Source: *Mostar: Unique Sign, Unique Location*, Cultural City Network Graz (CCN), 2000.



Fig. 19

Gordana Anđelić-Galić, *Sewing*, 2000, photographic performance documentation, Mostar (B-H).

Source: *Mostar: Unique Sign, Unique Location*, Cultural City Network Graz (CCN), 2000.



Fig. 20

Gordana Anđelić-Galić, *Sewing*, 2000, photographic performance documentation, Mostar (B-H).

Source: *Mostar: Unique Sign, Unique Location*, Cultural City Network Graz (CCN), 2000.



Fig. 21

Maja Bajević, *Dressed Up*, 1999, seven-hour performance, video still. Part of the exhibition *MINIMUM*, 1999, SCCA, City Gallery Collegium Artisticum, Sarajevo (B-H). Curator: Dunja Blazeovic. Photo documentation: Danica Dakić, SCCA.

Source: "Maja Bajevic, Works, Dressed Up," Maja Bajevic, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://majabajevic.com/works/dressed-up/>.



Fig. 22

Maja Bajević, *Dressed Up*, 1999, seven-hour performance, video still. Part of the exhibition *MINIMUM*, 1999, SCCA, City Gallery Collegium Artisticum, Sarajevo (B-H). Curator: Dunja Blazeovic. Photo documentation: Danica Dakić, SCCA.

Source: "Maja Bajevic, Works, Dressed Up," Maja Bajevic, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://majabajevic.com/works/dressed-up/>.



Fig. 23

Maja Bajević, *Dressed Up*, 1999, seven-hour performance, video still. Part of the exhibition *MINIMUM*, 1999, SCCA, City Gallery Collegium Artisticum, Sarajevo (B-H). Curator: Dunja Blazevic. Photo documentation: Danica Dakić, SCCA.

Source: “Maja Bajevic, Works, Dressed Up,” Maja Bajevic, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://majabajevic.com/works/dressed-up/>.



Fig. 24

Maja Bajević, *Dressed Up*, 1999, seven-hour performance, installation view. Part of the exhibition *MINIMUM*, 1999, SCCA, City Gallery Collegium Artisticum, Sarajevo (B-H). Curator: Dunja Blazevic. Photo documentation: Danica Dakić, SCCA.

Source: “Maja Bajevic, Works, Dressed Up,” Maja Bajevic, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://majabajevic.com/works/dressed-up/>.



Fig. 25

Maja Bajević, *Dressed Up*, 1999, seven-hour performance, installation view. Part of the exhibition *MINIMUM*, 1999, SCCA, City Gallery Collegium Artisticum, Sarajevo (B-H). Curator: Dunja Blazevic. Photo documentation: Danica Dakić, SCCA.

Source: “Maja Bajevic, Works, Dressed Up,” Maja Bajevic, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://majabajevic.com/works/dressed-up/>.



Fig. 26

Slobodan Milošević (third from left), Alija Izetbegović (fourth from left), and Franjo Tudjman (sixth from left).

Source: Bill Clinton, “Dayton Accords,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last modified November 14, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Dayton-Accords>.



Fig. 27

Kurt&Plasto, *500 Meters is Half a Kilometer*, 1998, performance, River Miljacka, Sarajevo (B-H). During the exhibition *Beyond the Mirror*, August 22–September 20, 1998, Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art.

Source: “Kurt & Plasto Remember my song, part II,” Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/beyond-the-mirror/beyond-the-mirror/>.

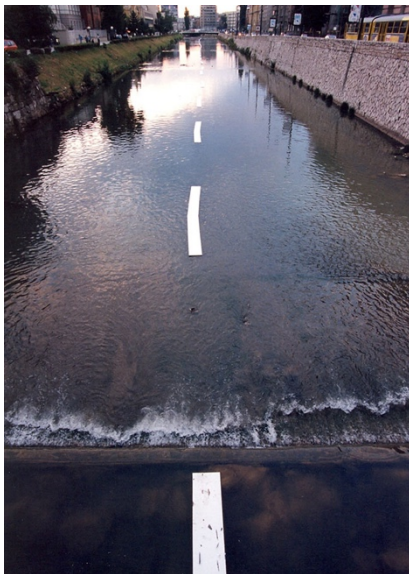


Fig. 28

Kurt&Plasto, *500 Meters is Half a Kilometer*, 1998, performance, River Miljacka, Sarajevo (B-H). During the exhibition *Beyond the Mirror*, August 22–September 20, 1998, Sarajevo Center for contemporary Art.

