



# ART+ MEDIA

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**MAIN TOPIC: Art and Archives in the Digital Age**

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## Editors' Note

### Art and Archives in the Digital Age

What challenges and threats does the digital age pose for archives and how is the medium of the archive represented in contemporary art and theory? The radical challenges posed by social media have changed the relationship between users and archives and the role of documents and the status of archives. Wikileaks, Flickr, Instagram, and many others are paradigmatic examples of this trend. They mark a temporary culmination by providing a repository for the limitless production of digital images created by smartphone cameras and shared by anonymous users.

Various conceptualizations of an archive have been formulated, for example, archive and historical a priori (Michel Foucault), archive fever (Jacques Derrida), archival territory (Allan Sekula), archival entropy (Wolfgang Ernst), archival violence (Ariella Azoulay), archival activism (Joaquín Barriendos) and others. This issue contains contributions dealing with the aesthetics of contemporary artistic practices, artistic research in/with archives and studies on the theory of cultural memory media. What constitutes an archive, apart from being an accumulation of documents meticulously organized according to an all-encompassing classification and imposed power structures? How can the archive become a living and activated place from which we can rethink art and its institutions? Could we perceive archives not only as time capsules but also as repositories for unfinished or incomplete utopias or alternative futures?

In contemporary scholarship, including visual anthropology, the sociology of visual culture and social art history, there is a growing interest in the re-evaluation of archived iconospheres from socialist and post-socialist times. Theorizing the notion of the archive itself raises the question of how to undermine and unlearn the imperial legacy of an archive or even activate its hidden potential.

The issue discusses how digital technologies have profoundly altered perceptions of materiality, space, and information. Boško Drobnjak in his essay "Digital Architectural Archives – Aesthetic Reading" tackles the problem of digital archives that have emerged as temporary repositories of architectural activity. Pablo Gobira, Emanuelle Silva, and Luiz Oliveira co-authored the essay "Digital Games and The City: About Reality, Commuting and Gamification", which provides an insight into gamification of reality. Jovana Tošić in her essay "Digital Mini-Archives: Social Media Users as Curators of an Architectural Utopia" explores utopian potential that is based on digital mini-archives and curating role of social media users as interpreters of architectural history, as well as of the future of architecture. So called non-fungible tokens (NFT) and their implementation in visual arts during the COVID-19 pandemic is

analyzed by Maja Stanković in her essay “NFT: An Episode in Digital Arts”. Vladimir Popov in his essay “The Transformative Role of Digital Tools in Comic Book Preservation” revise the media theories that democratize access to cultural heritage, transforming archives into active sites of cultural engagement and potentiality. And, finally, Daniel Grůň in his essay “Cultural Therapy and Concern for the Archive. The Case of Documentary Video Archives by Tomáš Rafa” explores contemporary artistic ways of archiving and their roles in constructing regional art histories.

Guest Issue Editor  
**Daniel Grůň**



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The background features large, overlapping, curved shapes in shades of grey and white, creating a modern, abstract aesthetic. The shapes are reminiscent of stylized letters or organic forms, with some appearing as negative space within larger grey areas.

# **MAIN TOPIC**

**ART AND ARCHIVES IN THE DIGITAL AGE**



## ART+MEDIA

**Boško Drobňak**

Digital Architectural Archives – Aesthetic Reading

**Pablo Gobira, Emanuelle Silva, Luiz Oliveira**

Digital Games and The City: About Reality, Commuting and Gamification

**Jovana Tošić**

Digital Mini-Archives: Social Media Users as Curators of an Architectural Utopia

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Cultural Therapy and *Concern for the Archive*. The Case of Documentary Video Archives by Tomáš Rafa

**Boško Drobnjak**

*University of Belgrade – Faculty of Architecture, Belgrade, Serbia*

## Digital Architectural Archives – Aesthetic Reading

**Abstract:** My aim in this paper is to examine the impact of digital technology on the perception and practice of architecture. Online activities leave discernible traces, challenging the traditional ontological view of the subject's independence from the material world. I will offer an exploration of the Internet's role as the primary communication medium transforms architectural practice, emphasizing digital archives and distribution. Platforms like Pinterest, ArchDaily, and Instagram have transformed how architectural practices are shared and consumed, cultivating a new culture of multimodal communication. Within this context, I will discuss how digital technologies have profoundly altered perceptions of materiality, space, and information. I will explore how architects and artists now operate within an interconnected network of social, economic, and technological forces, moving away from traditional media to embrace digital fragmentation. This shift impacts how architectural objects are perceived, from complete forms to fragmented digital representations that are accessible to a global audience.

**Keywords:** digital technology; architectural practice; digital archives; digital images; aesthetic communication; architectural representation.

### Introduction

In contemporaneity,<sup>1</sup> the Internet has become the main form of communication. Art and architecture, as the most representative visual fields, utilize the Internet for distributing drawings, pictures, and photographs, thereby creating digital archives. These digital architectural archives have become the primary means of exchange, communion, and presentation with regards to the creativity of individual and collective *architectural practices*. It is important to emphasize at this point that the term 'architectural practice' refers to the expansion of architecture beyond the traditional realms of design, construction, building design, interior spaces, and urban planning. The term 'practice' signifies an ongoing process, something in progress, unlike 'artwork' or 'building', which denote a completed and built architectural project. Therefore, architectural practices encompass a broader spectrum, including marginal and unconventional activities that imply architectural spatiality. This can extend to unrealized works such as concepts,

<sup>1</sup> Terry Smith, "Contemporary Art and Contemporaneity," *Critical Inquiry* 32, 4 (2006): 681–707.

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drawings, plans, and diagrams, representing not finished products but open-ended, unfinished endeavors. In this process, architectural practices necessarily arise from specific social situations, movements, relationships, and actions.

With the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, internet applications such as Pinterest, ArchDaily, and Instagram became primary platforms for the distribution of architectural practices and cultural archives. These applications broadcast architectural practices globally, immersing viewers in the world of visual representations – one might say, a virtual spectacle.<sup>2</sup> Such digital architectural archives can be created by a single author, an architectural bureau, cultural institutions, or anonymous individuals.<sup>3</sup> The Internet allows authors to make their art accessible to almost everyone around the world while simultaneously creating a personal archive of it.<sup>4</sup> A significant factor in this context is that every instance of viewing an image or reading a text on the Internet is meticulously documented, leaving discernible traces. In the offline realm, the act of contemplation leaves no trace, corresponding to the traditional ontological view that the subject exists independently of the material world. On the other hand when online, every act of contemplation is recorded, thereby eroding the ontological autonomy of the subject.<sup>5</sup>

Nowadays, as Boris Groys perspicaciously remarked: “One can say that on the Internet there is no art or literature, but only information about art and literature.”<sup>6</sup> The shift from traditional mass media to horizontal communication networks based on the Internet and wireless technologies has introduced varied communication patterns, leading to a significant cultural transformation. As virtual interactions become essential to our daily lives, a new culture is emerging, centered around multimodal communication and digital information processing.<sup>7</sup> For that precise reason, wireless communication has become the leading platform for distributing a variety of digitized products such as games, music, images, news, and instant messaging. These services encompass every facet of human activity, from personal support networks to professional tasks and political mobilization. As a result, electronic communication networks permeate all our actions, regardless of location or time. That said, the key feature of wireless communication is not mobility but continuous connectivity.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Here, ‘spectacle’ is understood in Guy Debord’s sense: “The spectacle is *capital* accumulated to the point that it becomes images.” See: Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (London: Rebel Press, 2005), 17.

<sup>3</sup> There is another aspect that does not have enough space to be covered here, but it is important to mention what Gilles Deleuze pointed out: the question of control. For Deleuze, it was important to critically re-examine the relationship between digital technology and control. In his view, the basic idea is that power and control in contemporary society are exerted through digital means, contrasting with the more physical forms of control seen in earlier disciplinary societies. That is to say, digital technologies play a crucial role in control societies by enabling continuous modulation and monitoring of individuals’ behavior. See: Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” *October* 59 (1992): 3–7.

<sup>4</sup> Boris Groys, *In the Flow* (London and New York: Verso, 2016), 177.

<sup>5</sup> Groys, *In the Flow*, 185–86.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>7</sup> Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), xviii.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, xxx.

This connection is made possible by the circulation of photos through digital photography technology, resulting in uncontrolled and chaotic distribution across social networks. Instagram and Facebook constitute systems of technologies that facilitate the movement, transfer, presentation, selection, deletion, replacement, and censorship of images. These platforms exemplify the transformation of images from physical hard copies to digital entities, fostering a complex interplay of visual exchanges. As Paul Virilio articulated, with the advent of synthetic images through info-graphic software and digital image processing in computer-aided design, we are now approaching synthetic vision, signifying the automation of perception.<sup>9</sup> In *The Information Bomb*, Virilio indisputably grounded his debate about the change in our sensory perception in the digital age. He argued that as audiovisual, tactile, and olfactory information increasingly goes digital, the shift from immediate sensations to numerical probabilities of distant phenomena threatens to disrupt our sensory ecology irreversibly.<sup>10</sup>

For British philosopher Peter Osborne, a digitally produced image is inherently shareable and capable of global distribution via the Internet. In other words, the extensive and diverse social interactions facilitated by the endless possibilities for visual reproductions bring about a substantial transformation in social space.<sup>11</sup> This is precisely what Walter Benjamin underlined in his well-known statement: “Just as the entire mode of existence of human collectives changes over long historical periods, so too does their mode of perception. The way in which human perception is organized—the medium in which it occurs—is conditioned not only by nature but by history.”<sup>12</sup> This famous thesis, perpetually relevant with each new era, precisely explains that in contemporary times, the visibility and sensory perception of the world differ from those of all preceding epochs. What is evident is that digital technologies have dramatically altered our perceptions of materiality, space, and information, inevitably shaping our understanding of architecture, habitation, and the built environment. These transformations are most evident in the advanced systems developed for simulating, storing, and disseminating information.<sup>13</sup> That is to say, we are experiencing a profound media revolution characterized by the transition of all cultural production, distribution, and communication to computer-mediated forms. As Lev Manovich would put it, this revolution impacts every stage of communication, including accumulation, manipulation, storage, and distribution. Moreover, it affects all forms of media, including text, still images, moving images, sound, and – crucially for this paper – spatial constructions.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Paul Virilio, *The Vision Machine* (Bloomington: Indiana University press, 1994), 62.