Source: “Kurt & Plasto Remember my song, part II,” Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/beyond-the-mirror/beyond-the-mirror/>.



Fig. 29

Kurt&Plasto, *500 Meters is Half a Kilometer*, 1998, performance, River Miljacka, Sarajevo (B-H). During the exhibition *Beyond the Mirror*, August 22–September 20, 1998, Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art.

Source: “Kurt & Plasto Remember my song, part II,” Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/beyond-the-mirror/beyond-the-mirror/>.



Fig. 30

Danica Dakić, *Madame X*, 1997, installation view, *Meeting Point* exhibition, 1997, Sarajevo (B-H).

Source: “Danica Dakić, Passing by: Madame X,” Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/meeting-point/meeting-point-danica-dakic-passing-by-madame-x/>.



Fig. 31

Danica Dakić, *Madame X*, 1997, installation view, *Meeting Point* exhibition, 1997, Sarajevo (B-H).

Source: "Danica Dakić, Passing by: Madame X," Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/meeting-point/meeting-point-danica-dakic-passing-by-madame-x/>.

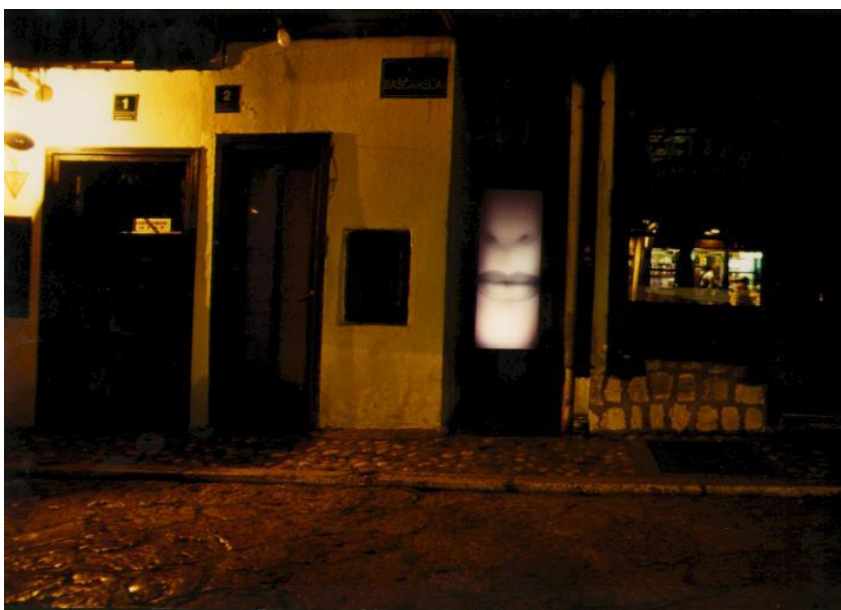


Fig. 32

Danica Dakić, *Madame X*, 1997, installation view, *Meeting Point* exhibition, 1997, Sarajevo (B-H).

Source: "Danica Dakić, Passing by: Madame X," Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/meeting-point/meeting-point-danica-dakic-passing-by-madame-x/>.



Fig. 33

Anela Šabić and Suzana Cerić, *Promenade*, March 1997, performance, Sarajevo (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the television reportage of the performance.

Source: “Maxumim: Exhibitions,” Maxumim, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://maxumim.com/umjetnici.html>. There is no additional information on the website about the time and date of the video upload.



Fig. 34

Anela Šabić and Suzana Cerić, *Promenade*, March 1997, performance, Sarajevo (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the television reportage of the performance.

Source: “Maxumim: Exhibitions,” Maxumim, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://maxumim.com/umjetnici.html>. There is no additional information on the website about the time and date of the video upload.



Fig. 35

Anela Šabić and Suzana Cerić, *Promenade*, March 1997, performance, Sarajevo (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the television reportage of the performance.

Source: "Maxumim: Exhibitions," Maxumim, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://maxumim.com/umjetnici.html>. There is no additional information on the website about the time and date of the video upload.