<sup>10</sup> Paul Virilio, *The Information Bomb* (London and New York: Verso, 2005), 114.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Osborne, *The Postconceptual Condition: Critical Essays* (London, Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2018), 136.

<sup>12</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in *Selected Writings Volume 3, 1935-1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 104.

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from Outside* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2001), 75–76.

<sup>14</sup> Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), 43.



Numerous interfaces and processes nowadays are already capable of linking human perception to the computer's program and the so-called Mixed Reality virtual environment.<sup>15</sup> However, this paper will focus on two-dimensional representations and the experience of architectural space on social networks, serving as everyday forms of digital architectural archives.

### **Technological innovation and artistic expression: from avant-garde to postmodernism – a brief overview**

Innovative aspects within the technological sphere (such as new media like film and photography) were significant characteristics of the avant-garde, particularly in terms of artistic expression. For the avant-garde artists between the two World Wars, the project of new media was utopian. In contrast, the neo-avant-garde pursued the synthesis of art and science. After the Second World War, with the formation of the *Welfare State*, many technological products became available to every household. With the neo-avant-garde, the artist assumes the role of the scientist. The neo-avant-garde approach in architecture, for instance, aimed to dismantle the traditional, expected, and rigid forms of post-war architectural practices by synthesizing architecture with art, science, technology, politics, and everyday life. It sought to concretely realize the utopian ideals of historical architectural avant-gardes within a new ideological, political, technological, and social context. In other words, Neo-avant-garde artists after Second World War saw new media practices as both fulfilling the avant-garde's utopian vision of merging art and technology and integrating themselves into the commercialization of new technologies accessible for widespread consumption beyond specialized scientific and technological settings. With postmodernism, high technology becomes widely accessible for mass consumption. The postmodern artist becomes a participant in information marketing, utilizing programs and appropriating their effects. More precisely, postmodern artists employ pre-existing operations in their artistic practice. Bruno Latour says that modernity is “much more than an illusion and much less than an essence. It is a force added to others that for a long time had the power to represent, to accelerate, or to summarize – a power that it no longer entirely holds.”<sup>16</sup> This is not to imply that contemporary times have not introduced novel forms of technology and modes of living (e.g. internet, digital age). What architecture theorist Jeremy Till will emphasize is that Latour is acutely aware of these modern innovations, but perceives them not merely as outcomes of technological advancement, but rather as components of a more intricate network of social, economic, and technological forces.<sup>17</sup> Today, the process of information and communication shapes human labor, facilitates the exchange of goods, and establishes the ideological digital sphere.

<sup>15</sup> Wolfgang Strauss, Monika Reischmann, “Implosion of Numbers: Performative Mixed Reality,” in *Disappearing Architecture: From Real to Virtual to Quantum*, ed. Georg Flachbart and Peter Weibel (Basel: Birkhäuser Architecture, 2005), 123.

<sup>16</sup> Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 40.

<sup>17</sup> Jeremy Till, *Architecture Depends* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2013), 57.

## Contrasting perspectives on the digital age: Baudrillard's hyperreality and Kittler's technological determinism

In this section I will refer to two different theoretical perspectives: French philosopher Jean Baudrillard's and German media theorist Friedrich Kittler's, who have differing views on the digital age. Baudrillard views the digital age through the lens of hyperreality and simulation, arguing that digital technologies blur the line between reality and its representations, creating a world where simulations replace the reality. When Baudrillard talks about a society dominated by the proliferation of images, signs, and simulations that frequently obscure or replace reality, this allows him to consciously evoke the concept of simulation and its impact on contemporary life.<sup>18</sup> Baudrillard pursues a prominent discussion of the digital in his concepts of hyperreality and the simulation of reality through media and technology. He contends that in the digital age, reality becomes indistinguishable from its representations, resulting in a state of hyperreality where simulations are mistaken for reality itself. For instance, transferred to the architectural field, a simulacrum is understood as an architectural work that appears to correspond to reality but is, in fact, an artificially created reality with no reference to actual architectural buildings.

In clear contrast to that position, Kittler conceives the digital realm as fundamentally shaped by the material and technical aspects of media, emphasizing the deterministic influence of technology on culture and society. The argument of Kittler's *Optical Media: Berlin Lectures 1999* runs as follows: Unlike film, television ceased to rely on optics. While one can inspect each frame of a film reel by holding it up to the sun, television signals are inaccessible visually as they exist solely as electronic signals. These signals are only perceptible to the eyes at the beginning and end of their transmission chain – in the studio and on the screen. Therefore, digital image processing marks the complete dissolution of this final vestige of the imaginary realm.<sup>19</sup> In short, Kittler's point is that digital photography represents the dissolution of its ontological basis, no longer portraying a fixed feature of reality but rather an effect of symbolic organization or algorithmic processes. Moreover, within network systems, it becomes detached from fixed tangible objects, circulating continuously through social networks. That is to say, in the digital age, we no longer merely depict life through images; instead, we construct events as artificial or virtual realities. The fundamental ontological aspect of this shift is that control over processes in the supposed 'real' world is now achievable only through these constructed events.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), xx.

<sup>19</sup> Friedrich Kittler, *Optical media: Berlin Lectures 1999* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2010), 226.

<sup>20</sup> Žarko Paić, *Tehnosfera I. Žrtvovanje i dosada: Životinja – Čovjek – Stroj* (Zagreb: Biblioteka Sandorf & Mizantrop, 2018), 42.

## Digital representation and the sensory perception of architecture

In the context of this paper, the real question is: how does all this concern architecture and its representation on the Internet? As Groys would argue, contemporary artistic events, unlike traditional artwork, cannot be preserved for contemplation but can be documented and commented on, shifting the focus from creating art objects to generating information about art events.<sup>21</sup> In this theoretical context, at the intersection of the digital and artistic spheres, one can argue that digital art facilitates novel methods for accessing, appropriating, and manipulating information on technical, epistemological, and emotional levels. For example, techniques in digital art include hypermedia, databases, search engines, data comparators, image processing tools, visualizations, simulations, and interactive technologies, among others.<sup>22</sup> In this process, a digital artist who adopts technical skills of an IT professional engages with media records rather than direct material reality, focusing on accumulated representations and data. They explore the possibilities for transforming and disseminating these records, creating artificially constructed audiovisual texts that are experienced individually or collectively through sensory distribution.<sup>23</sup>

That being said, we are facing a shift in the perception of architecture within the previously accepted frameworks. It involves a kind of reanimation through new technology and drastically new forms of communication. The digital realms of Instagram, Facebook, and similar platforms represent spaces of transition between different states and continents. Viewing these digital archives on a computer, laptop, tablet, or phone, rather than in their full natural dimensions, has become an accepted norm.

Such a perception of architectural representations is produced by distance that separates the visual depiction from the real, materialized presence of architecture. It is the inflation of architectural images, photographs, and renderings within digital production and consumption that creates this effect. As stated, in the digital realm, architecture is observed from a distance, leading to an artificial sense of understanding the architectural space – an understanding that is fundamentally incomplete when compared to traditional, firsthand experiences. For the architect and theoretician of architecture Steven Holl, the issue of perception is inseparable from the archetypal experience of architecture itself, in which feelings occupy a central place.<sup>24</sup> In contemporaneity, in cyber culture, unlike over half a century ago, the distinction between the real, virtual, and illusory blurs, leading to continual transformation of form.<sup>25</sup>

As mentioned earlier, there has been a shift away from realistic representations of architectural objects in everyday life towards the creation of digital copies intended

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<sup>21</sup> Groys, *In the Flow*, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Miško Šuvaković, “Skice za teoriju novih medija,” *Kultura* 147 (2015): 64.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Steven Holl, Juhani Pallasmaa, and Alberto Perez-Gomez, *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture* (San Francisco: William Stout Publishers, 2007), 40.

<sup>25</sup> Vladimir Milenković, *Forma prati temu – petodelni metodološki esej* (Beograd: Univerzitet u Beogradu – Arhitektonski fakultet, Muzej primenjene umetnosti, 2015), 27.

for websites or social networks. In present times, the aestheticization of reality, as well as digital spaces, is more dominant than ever before. To exemplify this, I will refer once again to popular platforms such as ArchDaily, Instagram, and Pinterest. They are characterized by a visually-driven approach that emphasizes high-quality images and visual content as central to their platforms. These platforms often feature minimalist designs with clean, uncluttered layouts to highlight images, and they incorporate interactive elements such as likes, comments, and shares to engage users. Typography tends to be simple and understated, using sans-serif fonts that complement the visual content without distraction. Presentations are polished, with a high degree of attention to image quality, reflecting current design and visual trends through the use of filters and selected feeds.

These necessarily copied photos target specific audiences and, due to the global reach of the Internet, have the potential to reach a broader audience. The aesthetic contemplation of the architectural work has been supplanted by the aesthetic contemplation of its copy. An important aspect of aesthetic communication here is that the frame of the computer screen (or smartphone, tablet, etc.) separates the drawing from the material world.<sup>26</sup> That is to say, perception has changed as a result of the transition from a horizontal to a vertical surface. A traditional paper drawing is perceived in its entirety at a glance, whereas a digital drawing is viewed in segments. Digital drawings can be constructed by integrating multiple files, which can be modified and collaborated on by individuals across vast distances, often concurrently.<sup>27</sup> This kind of abandonment of viewing architectural objects in their entirety has led to a shift towards digital fragmentation. To put it crudely: in digital aesthetics, interaction refers to the communication process among living systems within a network that lacks a central point or boundaries.<sup>28</sup>

In other words, architectural objects are no longer perceived in complete forms; instead, they exist as specific segments distributed through social networks. In this sense, digital archives of architectural practices, whether realized or conceptual, become easily accessible. They provide access to extensive databases containing diverse examples from the history of architecture and civilization. Through digital architectural archives available on social networks or specific websites, it is now possible to make historical comparisons, analyses, and identifications like never before. This can also be related to the existence of digital archives in the context of heritage presentation.<sup>29</sup> For instance, one can use various photo and video editing software to analyze how the German-American architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe incorporated elements of the ancient Parthenon temple into his Barcelona Pavilion project, exhibited at the 1929 International Exposition in Spain, but recontextualized in a new historical setting.

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<sup>26</sup> Jonathan Hill, *Immaterial Architecture* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 59.

<sup>27</sup> Christopher Height, "Manners of Working: Fabricating Representation in Digital Based Design," in *The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory*, ed. Greig Crysler, Stephen Cairns and Hilde Heynen (New York: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2012), 414.

<sup>28</sup> Paić, *Tehnosfera I. Žrtvovanje i dosada: Životinja – Čovjek – Stroj*, 152.

<sup>29</sup> Marko Nikolić, Boško Drobnjak, and Irena Kuletin Čulafić, "The Possibilities of Preservation, Regeneration and Presentation of Industrial Heritage: The Case of Old Mint "A.D." on Belgrade Riverfront," *Sustainability* 12, 5264 (2020); Milja Mladenović, "Mixed-reality Heritage: Edutainment Potential in Students Square Area Public Spaces," *Serbian Architectural Journal* 15, 23 (2023): 314–31.

Digital archives have emerged as temporary repositories of architectural activity. Contemporary digital architectural archives are documented and processed, enabling interventions (such as meme practices) and comments by followers of specific institutions or individuals who post images of architectural objects on their social network or internet accounts. However, these digital representations lack a complete sensory understanding of the architectural environment they depict, such as comprehensive sensory perception of space including sounds, smells, or the warmth of its lighting.

Following the Finnish architect and theoretician Juhani Pallasmaa, this digital turn fails to bring us closer to understanding architectural space. Pallasmaa is known for his phenomenological approach to architecture, emphasizing the importance of human sensory experience and perception in the design and understanding of architectural spaces. Pallasmaa argues that contemporary architecture often prioritizes visual elements at the expense of other sensory experiences. He believes that this visual dominance can lead to a sense of disconnection and detachment in the built environment. Pallasmaa advocates for a more holistic approach to architecture that engages all senses, creating spaces that resonate with human experience on a deeper level.<sup>30</sup>

Swiss architect and theoretician Peter Zumthor stands on the same theoretical lines, he emphasizes the importance of sensory experience in observing architecture by saying the following: “The sense that I try to instill into materials is beyond all rules of composition, and their tangibility, smell and acoustic qualities are merely element of the language that we are obliged to use.”<sup>31</sup> In his work, Zumthor focuses on creating atmospheres that evoke feelings and memories, emphasizing materiality, light, and building tactile qualities. These sections in particular contain Zumthor’s insights into how architectural spaces can evoke specific emotions and sensory experiences, providing a deep understanding of his approach to creating atmospheres in architecture: “We perceive atmosphere through our emotional sensitivity – a form of perception that works incredibly quickly, and which we humans evidently need to help us survive... We are capable of immediate appreciation, of a spontaneous emotional response, of rejecting things in flesh.”<sup>32</sup> Both Pallasmaa and Zumthor advocate for a sensory-rich approach to architecture, valuing the full range of human sensory experiences in creating meaningful and engaging spaces.

In other words, architectural spaces reproduced through digital platforms inevitably lose some aspects of their full sensory perception, making it challenging for observers to fully grasp the entirety of the space. Instead of focusing on a single comprehensive representation, the observer’s attention shifts from one depiction to another. Digital architectural archives use images of architectural events to evoke a specific, individual atmosphere that directly engages the subject, observer, or recipient encountering a digital architectural representation (copy). However, such digital copies are detached and isolated from their original contexts, existing within the digital sphere.

<sup>30</sup> Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Academy, 2005), 26–30.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture* (Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhäuser Architecture, 1999), 11.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Zumthor, *Atmospheres: Architectural Environments. Surrounding Objects* (Basel, Boston, Berlin: Birkhäuser Architecture, 2006), 13.

## Conclusion

My intention with this paper was to show how digital archives, such as Pinterest, ArchDaily, and Instagram, have fostered a culture of multimodal communication, where architectural practices are increasingly fragmented and disseminated through digital images. This very evolution challenges conventional perceptions of architecture and art, highlighting the absence of fully sensory engagement crucial for experiencing architecture in the digital age. Further, I discussed how, despite the unprecedented access to architectural knowledge and global connectivity offered by digital archives, these platforms (although change in this matter is surely coming in the future) impose limitations by reducing complex, sensory-rich experiences to visual information on screens. This digital fragmentation, following the theoretical paths of Peter Zumthor and Juhani Pallasmaa, detracts from the holistic, sensory engagement essential for fully appreciating architectural spaces. However, as mentioned, in the future, with the continued evolution of VR and AR technologies, there is potential to significantly enhance sensory experiences in digital architecture. These technologies promise to simulate immersive environments where users can engage with architectural spaces not just visually, but also through auditory and tactile feedback. On the other hand, this promise of enhanced sensory immersion, while seductive, masks a deeper ideological dilemma: instead of truly enriching our experience of architecture, it may merely substitute one form of virtual spectacle for another, creating a further distance from architecture as a reflection of reality within a specific social-historical context.

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# **Digital Games and The City: About Reality, Commuting and Gamification**

**Abstract:** This paper is part of a research on gaming and reality carried out by the Laboratório de Poéticas Fronteiriças, a research group rolled on the CNPq's directory and certified by the UEMG (Brazil). Growing number of phone programs that provide ride-share services, transportation, or product delivery, primarily food, remind us of old games that use similar mechanisms. Our aim is to analyze the games series *Crazy Taxi* and *Grand Theft Auto*, their narrative and aesthetic elements as well as similarities to the Uber app in order to better understand ways the gamification of such types of apps can allow a re-signification of the city spaces, its users as players and of its socio-economic impact.

**Keywords:** digital games; virtual reality; cities; Uber; commuting.

## **Introduction**

This paper is part of a research on games and reality carried out by the Laboratory of Front Poetics<sup>1</sup>, a research, innovation, and development group on the CNPq's directory and certified by the UEMG. We will present a bibliographical review and an analysis of two games accompanied by a comparative study with an urban transportation program. Considering the growing number of phone programs being developed, with the purpose of 'car ride', transportation services or even delivery of products, especially food, we can easily recall a few old video games that use similar mechanisms, such as use of map and the need for player (or user) to be in motion. Based on the context mentioned above, this paper discusses the relationship between game and reality.

*Crazy Taxi*<sup>2</sup> is a series of racing games developed by Hitmaker and published by SEGA, with its first game hitting the market in 1999, primarily in the arcades. The

<sup>1</sup> <http://labfront.weebly.com> – CNPq/UEMG.

<sup>2</sup> Hitmaker, *Crazy Taxi*, Sega, 1999.

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goal of the game is to board and deliver passengers to their destinations as quickly as possible. Provided with a map to guide him around, the player loses credits if the delivery is not made on time and receives extra credits if the delivery time is met.

*Grand Theft Auto* (popularly known by the acronym *GTA*)<sup>3</sup> is a game series that revolves around the exploration of its open world, where the player can travel long distances, by car or on foot, accomplishing missions, often with a time limit.

Ride-sharing apps (such as Uber, Cabify, and Lyft, among others) work similarly. Such apps can be linked to games by using some of their elements, including map, user's (driver's) pay according to the length of their trajectory, and by archiving data of each of the rides so that it becomes possible to observe a specific user's travel history.

The presence of game elements in situations that go beyond the game context is known as gamification, where “like some other forms of virtual work, blurs the line between ‘work’ and ‘leisure’”<sup>4</sup>. Having that in mind, discussions are emerging about how apps take part in this gamification context, not only through their interface and graphic elements, but also by mixing boundaries between work and leisure, between social and game realities in a more fluid and clear way.

However, Uber, a ride-sharing and food delivery app, is already available in 60 countries around the world, with more than 10 billion singular uses made since it was created in 2010<sup>5</sup>. Uber is not the only company that provides these kinds of services but is certainly the largest and the most popular one today. The app's existence is so embedded in daily life and popular culture that it is common to hear the company's name mentioned in movies or tv shows, as well as hearing its users saying its name even when using another app (“I'm calling an Uber”), having become synonymous with a transportation service.

According to Nick Yee<sup>6</sup>, the relationship between work and play has the potential to become indistinguishable. Digital games – usually seen as an entertainment activity – are increasingly being recognized as a stressful and laborious activity that requires time and energy, demanding us to work for them, preparing and training us for the work environment. Understanding this makes it possible for us to analyze the relationship between games and reality. We can research how these two are intertwined and how they modify one another so we can understand how the gap between apps like Uber and games like *GTA* or *Crazy Taxi* is a complicated problem, especially if we restrict the analysis to the mechanics of interaction.

This is the perspective that we intend to take in order to discuss the gamified aesthetics of transportation apps. We are going to use Uber as an example to better understand the relationship between games and urban spaces, seeing that it is the environment used as a base for both *GTA* and *Crazy Taxi*, as well as Uber's trips. In order

<sup>3</sup> Rockstar North, *Grand Theft Auto*, Rockstar Games, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Miriam Cherry, “The Gamification of Work,” *Hofstra Law Review* 40, 4 (January 1, 2012): 851–58.

<sup>5</sup> Mansoor Iqbal, “Uber Revenue and Usage Statistics (2024),” *Business of Apps*, January 15, 2024, <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/uber-statistics/>, acc. on February 25, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Nick Yee, “The Labor of Fun: How Video Games Blur the Boundaries of Work and Play,” *Games and Culture* 1, 1 (January 2006): 68.

to achieve this goal, besides this introduction and the final considerations, we divided our paper into three (3). In the first part we discuss the relationship between games and reality. In the second section, we discuss the games' movement mechanics and, by comparison, how mobility occurs through the use of apps throughout the city. In the third section, by taking Uber as an example, we analyse how the aesthetics of games spills over to the social reality through the process of user (driver/passenger) ludification and also bring to light the discussions that are emerging as criticism of these types of apps.