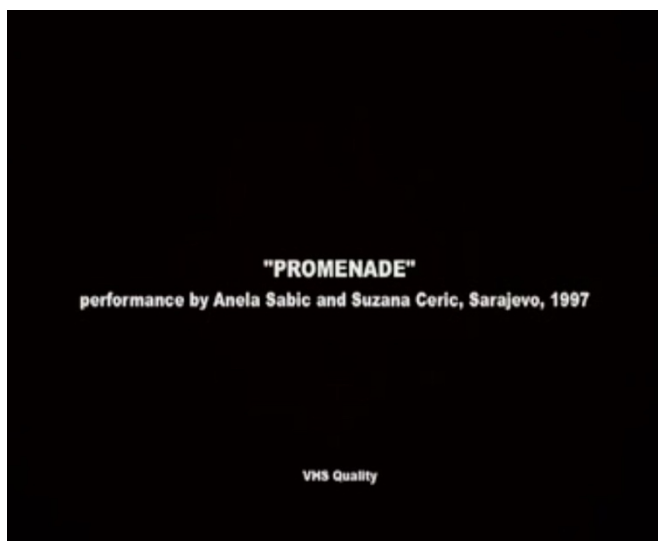


Fig. 36

Anela Šabić and Suzana Cerić, *Promenade*, March 1997, performance, Sarajevo (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the television reportage of the performance.

Source: "Maxumim: Exhibitions," Maxumim, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://maxumim.com/umjetnici.html>. There is no additional information on the website about the time and date of the video upload.

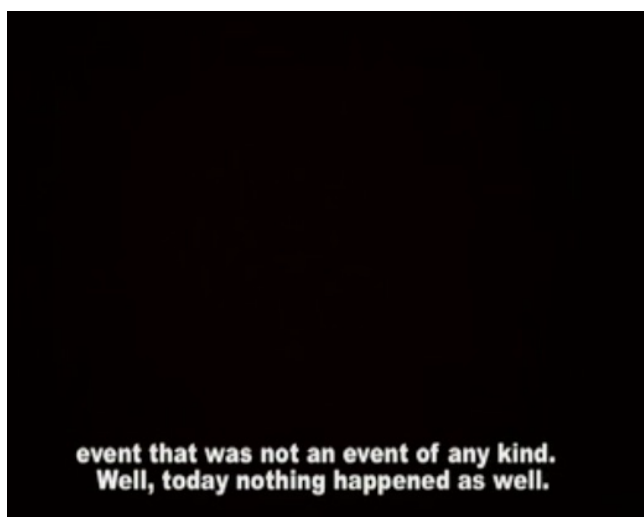


Fig. 37

Anela Šabić and Suzana Cerić, *Promenade*, March 1997, performance, Sarajevo (B-H). Screenshot by the thesis author from the television reportage of the performance.

Source: “Maxumim: Exhibitions,” Maxumim, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://maxumim.com/umjetnici.html>. There is no additional information on the website about the time and date of the video upload.



Fig. 38

Ameli Tančica, *Homage to Yves Klein*, September 3, 1997, photo documentation of a performance, Sarajevo (B-H). [Point 13]

Source: “Ameli Tančica ‘Trilogy: Coffee, Dreamtime and Homage to Yves Klein’,” Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed May 7, 2019, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/meeting-point/meeting-point-ameli-tancica-trilogy-coffe-dreamtime-and-homage-to-yves-klein/>.



Fig. 39

Ameli Tančica, *Homage to Yves Klein*, September 3, 1997, photo documentation of a performance, Sarajevo (B-H). [Point 15]

Source: “Ameli Tančica ‘Trilogy: Coffee, Dreamtime and Homage to Yves Klein’,” Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed May 7, 2019, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/meeting-point/meeting-point-ameli-tancica-trilogy-coffe-dreamtime-and-homage-to-yves-klein/>.



Fig. 40

Ameli Tančica, *Homage to Yves Klein*, September 3, 1997, photo documentation of a performance, Sarajevo (B-H). [Point 19]

Source: “Ameli Tančica ‘Trilogy: Coffee, Dreamtime and Homage to Yves Klein’,” Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed May 7, 2019, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/meeting-point/meeting-point-ameli-tancica-trilogy-coffe-dreamtime-and-homage-to-yves-klein/>.