## Reality and games

The world-wide known board game *Monopoly* was released in 1935 by Charles Darrow, at the time working for Parker Brothers, a US children's product company. The game consists of several pieces (pawns), which represent each player, a dice, and fake money bills. The players wait their turn to roll the dice and see how many blocks, or spaces, they can 'walk' on the board; each block represents a street or a city. Once inside the block, if the player has enough money he/she can purchase a house on a spot represented by a placement. If the player ends up in a block that is already owned by another player, he must pay rent to the landlord. The player who possesses more houses, and thus more money, wins the game.

As we can see, the relationship between *Monopoly* and real-life elements is blatant. The board game was created, decades before its release, by Elizabeth Magie Phillips, an anti-monopolist who developed two versions of the: one where all players would win when riches were created, and the other where the objective of the game was the same as we know it to be nowadays.<sup>7</sup> Despite the creator's goal for the game to be a sign of "protest against the big monopolists of her time"<sup>8</sup>, once it was made available for mass consumption, the players chose to try and achieve on the board, something that in real life would be more difficult and take more time.

There is a well-known saying that games imitate life. We could use this expression to explain why, by getting rid of social and economic hindrances, prejudices, and obstacles, the *Monopoly* game became popular by giving its players a way to achieve a goal that is practically impossible in social reality. The game, therefore, creates a version of reality that is desired by its players, who then seek to carry certain features and actions of the game dynamics into their social and environmental interactions, in order to be able to get closer to what they can experience in the game. In a feedback loop the game goes on adapting and incorporating transformations that society and people went through, developing its own methods and mechanisms, at the same time, being influenced by, and influencing, our social reality.

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<sup>7</sup> Mary Pilon, "Monopoly Was Designed to Teach the 99% about Income Inequality," *Smithsonian Magazine*, January 2015, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/monopoly-was-designed-teach-99-about-income-inequality-180953630/>, acc. on February 25, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Mary Pilon, "Monopoly's Inventor: The Progressive Who Didn't Pass 'Go,'" *The New York Times*, February 13, 2015, sec. Business, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/15/business/behind-monopoly-an-inventor-who-didnt-pass-go.html>, acc. on February 25, 2024.

In such a manner, we can see the complexity of the development of what we understand as “games”, since its interrelation with our reality, even as a representation, seems to be a fundamental characteristic for its existence. This ends up straining what Huizinga, Dutch historian and linguist, describes as “play is not ‘ordinary’ or ‘real’ life. It is rather a stepping out of ‘real’ life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own”<sup>9</sup> This goes back to what Jane McGonigal writes on the inherent fear coming from human thoughts about games, where what we really worry about is losing control, “we’re afraid of losing track of where the game ends and where reality begins.”<sup>10</sup>

In his book *Homo Ludens*, Johan Huizinga describes how the game, the act of playing, predates human culture, existing even among animals, thus not being able to be credited to us, since “The very existence of play continually confirms the supra-logical nature of the human situation.”<sup>11</sup> Huizinga writes the following:

In tackling the problem of play as a function of culture proper and not as it appears in the life of the animal or the child, we begin where biology and psychology leave off. In culture we find play as a given magnitude existing before culture itself existed, accompanying it and pervading it from the earliest beginnings right up to the phase of civilization we are now living in.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, we can understand the game and the development of culture by looking beyond the representational dimension inside the games. Our interactions, created over time, during the act of playing, eventually led to the development of important aspects of social interaction and social reality.

It is crucial to highlight here that, despite starting this paper by bringing examples of present-day games, the concept of playing we use here as a basis has been in accordance with Huizinga’s<sup>13</sup> descriptions of it. Researchers understand the game as a shared action that brings forward new experiences, making possible the creation of language, myths, behaviours, among others. Games have become popular in different cultures by amplifying the aesthetic potential in the dynamics of human relationships. Once we clear the way for this notion of game, through its possibilities, we begin to treat it as a reflection and, at the same time, as a component of our reality.

Social reality’s close connection to games was also used as an enhancer for new situations. Games in which their dynamics serve as preparation for social situations have gradually emerged and been refined, shaping a ‘primitive’ instance of serious games. In his paper “From Visual Simulation to Virtual Reality Games”,<sup>14</sup> Michael

<sup>9</sup> Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 8.

<sup>10</sup> Jane McGonigal, *Reality Is Broken: Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World* (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 20.

<sup>11</sup> Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Michael Zyda, “From Visual Simulation to Virtual Reality to Games,” *Computer* 38, 9 (September 2005): 25–32.

Zyda says that serious games can be understood as a “mental contest, played with a computer in accordance with specific rules, that uses entertainment to further government or corporate training, education, health, public policy, and strategic communication objectives.”<sup>15</sup> Digital games weren’t responsible for connecting the ludic with the ‘real’, but their aesthetics enables, through audiovisual and interactive expression, a direct connection between reality and game reality, understanding the way we perceive game beyond its representations’ specificity.

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann describe the concept of reality as “a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition (we cannot ‘wish them away’).”<sup>16</sup> In their book *The Social Construction of Reality*, the authors talk about reality as independent from human will. Berger and Luckmann amplify the discussion about how our reality is a social construction, in such a way that the understanding of reality is dependent on a social relativity built through the positioning and action of individuals in that society. To researchers, our consciousness work, which is entirely voluntary,<sup>17</sup> leads to the construction of different spheres of reality; such as the reality of our dreams and other people’s reality. We choose to become conscious of these other realities but we understand our daily reality as the primary and the most organized one.

It is important that we highlight Johan Huizinga’s stance, once that game allows for a diverse understanding of reality. Huizinga understands the game as a separate line of thought where we “express the structure of mental and social life.”<sup>18</sup> “Laughter” has a function, in this context, of human social elevation. For the author, laughter highlights the difference between what humans understand as games and what other animals understand as games, bringing exclusivity to the human game that allows for a development of reality.

Although game and comedy are not intertwined, the “not serious”,<sup>19</sup> the act of laughing, through playing a game, allows for an exit from our social reality by being conscious of its place. It’s the aesthetic existence, however, that solidifies the reality of games in confluence with our social reality. The discussion here presented involves not only the aesthetic side, with its visual elements and its sounds, as well as the easily recognisable digital game elements, but also its order, its rules and physical, or mental, manifestation as well as other aspects always present in the act of playing.

The potency of game realities seems to go even further as it is. By ‘shifting’ their place,<sup>20</sup> games are able to connect with different types and levels of narratives, shifting

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>16</sup> Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Penguin Books Limited, 1991), 13.

<sup>17</sup> Pilon, “Monopoly’s Inventor: The Progressive Who Didn’t Pass ‘Go.’”

<sup>18</sup> Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>20</sup> Pablo Gobira, “Comentários Perfunctórios Sobre Jogos Digitais E Seu Potencial Narrativo,” in *Design+: arte, ciência e tecnologia: conexões teórico-práticas*, ed. by Débora Aita Gasparetto (Santa Maria RS: Editora PPGART, 2017), 134–140.

between media, establishing a link with different industries in a way that “roots the game into society”.<sup>21</sup> The game culture and universe are intertwined on diverse levels. The development of digital games created an additional connection between these spheres. The aspect of narration, potentialized by the solidification of digital games as a creative industry,<sup>22</sup> allowed for a clearer exchange of aesthetic values. This exchange happens between digital games and our social reality through a qualitative equivalence between what is built through games (even more in digital games sourced from and influenced by the industry expansion) and the construction of ‘real’.

The aesthetic aspect of a ludic reality, in digital games, appears through direct representation of the elements that are in dialogue with our social reality. Huizinga believes that the act of representing things inside games is a way of transporting a specific aspect inside the ludic reality, which then creates an execution of appearances<sup>23</sup>. On the topic of movement within games (that will be further discussed in the next section), we have an equivalence of its elements with our reality’s characteristics: both games here analysed happened in a ludic reality similar to physical environment (or a type of physical place: the urban scene) that exists in our social reality.

*Crazy Taxi* brings forward specific elements from the places around the state of California, in the United States, while *GTA* creates its own cities, based on existing ones. The maps of those cities dialogue with maps that people use to localize themselves along the cities, its buildings, streets, commercial areas, economic hubs, other cars, etc. All the narrative, audiovisual and interactive elements allow for an expansion of our reality. But what is the difference between this genre of games’ aesthetic dimension and a game like Monopoly?

The answer is in the post-digital presence that the game industry has in our reality through not only its products, but also in its manner of production. Although a person may not have a game console or does not even play games, he/she will experience typical game mechanics in certain periods or sectors of their productive life. These mechanics are present through a boost of playing in our society, even though not all people are able to identify it in their daily lives, they can notice it in their aesthetic correspondents, such as, for example, in the ride sharing apps.

This way, by dislocating inside the map in the game, through their avatar, we can say that there is a transposition of the player inside the universe of the game, allowing for its extrapolation. Therefore, can we say that the player, even though through a representation of themselves, is moving? How can we understand this relationship when we analyze the ride sharing apps where our avatar’s movements are entirely reliant on the user’s physical movements?

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*.

## Commuting and games

In this section we will analyze the relationship between the act of moving around that we do in our socially constructed reality and the games here mentioned. Our analysis stems out of the assumption that we can recognize the gamification of reality on an immersive level thanks to the use of ride sharing apps. To enter into this debate, we will start by understanding the meaning of movement.:

Though a recurring concept, we are not utilizing the verb here in its physical understanding, which is to dislocate a body with a variation of its position in a modular space, with a way and direction, in a set amount of time. In the contemporary society that we live in, “movement” is understood as a material and a symbolic practice, a way to change our position in space through separate interests (work, going shopping, etc.), due to a social order, that predates, in society, the birth of individuals, in the same way our mother tongue has been taught to us since infancy.

The Situationist International (SI, 1957–1972) was an avant-garde organization whose member artists and scholars – or, how they preferred to be called: situationists (they denied previously existing descriptions) – acted against the spectacularization of society. Some authors consider SI the last historical avant-garde movement.<sup>24</sup> In order to reflect on the approach to movement in games and cities through the use of a ride sharing app, we need to understand the importance that city and urban sphere as a whole have for this organization.

In their searches for surpassing art, the situationists realized that the prerequisite for the integration of art and life would be a critical approach to urban planning.<sup>25</sup> People move in search of work opportunities and leisure.<sup>26</sup> Within a predetermined architecturally limited geographical space (city, neighborhood, country), a person moves through streets with the intention of getting to work or reaching a specific leisure goal.<sup>27</sup> The act of moving belongs to the social order, it has a goal, milestones, divisions and, usually, there isn't a way of altering the path in any groundbreaking manner.

Such reflection is based on the notion of *dérive*, present in the practical theory of the situationists.<sup>28</sup> To them, the proposition of *dérive* proves and, in a theoretical-practical action, denies spatial similarities that exist in urban centers all around the world, ruled by politics and economy, seeing that all cities have: economic hubs, political hubs, recognizable shopping areas, streets for car traffic only, pedestrian

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<sup>24</sup> Mario Perniola, *Os Situacionistas: O Movimento Que Profetizou a “Sociedade Do Espetáculo”*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (São Paulo: Annablume, 2009).

<sup>25</sup> Paola B. Jacques, “Apresentação,” in *Apologia da Deriva: Escritos Situacionistas sobre a Cidade*, ed. Paola B. Jacques (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, 2003), 13–36.

<sup>26</sup> Guy Debord, “Teoria da Deriva,” in *Apologia da Deriva: Escritos Situacionistas sobre a Cidade*, ed. Paola B. Jacques (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, 2003), 87–91.

<sup>27</sup> Abdelhafid Khatib, “Esboço de Descrição Psicogeográfica do Les Halles de Paris,” in *Apologia da Deriva: Escritos Situacionistas sobre a Cidade*, ed. Paola B. Jacques (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, 2003), 79–84.

<sup>28</sup> Debord, “Teoria da Deriva”.

streets, etc. All of this creates a rationality that belongs specifically to a hegemonic way of life.

The understanding of movement as an aesthetic quality can be processed in the digital games and through the apps here used for reference, not in a theoretical-critical way, like the situationist did, but incorporated to our socially experienced reality. This incorporation happens through the game industry, where studios utilize the movement in game dynamics such as *GTA* and *Crazy Taxi*, as well as in the ride sharing apps.

In both of those – apps and games – we see the city through a lens of repetition of patterns and places that the workers need to go to in order to do their daily tasks. Going to work, visiting family and friends, going shopping, amongst other situations, are acts of urban movement that are repeated cyclically through the use of the software. Parallel to that, in the games, the avatar needs to walk through a specified path in order to complete its missions. In *GTA* the missions involve the need for stops in different locations to acquire objects that enable the player to complete their missions through the city environment being reproduced on screen, while in *Crazy Taxi* the mission is to move. In a way, this is the same *modus operandi* of the social understanding of movement. In order to get to work and complete their tasks, workers unavoidably have to move to certain places in time not to be punished or be penalized, in a way that moving is an integral part of their job.

Playing games, by enabling an escape from the social reality to a ludic one, transports the player to an universe where they are represented. Through the use of their avatar, that works as the player in the ludic reality, they are able to perform interactions with the environment and the architecture of the place they were inserted in. In order to complete missions that happen on different levels of the game, the avatar needs to follow the predetermined path and do certain specific actions, similar to what happens in our social reality on a day-to-day basis.

Having in mind the relationship between ludic and social realities, studies have for some time now tried to explain physical changes developed in players during the act of playing.<sup>29</sup> However, it is not necessary to study the immersion of the player in order for us to consider that they move through the execution and perception of movement inside the virtual reality. The movement in games, such as in the two being analyzed here, makes for a cognitive correspondent of moving in social reality, where the act of moving around the city is also representative aesthetically in an app. In both scenarios, the signalisation of a correspondent of such cognition happens through possibilities of interaction with an interface developed according to similar patterns that take into account the user's experience.

What allows for such precise convergence of realities is its aesthetic existence, that creates unique user interaction elements. Such similarities are of no surprise, if we remember how intertwined games and culture are.

The gamification of reality happens all the time. The only way in which the game can actually shape and transform reality in a way that goes beyond a supporting role

<sup>29</sup> Rosilane R. Mota and Francisco C. Marinho, "Jogo Digital: Aspectos Psicofisiológicos no Processo de Imersão," in *SBC – Proceedings of SBGames* (Rio Grande do Sul: Porto Alegre, 2014), 1145–54.

inside culture is that, as the situationist explained a few decades ago, “the new game affirmation phase should be characterized by the removal of all elements of competition.”<sup>30</sup> Once we erase the function of competing, of winning, the use of games no longer would be subject to the examples here analyzed.

By bringing the situationist critique to this paper we aim to shed light on the aesthetic character present in a specific social reality, which the ride sharing apps as well as the games’ ludic realities take advantage of in their reference to the urban dimension.

### The aesthetics of games spreads around the city

Uber is an American multinational company founded in 2009 in California. Uber, or Über, is a word of German origin that means ‘above’ or ‘over’. Its English version takes a slightly different meaning slightly different, bringing an idea of ‘superiority’, ‘improvement’, used frequently as a slang. Its creators’ goal was to enable the same type of ride service as a cab but with a better experience.<sup>31</sup> Cabify was created in 2011 by a Spanish businessman offering services similar to the ones available in Uber.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Lyft<sup>33</sup> appeared on the market in 2012 with its solidarity rides. The increase in the number of these companies is of no surprise, if we have in mind evolutionized presence of technology in our daily lives and, more specifically, the gamification of social spaces. The convenience provided is that we no longer need to go to bus stops or subway stations. Furthermore, a big difference to cabs, their predecessors, is that users know the price of their rides in advance, which outweighs the fear of invasion of privacy coming from the intrusive permissions required to download the application, and as well as the blurring of the ‘line’ that separates reality and game.

This condition of reality occurs not only for the users who need to go somewhere, but also for those who put their own vehicles at disposal, in exchange for a fee, to make such trips possible. Compensation received for the completed ride is the incentive they have to provide this transportation to others, in a similar way to the games described here, that reward their users with points, or other (digital) objects (serving as an advantage in the plot), when they move around the map, accomplishing their mission. In fact, there is a *GTA* modification, called *RideShare*,<sup>34</sup> that simulates the work of a ride share app driver, revealing the overlap between the game and the

<sup>30</sup> Internacional Situacionista, “Contribuição para uma Definição Situacionista de Jogo,” in *Apologia da Deriva: Escritos Situacionistas sobre a Cidade*, ed. Paola B. Jacques (Rio de Janeiro: Casa da Palavra, 2003), 60–61.

<sup>31</sup> Julia Marquers, “O que Significa Uber? Confira Perguntas e Respostas sobre o Aplicativo,” *TechTudo*, June 15, 2019, <https://www.techtudo.com.br/noticias/2019/06/o-que-significa-uber-confira-perguntas-e-respostas-sobre-o-aplicativo.ghtml>, acc. on July 13, 2024

<sup>32</sup> Manuel A. Arce, “Cabify, La Competencia de Uber se Prepara para Operar en Costa Rica,” *La Nacion*. <https://www.nacion.com/economia/negocios/cabify-la-competencia-de-uber-se-prepara-para-operar-en-costa-rica/UTJMTPKNYNGHNP3BPPI5LPU3RM/story/>, acc. on February 25, 2024.

<sup>33</sup> Christina Farr, “Lyft Team Gets \$60M More; Now It Must Prove Ride-Sharing Can Go Global,” *Venture Beat*, <https://venturebeat.com/2013/05/23/lyft-races-ahead-with-60m-in-funding-but-what-challenges-lie-ahead/>, acc. on August 21, 2024.

<sup>34</sup> Keith, *Rideshare*, Grand Theft Auto V: Rockstar Games, 2017.



transport app. In 2015 Uber also launched a mobile app that simulated, in a digital game format, the experience of working as a driver in the software. The goal, according to the developer's company management, was both to train their partners as well as to attract new potential drivers.<sup>35</sup>

This illustrates how digital games and social reality are increasingly connected, especially in the context of work. If previously it was necessary for us to use boards or other devices (such as dice, for example, or other types of objects) to realize the aesthetic dimension of playing games, nowadays, thanks to the social connection enabled through the technological advances, gamification is something very common in our reality.

Understood as “the idea of using game design elements in non-game contexts to motivate and increase user activity and retention”<sup>36</sup>, however, the development of ride sharing apps brought to light specificities thanks to its use.

We can also observe, in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the first steps of gamification. Some of them were proposed by Vladimir Lenin and later by Josef Stalin, as analyzed by Mark J. Nelson. The author describes the developments of the 20<sup>th</sup> century putting under a magnifying glass the Soviet Union's strategies,<sup>37</sup> such as the socialist monetary alternative to boost work and competition to encourage workers. In order to guarantee good production, Stalin awarded the best factories with fake palm trees for their decoration. Likewise, in order to encourage its employees, Uber awards drivers that have high approval ratings not only through monetary gains but also with gifts and discounts.

As observed by Nelson, the work environment in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by non-monetary payment as one of the encouraging strategies alongside with gamification. In the author's opinion, and with Andersen's analysis<sup>38</sup> as its basis, the gamification processes are likely to blur hierarchical structures. Uber's positioning showcases such characteristics, with an asymmetric relationship with its drivers. As told by Rosenblat and Stark, Uber normally refers to partners and not workers or employees. The company is also clear in their contracts that they aren't a transportation company, but a technology company, obviating the drivers' labour laws.<sup>39</sup>

We can consider that the idea of gamification is one of the fundamental pieces of what, for some authors, would be the ‘virtual work’, consolidating its position by

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<sup>35</sup> Maggie Zhang, “UberDRIVE: A Mobile Game to Recruit and Train Uber Drivers,” *Forbes*, June 12, 2015, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mzhang/2015/06/12/uberdrive/?sh=6179705061ac>, acc. on February 25, 2024.