Fig. 41

Ameli Tančica, *Homage to Yves Klein*, September 3, 1997, photo documentation of a performance, Sarajevo (B-H). [Point 21]

Source: “Ameli Tančica ‘Trilogy: Coffee, Dreamtime and Homage to Yves Klein’,” Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed May 7, 2019, <http://scca.ba/exhibitions/annual-exhibitions/meeting-point/meeting-point-ameli-tancica-trilogy-coffe-dreamtime-and-homage-to-yves-klein/>.



Fig. 42

Zvono, *Toplo-Hladno* [Warm-Cold], 1982–92, performance at Café Zvono, Sarajevo (B-H).

Source: Branka Vujanović, *Zvono*: “Zvono: Poziv na ozbiljnu igru” [Zvono: A call to serious play], in *Zvono* [The Bell] (Bihać: City Gallery Bihać, 2010), 4.



Fig. 43
Radoslav Tadić, *Homage to Yves Klein*, 1984, Počitelj (B-H).

Source: *Artefacts: Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Venice Biennale 1993–2003* (Sarajevo: Ars Aevi, 2007).



Fig. 44
Tomislav Gotovac, *Adapting to objects on Marshal Tito Square – Marshal Tito Square, I love you!*, October 14, 1997, photographic performance documentation. Part of The Week of Performance, Soros Center for Contemporary Art, Zagreb (Croatia).

Source: “Trg maršala Tita, volim te!,” SEEcult.org, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://www.seecult.org/vest/trg-marsala-tita-volim-te>.



Fig. 45

Tomislav Gotovac, *Adapting to objects on Marshal Tito Square – Marshal Tito Square, I love you!*, October 14, 1997, photographic performance documentation. Part of The Week of Performance, Soros Center for Contemporary Art, Zagreb (Croatia).

Source: “Tomislav Gotovac,” BADco News, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://badco.hr/en/news-item/tomislav-gotovac-14-10-2017>.



Fig. 46

Tomislav Gotovac, *Adapting to objects on Marshal Tito Square – Marshal Tito Square, I love you!*, October 14, 1997, photographic performance documentation. Part of The Week of Performance, Soros Center for Contemporary Art, Zagreb (Croatia).

Source: “Tomislav Gotovac,” Zagreb Javni Prostor [Zagreb Public Space], accessed July 7, 2019, <https://zagrebjavni prostor.tumblr.com/post/156897484518/tomislav-gotovac-trg-maršala-tita-volimte>.



Fig. 47

Ciprian Muresan, *Leap into the Void, after Three Seconds*, 2004, photograph, gelatin silver print on paper, 1400 x 1000 mm.

Source: “Ciprian Muresan Leap into the Void, after Three Seconds,” summary by Juliet Bingham, Tate Gallery, last accessed January 17, 2020, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/muresan-leap-into-the-void-after-three-seconds-p20523>.



Fig. 48

Yves Klein, *Leap into the Void*, 1960, photograph.

Source: “Leap into the Void, October 1960,” Yves Klein, last accessed January 17, 2020, <http://www.yvesklein.com/en/oeuvres/view/643/leap-into-the-void/>.



Fig. 49

Nuriya Pecikoza running in the streets of Sarajevo during siege.

Source: "Sarajevo Legend Nuriya Pecikoza Passed Away," *Sarajevo Times*, July 3, 2021, <https://sarajevotimes.com/sarajevo-legend-nuriya-pecikoza-passed-away/>.

Appendix 2: Abstract (English)

The objective of the master's thesis, *A Geography of Gesture: Contemporary Performative Art Practices of Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina*, is to examine, historicize, and define the term “performative gesture.” In order to do so, this thesis uses examples of contemporary performative art practices from postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina and analyzes artworks by Gordana Anđelić-Galić (b. 1949), Almir Kurt (b. 1971), Samir Plasto (b. 1970), Danica Dakić (b. 1962), Suzana Cerić (b. 1971), Anela Šabić (b. 1970), and Ameli Tančica (b. 1970) that were performed or exhibited in public space in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the immediate postwar period between the years 1997 and 2000. Explored in five separate case studies, these artworks articulate—each in its own manner—different ways of embodied storytelling carried out in distinct public spaces in two postwar cities, Sarajevo and Mostar.

With the aim to historicize and define the notion of performative gesture and simultaneously to contextualize a part of the postwar period of Bosnia-Herzegovina's art history, this thesis develops two methodological frameworks: metonymic structure and geographic paradigm.