<sup>36</sup> Sebastian Deterding, Dan Dixon, Rilla Khaled, and Lennart Nacke, “From Game Design Elements to Gamefulness: Defining Gamification,” *Proceedings of the 15th International Academic MindTrek Conference: Envisioning Future Media Environments* (Finland: MindTrek, 2011), 9–15.

<sup>37</sup> Mark J. Nelson, “Soviet and American Precursors to the Gamification of Work,” in *MindTrek 2012: Proceeding of the 16th International Academic MindTrek Conference* (2012), 23–26.

<sup>38</sup> Niels Åkerstrøm Andersen, *Power at Play: The Relationships between Play, Work and Governance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

<sup>39</sup> Alex Rosenblat and Luke Stark, “Algorithmic Labor and Information Asymmetries: A Case Study of Uber's Drivers,” *International Journal of Communication* 10, 0 (July 27, 2016): 27.

enabling a further, more practical, entanglement of work and leisure.<sup>40</sup> Once a driver downloads the Uber app, or any other previously mentioned app, the similarities between its platform and those in digital games becomes obvious.

Under the pretext of enabling a flexibilization of work, by making available a platform where independent transportation workers are solicited by users/passengers, Uber started to be seen as an alternative to the traditional workplace market, where employees would have more freedom and control over their routine and earnings. The perspective therefore becomes – you earn according to work you do. What, at first, seemed like a good solution was the way in which this app managed to root itself ubiquitously into our social reality, mixing its digital platform with our day-to-day life.

Considered a ‘soft power’, this flexibilization and apparent autonomy that drivers have, works in a way so that the control over their routines and work is performed in an almost imperceptible manner.<sup>41</sup> As independent employees, Uber drivers aren’t required by law to fulfil a predetermined workload. An audiovisual, interactive and narrative aesthetic, similar to the ones used in video games, is implemented, after a carefully done research by Uber with social scientists and analytic scientists,<sup>42</sup> so that they are able to create in the user the will to continue its trajectory, in the same way in which a GTA player is influenced to complete a new mission by the game’s applied mechanisms.

One of the techniques used in parallel to the motives introduced in video games is called the “ludic loop”. The “ludic loop” presents to the user (or player) a “progress toward a certain goal that is always just beyond the player’s grasp.”<sup>43</sup> This type of action is implemented by Uber, and its rivals, making it so that the drivers are attracted to their platform, repeating the attraction made so that they would offer their services in the app for the very first time.

By removing from the equation, the regulation about the obligations between employer and employee, giving the users more ‘freedom’, there is a decrease of cost to the companies, once they no longer go through the traditional work regulations, such as signed labor, unemployment checks, life insurance, amongst many other statutory rights. The drivers, on the other hand, aren’t forced to be on the streets ready to drive passengers that need a ride during all hours of the day. However, in spite of everything, drivers are inserted into a social form, not much different from the one existing inside regular jobs. This is the aesthetic dimension that makes us believe that the driver has an option, once they are given an idea that they are also a “user” on the app, a “user-driver”. The gamification aesthetic elements, or the gamification elements, are important so that the platform’s interface there is a reinforcement of this idea.

Seeing that such companies operate exactly with the intent of enabling transportation anywhere at any time, they are entirely reliant on their drivers’ availability

<sup>40</sup> Cherry, “The Gamification of Work.”

<sup>41</sup> Rosenblat and Stark, “Algorithmic Labor and Information Asymmetries: A Case Study of Uber’s Drivers.”

<sup>42</sup> Noam Scheiber, “How Uber Uses Psychological Tricks to Push Its Drivers’ Buttons,” *The New York Times*, April 2, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/04/02/technology/uber-drivers-psychological-tricks.html>, acc. on February 25, 2024.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Olyslager, “How Uber Gamification Manipulates Drivers,” *Paul Olyslager*, 2017, <https://www.paulolyslager.com/how-uber-gamification-manipulate-drivers/>, acc. on February 13, 2024.

to fulfill tasks, in such a way that non-coercive mechanisms need to be implemented in order to boost the users' will to continue executing their function.<sup>44</sup>

The conduction of the 'user-driver' to a gamified reality also transforms their perception of the physical space, in a way similar to a digital game. One of the aesthetic aspects present in transportation service's apps is the maps corresponding to the place in which the user is located. In this map, through visual hotspots, places where one can find a higher number of people soliciting their work are highlighted, which leads to an increase in their earnings. The passengers thus represent the missions available in digital games, and the money corresponds to the scores. In order to conclude their mission, or their ride, and be able to receive money, drivers need to take their passengers from starting to destination point indicated on the map in their phone. Driver needs to move in a social reality's recognized physical space with his/her phone's GPS turned on, so that they can be monitored and localized by the platform.

Although the gamification aspect of this app brings excitement and euphoria, few end up staying as drivers for longer periods of time. Not even 50% of its users stay available to Uber after one year of starting to use the platform.<sup>45</sup> This is mostly due to the employer-employee relationship insecurities, that are showcasing a "significant information and power asymmetries between the two"<sup>46</sup>.

The 'freedom' that such work bases itself on doesn't mean challenges only for the companies to attract drivers, but also creates disadvantages to those working for these companies. Drivers need to fit into the way such platforms work, which includes low ride fares and the impossibility of choosing or getting to know before-hand which passenger they will be driving,<sup>47</sup> making it impossible to create changes to such mechanisms due to the informality in which they operate.

## Final considerations

Although there are certain reservations in the way that these companies operate, ride sharing apps are, currently, one of the clearer examples of work gamification, even more so when we take into consideration the aesthetic manifestation that they use, making their ludic dimension even more apparent. Such changes to the work structure and modifications to the way employees perform their duties also involves the combination of culture and games that Huizinga analyzes in his book.<sup>48</sup> Transportation services' softwares and digital games show the gamified elements of the work economic structures and strengthen their characteristics through gamification.

<sup>44</sup> Sarah Mason, "High Score, Low Pay: Why the Gig Economy Loves Gamification," *The Guardian*, November 20, 2018), <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/nov/20/high-score-low-pay-gamification-lyft-uber-drivers-ride-hailing-gig-economy>, acc. on February 25, 2024; Olyslager, "How Uber Gamification Manipulates Drivers;" Scheiber, "How Uber Uses Psychological Tricks to Push Its Drivers' Buttons."

<sup>45</sup> Jonathan V. Hall and Alan B. Krueger, "An Analysis of the Labor Market for Uber's Driver-Partners in the United States," *ILR Review* 71, 3 (June 29, 2017): 705–32.

<sup>46</sup> Rosenblat and Stark, "Algorithmic Labor and Information Asymmetries: A Case Study of Uber's Drivers."

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*.

We believe that the combination of games and social reality will become even more present in our daily lives; the distinction between what is or isn't playing will decrease, in the same way that we saw in the Situationist International members,<sup>49</sup> with the removal of the difference between political economy's aesthetics and arts' aesthetics that they experimented with, and with the critical approach to the urban space through the notion of *derivé*.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, we see how the boundary between game reality and socially constructed reality becomes blurred. This comes not only from the technologies applied in day-to-day life, but also from the ways in which games and play are adapted to the current political and economic reality. More than this, the political economy that has elevated digital games to a major industry for some decades now also assimilates these games as part of the political-economic reality which structures the relationships in social reality.

Lastly, it isn't uncommon to see that the aesthetic/gamified elements present in one, or more, industries in political economy, such as the ones we've analysed in the digital games present in this paper, once well received, can blend into our socially constructed reality, seeing that they never stopped being part of it, even though present only inside the games. If that was the case, such games wouldn't present representation of people, streets, sidewalks, maps, buildings, amongst others, recognisable in different cultures across the globe.

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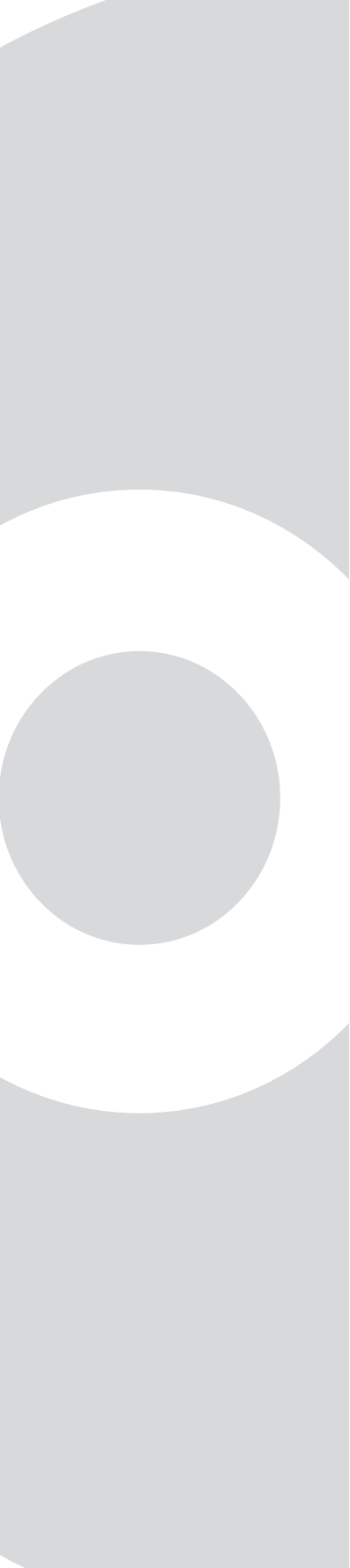
<sup>49</sup> Internacional Situacionista, "Contribuição para uma Definição Situacionista de Jogo."

<sup>50</sup> Debord, "Teoria da Deriva."

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## Digital Mini-Archives: Social Media Users as Curators of an Architectural Utopia

**Abstract:** This paper explores the importance and meaning of a new concept of architectural archives – digital mini-archives in the form of social media profiles (Instagram profiles), whether they are public or private. The paper’s interpretation of digital architectural archives is based on Jacques Derrida’s interpretation of archives. The aim is to analyze the relationship between archivists and users in the context of social media platforms, and the structure and content of digital mini-archives. I tried to select examples of different Instagram profiles whose content (photos, videos, and quotes) relates to architectural history and architectural design presented in an innovative manner. The hypothesis emphasizes a curating role of social media users as interpreters of architectural history references and their (new) meanings, as well as curators of the future of architecture. Also, the concept of *architectural utopia* concerns Nathaniel Coleman’s theory of utopia in architecture and its contemporary interpretations. There is a strong bond between *architectural utopia* and digital mini-archives which enable architecture’s *utopian* potential because of their flexibility, openness to change, and transformability. Thus, experimental projects with *utopian potential* are created based on digital mini-archives. However, do these digital mini-archives contribute by deciding which (part of) architectural history ought to be forgotten or remembered in collective memory and translated to another temporal context through experimental architectural design?

**Keywords:** architecture archives; digital archives; social media; architectural utopia; Instagram; experimental design; experimental project.

### Introduction

In contemporary archival discourse, the elaboration of the term *archive* can be divided into two opposite (but inseparable) interpretations: traditional (analog) archives and contemporary (digital) archives. Traditional archives are characterized by linearity, homogeneity, static (passivity), tangible, controlled, centered, and arranged. In contrast, digital archives are non-linear, heterogeneous, dynamic, intangible, de-centered, inclusive, open-sourced, flexible, and fluid. As a concept, the digital archive isn’t whole, it’s not united into precise categories. Instead, it is often presented as a



collage (of concepts, objects, themes, and events). In the context of contemporary high technology and the transition from traditional to digital archives, different categories arise. Digital *archival objects* are becoming more visible with contemporary search engines, and thus, more important and used *archival material* by categories such as searchability and popularity.<sup>1</sup>

Also, by researching traditional archives, users reveal *one truth*<sup>2</sup>, while users of digital archives discover *multiple (parallel) truths*. Interpretation of history and archives differs; while architectural historian Beatriz Colomina claims that archives are revealed as fragmented entities of history “that hide in a private and *messy space*,” for historian Jacques Le Goff, archives are independent of ideology and more subjective.<sup>3</sup> Digital archives enable the reading and simultaneous interpretation of several *parallel truths (histories)*, where the subjective way of archiving can lead to objective research results. However, due to blurring the boundary and intertwining roles of archivist and user, and the dynamism and inclusiveness of digital archives, their content can be easily erased or over-written. From that perspective, digital archives have greater power in determining what will be remembered, and a part of history or its interpretation that will be forgotten. A perspective from which the archive is perceived as “an architectural object,” leads to transformative work that “takes place in that interval between escaping the clutches of personal memory and being subsumed into history.”<sup>4</sup>

The interpretation of contemporary (digital) architectural archives is based on Jacques Derrida’s interpretation of archives. In the context of digital archives, mainly social media platforms like Instagram, *archive fever* becomes *personal digital archive fever*.<sup>5</sup> Derrida defines the term *archivable meaning*: “What is no longer archived in the same way is no longer lived in the same way. *Archivable meaning* is also and in advance codetermined by the structure that archives.”<sup>6</sup> The heterogeneity of digital architectural archives means that *archivable meaning* takes on a transformable character, changing and multiplying with different critical interpretations, thus enabling a change in the future of architecture. Also, it can be added that *what is no longer archived in the same way* is not researched and discovered in the same way.

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<sup>1</sup> Sylvia Lavin, “Today We Collect Everything,” *Perspecta* 48, *AMNESIA* (2015): 189.

<sup>2</sup> Stamatis Zografos, “On Archives,” in *Architecture and Fire: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Conservation* (London: UCL Press, 2019), 21.

<sup>3</sup> Zografos, “On Archives,” 28.

<sup>4</sup> Lavin, “Today We Collect Everything,” 190.

<sup>5</sup> Jessica Enoch and Pamela VanHaitisma, “Archival Literacy: Reading the Rhetoric of Digital Archives in the Undergraduate Classroom,” *College Composition and Communication* 67, 2 (December 2015): 232.

<sup>6</sup> Astrid Schmetterling, “Archival Obsessions: Arnold Dreyblatt’s Memory Work,” *Art Journal* 66, 4 (Winter 2007): 79.

## Architectural utopia – *hope* for a better future

The paper's concept of *architectural utopia* and its connection with digital architecture archives refer to Nathaniel Coleman's theory of utopia in architecture and its contemporary interpretations, which claim that projects do not have to be radical or visionary. Still, they ought to have *utopian potential* or a *utopian dimension*.<sup>7</sup> These projects are common in contemporary architectural discourse. What characterizes them are simultaneous existence of radicalism, flexibility, and social awareness.<sup>8</sup>

Coleman highlights the four most important characteristics for architecture to have a utopian potential: 1) to have a strong social and political content; 2) to have a significant level of detail in the description of what is proposed; 3) to elaborate a positive transformation of social and political life as a crucial part of its architectural concept, and 4) to manifest a substantive ethical and aesthetical critique of the present, based on a critical-historical perspective.<sup>9</sup> In other words, *architectural utopia* simultaneously includes: the past (it is based on critical thinking about architectural history references), the present (it responds to the contemporary moment), and the future (it imagines the future of architecture). In the context of the future of architecture, Coleman primarily highlights the necessity to untangle the terms *visionary* and *utopia* from one another.

Professor of history and theory of architecture Antoine Picon claims that utopia in architecture has a complex social and political connotation, since it represents *hope* for a better future.<sup>10</sup> The relationship of utopia to history is paradoxical because while, on the one hand, it tends to sever all ties with history, it relies on a critical relationship to historical references of architecture. In the context of utopian forms of architecture, philosopher Fredric Jameson argues that it is more important to “imagine” rather than “represent” them.<sup>11</sup> Referring to Jameson's emphasis on the imaginative aspect of utopia, architectural utopia is primarily “a product of the imagination”.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, it can never be fully realized in its final form. In contemporary architectural discourse, like digital architecture archives, architectural utopias are characterized by flexibility, openness to change, incompleteness, and transformability.

Since the notion of *utopia* in architecture in this paper refers to digital mini-archives manifested as social media (Instagram) profiles, it is essential to underline that utopia in architecture presented in these mini-archives doesn't refer to the number

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<sup>7</sup> Alex Ramiller and Patrick Schmidt, “Making Radical Change Real: Danish Sustainability, Adaptability, and the Reimagination of Architectural Utopias,” *Utopian Studies* 30, 2 (2019): 294.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Nathaniel Coleman, “The Problematic of Architecture and Utopia,” *Utopian Studies* 25, 1 (2014): 8.

<sup>10</sup> Antoine Picon, “Learning from Utopia: Contemporary Architecture and the Quest for Political and Social Relevance,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 67, 1 (March 2013): 22.

<sup>11</sup> Nathaniel Coleman, “Utopia and Modern architecture?” *Architectural Research Quarterly* 16, 4 (2012): 340.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 346.

of “likes” of each example or “relative levels of novelty or strangeness.”<sup>13</sup> They instead indicate architecture that forms a strong relationship between the public image of a project and its potential to be realized. Thus, they have a *utopian potential* to awaken hope and activate architectural social impact. The issue of contemporary *architectural utopia* presented in digital media is the widening gap between innovative architectural concepts and their potential to be realized (they do not raise hope and have no social impact).

Digital mini-archives and architectural utopia share openness, inclusiveness, fluidity, and transformability, which is why these two concepts have a strong bond. As a professor of performance studies, Diana Taylor states – “what makes an object *archival* is the process whereby it is selected, classified, and presented for analysis”<sup>14</sup>. In creating and curating digital mini-archives, selection is a significant instance, while classification is not as strictly defined as in traditional archives. Presentation – the image of architecture remains subject to interpretations and modifications. This presentation sometimes detaches *archival objects* from their historical reference, with its interpretation in the contemporary moment, but makes it difficult for the user to imagine the architectural object in the future. In other words, archivists or social media profile curators can reduce the *utopian potential* of architecture, depending on the manner of presentation. On the contrary, modern technologies and interpretations of the history of architecture can help reveal their *utopian dimension*.

### **Private *archive fever* on Instagram: Architectural content that changes *archival meaning***

The most popular and omnipresent digital archives for architecture research are image-based social media platforms like Instagram and Pinterest, but Instagram is the most influential. Posting content on Instagram has very much in common with archiving – there is something very satisfying in publishing new content on Instagram, as well as in the process of collecting and archiving. This similarity indicates that the roles of social media users and archivists are intertwined. But what kind of archivist social media users are? One type of archivist (collectors) classification is that there are *collectors of sameness* and *collectors of difference*.<sup>15</sup> There are both types of archivists on Instagram. Still, although there is a tendency for *collectors of sameness*, digital archives bring more *collectors of difference*. Unlike other architectural platforms, categorization by similarity on Instagram is not so obvious and transparent. These digital mini-archives (Instagram profiles) have architectural content that creates mutually contrasting architectural meanings and thus opens space for critical reflection and

<sup>13</sup> Coleman, “The Problematic of Architecture and Utopia,” 8.

<sup>14</sup> Jessica Enoch and Pamela VanHaitmsa, “Archival Literacy: Reading the Rhetoric of Digital Archives in the Undergraduate Classroom,” *College Composition and Communication* 67, 2 (December 2015): 220.

<sup>15</sup> Matt Roam, “You Are How You Collect,” *Perspecta* 48, *AMNESIA* (2015): 163.

comparison of their cross-references, fragments, details, as well as different styles and interpretations. This type of content opens up the potential for heterogeneity in (digital) archiving and (contemporary and future) architecture. Apart from the images/photos, these digital mini-archives can also have additional (introductory) explanations that direct the narrative and lead to a critical reflection of the architecture from the image. In other words, unlike architectural design platforms which have categorized content (*Archdaily*, *Dezeen*, *Architectural Digest*, *Archilovers*), apart from personal profiles that curate content, posts on Instagram are classified by the same topic according to *hashtags* (#), and categories of *most popular* and *most recent*. Therefore, the evaluation of an architectural project on Instagram is not determined by characteristics under which it is categorized. With this archival inclusivity, critical potential and possibility for changes are released, and thus, the *utopian dimension* of the project is opened for further interpretations.