Finally, this thesis understands performative gestures as acts within public space that can be recognized in the durational or fleeting artistic action, or in the placement of specific objects in distinct places within the realm of the city. Performative gestures examined in this thesis indirectly expose and address cultural and political issues, blind spots and gaps and vulnerabilities, as well as displacements and losses tied to the geographical context of postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Appendix 3: Abstract/Zusammenfassung (German)

Das Ziel der Masterarbeit *A Geography of Gesture: Contemporary Performative Art Practices of Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina* ist es, den Begriff der performativen Geste anhand von Beispielen zeitgenössischer performativer Kunstpraktiken aus Nachkriegs-Bosnien-Herzegowina zu untersuchen, zu historisieren und zu definieren. Dazu werden Arbeiten von Gordana Anđelić-Galić (geb. 1949), Almir Kurt (geb. 1971), Samir Plasto (geb. 1970), Danica Dakić (geb. 1962), Suzana Cerić (geb. 1971), Anela Šabić (geb. 1970), und Ameli Tančica (geb. 1970) analysiert, die in der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit zwischen 1997 und 2000 im öffentlichen Raum in Bosnien-Herzegowina aufgeführt oder ausgestellt wurden. Die Kunstwerke, die in fünf separaten Fallstudien untersucht werden, bringen—jedes auf seine Weise—unterschiedliche Arten des verkörperten Geschichtenerzählens zum Ausdruck, die in zwei Nachkriegsstädten, Sarajevo und Mostar, in unterschiedlichen öffentlichen Räumen aufgeführt wurden.

Mit dem Ziel, den Begriff der performativen Geste zu historisieren und zu definieren und gleichzeitig im Kontext der Nachkriegskunstgeschichte Bosnien-Herzegowinas zu verorten, entwickelt diese Arbeit zwei methodologische Rahmungen: die metonymische Struktur und das geographische Paradigma.

Schließlich versteht diese Masterarbeit performative Gesten als Handlungen im öffentlichen Raum, die sich in der dauerhaften oder ephemeren künstlerischen Handlung sowie in der Platzierung spezifischer Objekte an bestimmten Orten der Stadt erkennen lassen. Performative Gesten, wie sie in den untersuchten Kunstwerken verstanden werden, thematisieren und legen indirekt kulturelle und politische Fragen offen: blinde Stellen und Lücken, Verwundbarkeiten, Verschiebungen und Verluste, die an den geographischen Kontext des Nachkriegs-Bosnien-Herzegowina gebunden sind.

Appendix 4: Transcript of the Television Report about the Performance *Promenade* (1997, Sarajevo) by Suzana Cerić and Anela Šabić

“Promenade”

performance by Anela Šabić and Suzana Cerić, Sarajevo, 1997.³⁴⁸

VHS Quality

The introductory remarks by the television presenter:

Today, exactly a noon, the center of Sarajevo, around the Eternal Flame, was blocked. Cars had to stop, one could not pass through Tito’s Street, and pedestrians could only walk on sidewalks. Sarajevo Police secured some hundred meters of the road, from the National Bank to the Eternal Flame. And all that for only one reason, so that two girls could have a walk on that road section without interruption. Suzana and Anela are students of the Fine Arts Academy. Today they gave a task to Sarajevo to figure out what their walk meant while the entire city stopped.

Inscriptions in the video reportage:

And then...

Pripremili [prepared by] - Lejla Babović Dino Kasalo

Montaža [Montage] - Ekrem Mulahasanović

Comments from the interviewed passersby:

This is fantastic, this is the victory of the spirit.

Spontaneously, no happenings.

I don’t get it, but I feel this really...

³⁴⁸ The performance documentation can be accessed and downloaded from the web page of the art group Maxumim. See “Maxumim: Exhibitions,” Maxumim, accessed July 7, 2019, <http://maxumim.com/umjetnici.html>. There is no additional information on the website about the time and date of the video upload.

Don't run before you walk.

This is a better attention turning then...

Nothing happened now, but they succeeded to stir the mud.

Ending remarks by the television presenter:

It's not a custom to explain artistic visions, but let's clarify this a little. How many times have radio and all TV stations and newspapers reported go a cultural event that was not an event of any kind? Well, today nothing happened as well.