With reference to this paper, we are going to analyze seven specific examples of Instagram profiles as digital mini-archives with architectural content. The criteria for selecting profiles were the selection of architecture archival material (*collection of differences*), innovative manner of presentation, heterogeneity in critical interpretations of architectural history references, and the existence of *utopian potential* in the presented architectural objects.

Profile *@objectsexuality*, curated by photographer and filmmaker Lukas Verbickas, presents photos and edited videos of architectural objects, mostly buildings of modernism and brutalism.<sup>16</sup> Videos are edited and synchronized with music as a photo/video collage or photo-manipulation or some video effects added into a single building representation. With dynamic music beats, these buildings are presented as a city's live organisms, not monotonous and static. As can be seen from Instagram users' comments on these videos, those buildings are becoming more attractive, being seen from a different perspective, and maybe, thus, derived the name of a profile – *objectsexuality*. With the advantages of contemporary tech, architectural objects of modernism are more present in contemporary moments, and we can easily imagine them in the (near) future. Posts on this profile also include brief archival information (architect, location, year that the building was built), and it is an excellent example of an Instagram profile of architectural *private archive fever*.

Art historian Daniela Christmann is a creator/curator of a profile *@vielfaltdermoderne*.<sup>17</sup> She is the author of almost all photos. She also provided some narrative (in German and English) about the modern European building's exteriors, interiors, and details presented in photos. For example, in the text below the slide of photos of the movie theater Kino Babylon in Berlin, we can read the following information: year the building was completed (1928–1929), name of the architect (Hans Poelzig), precise

<sup>16</sup> Lukas Verbickas (*@objectsexuality*), 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/objectsexuality/>

<sup>17</sup> Daniela Christmann (*@vielfaltdermoderne*), 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/vielfaltdermoderne/>

location (street), and the entire history of the cinema interior redesign and restoration.<sup>18</sup> The photos of Kino Babylon capture various details, lower end of the staircase rail, as well as the very staircase, doors of the building, and floors. According to some interpretations, architectural details and fragments contain *deep memory* of a specific building.<sup>19</sup> Instagram users could see curators' aesthetic sensibility in these photos, captured in the moments of the photographer's authentic and deep, intimate experience of these spaces. Therefore, these photos also contribute to the digital archive of the architectural history of this spatio-temporal context because this private mini-archive gives another perspective on the contemporary life of these iconic modern buildings.

Another example of a digital mini-archive is the Instagram profile *@odlomci\_arhitektura*.<sup>20</sup> In this profile *bio*, one can read: "Fragments of architecture – poetry of space, a channel for new interpretations. *An architect must be an artist, a poet of his kind, so that sometimes he surpasses himself in ordinary work*".<sup>21</sup> This is a different type of digital mini-archive, not a typical Instagram profile because instead of photos, their posts are primarily textual – quotes about the essence, atmosphere, and experience of architecture. These quotes are statements, definitions, and thoughts by architects (Ranko Radović, Nikola Dobrović, Milan Zloković, Branislav Mitrović), philosophers (Gaston Bachelard), writers (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry), artists (Marina Abramović), etc. But, the most intriguing of all recently posted quotes is the one by ChatGPT (from 2023) – "Architecture – the silence of form, a story without words, the soul of space".<sup>22</sup> This generative quote is maybe the most poetic and accurate definition of architecture on this profile. This digital mini-archive blends traditional and contemporary (digital and hi-tech) archival content and unites them in a new hybrid form of digital archive.

A digital mini-archive that is more typical for *collectors of sameness* because of a single architectural style and period categorized is profile *@socialistmodernism*.<sup>23</sup> Curators of this profile collect photos and information on the current condition of architectural heritage – buildings and monuments of socialist modernism, built all around Europe. Digital archives like this one have ambiguous meanings: they are collective and individual memory keepers. Architectural objects of this architectural style are deeply inherited in their cultural, social, and political context, but at the same time, they tell so many individual stories of contemporary users. Some individual memories and personal reminiscences could be read in users' comments on

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, "Kino Babylon, 1928-1929, Arhitekt: Hans Poelzig..." Instagram photo, February 15, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C3W3KnRtEGg/>

<sup>19</sup> Ines Weizman, "Architecture's Internal Exile: Experiments in Digital Documentation of Adolf Loos's Vienna Houses," *Architectural Design* 88, 3 (2018): 37.

<sup>20</sup> Odlomci arhitektura | poezija prostora (@odlomci\_arhitektura), 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/odlomci\\_arhitektura/](https://www.instagram.com/odlomci_arhitektura/)

<sup>21</sup> Translation to English by the author [original: odlomci arhitektura | poezija prostora, kanal za nova tumačenja. "Arhitekt mora biti umetnik, pesnik svoje vrste, tako da katkad prevazilazi i sam sebe u običnom radu."]

<sup>22</sup> Translation to English by the author [original: Arhitektura – tišina oblika, priča bez reči, duša prostora.]

<sup>23</sup> #SOCIALISTMODERNISM (@socialistmodernism), 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/socialistmodernism/>

the posted photos: “I stayed in this hotel in January 2020, amazing!”<sup>24</sup>, “I have walked over this bridge in April 2023!”<sup>25</sup> Thus, the openness and inclusivity of these digital mini-archives allow social media users to give, enrich, change, and shape the *archival meaning* of architectural objects/monuments.

Instagram profile *@genex.tower* is a profile dedicated to a single building – the Genex Tower, Belgrade Western Gate, one of the city’s landmarks and one of the most famous brutalist buildings in Belgrade.<sup>26</sup> The curator of this digital mini-archive created a heterogeneous digital archive of a single *archival object*. A story about the historical and contemporary context of the Genex Tower could be read and interpreted through photos of the building’s exterior and interior created by professional photographers, videos from national TV channels published on YouTube, documentaries, posters for exhibition announcements, etc. Narratives – The description of these posts contains texts from books on architectural history and theory, as well as scientific and newspaper articles, with a critical approach to historical references of this building. The building consists of two main parts – commercial (business) and residential buildings, connected in the basement and near the top by a two-story bridge plus a circular restaurant-observatory. After Genex went into bankruptcy, the commercial building was abandoned and left in complete silence; Instagram users can perceive this atmosphere of decay and a building *frozen in time* through photos and videos. However, the residential tower is still inhabited, and a lot of information and stories are being told by residents and people who once worked in the business tower. What is important is that this digital mini-archive reveals not only *one truth* but *multiple truths* (histories): the history of a resident, the history of a worker, the history of a company, the history of a building, the history of a society and the history of a state.<sup>27</sup>

Instagram profile *@milanzlokovicfoundation*, an iconic historical architect’s profile in the contemporary context, is the profile of Milan Zloković, a pioneer of modernism in Serbia.<sup>28</sup> This digital archive not only presents his architectural oeuvre – technical documentation and photos of completed buildings, but also provides a comprehensive profile of Zloković as an artist (painter), an architect, a professor, and a family man.<sup>29</sup> This collaged digital mini-archive, at one point only private, is now

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<sup>24</sup> #SOCIALISTMODERNISM (@socialistmodernism), 2024, “Hotel Salyut. Kyiv, Ukraine. Built between 1976-1982.,” Instagram photo, May 5, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C6mgAtmIrKa/>

<sup>25</sup> #SOCIALISTMODERNISM (@socialistmodernism), 2024, “Development on steep slopes in Nutsbidze Street,” Instagram photo, May 6, 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/p/C6oaw39oV\\_K/](https://www.instagram.com/p/C6oaw39oV_K/)

<sup>26</sup> Genex Tower - a monument of an era (@genex.tower), 2022, <https://www.instagram.com/genex.tower/>

<sup>27</sup> Jovana Tošić, 2023, “Continuity or Discontinuity of Architectural History: Digital Repositories and Social Media as Archives in Architecture Archives of the Future,” in *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Conference of the Jaap Bakema Study Centre: Architecture Archives of the Future*, Rotterdam, November 2023, 133, (Rotterdam: TU Delft and Nieuwe Instituut).

<sup>28</sup> Milan Zloković (@milanzlokovicfoundation), 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/milanzlokovicfoundation/>

<sup>29</sup> Artifacts from his private collection are provided by Milan Zloković Foundation (established in 2016, as a private archive open for public with a mission to enable full enlightenment and affirmation of the work of architect Milan Zloković).

open to the public, offering a diverse collection of artworks – paintings, family photos, photos with his students, vacation photos, invitations for cultural and academic events, photos of journals/magazines the architect has founded and edited, and many other *archival objects*. Exploring this archival material, historical references to modernism in Serbian architecture can be interpreted from a fresh perspective, one that is uniquely shaped by Zloković's artistic sensibility and his evolution as an architectural designer, leading to a complex authorial approach to modern architecture.<sup>30</sup>

Digital mini-archive in the form of an Instagram profile of Richter Collection @zbirka\_richter presents works by Croatian architect and artist Vjenceslav Richter.<sup>31</sup> Posts are mostly related to his buildings and architectural competition works – technical drawings, models, sculptures, and installations, as well as contemporary exhibition announcements and photos. This profile doesn't contain artifacts from Richter's personal and family life (like the previously discussed profile of Milan Zloković), but presents exclusively his work as an architectural designer and artist. One of the most important *archival objects* in this digital mini archive is the architectural competition project of the Museum of the Revolution of the People of Yugoslavia in Belgrade.<sup>32</sup> This museum that has never been built represents an architectural utopia that wouldn't exist without its *archival meaning*.

### **Architectural utopia as an eternal experimental project: Museum of the Revolution of the People of Yugoslavia**

Referring to the previously stated, the issue of preserving archival material in contemporary archival discourse exists. The important questions that arise are: Is there an *archival memory* when everything archived digitally could be erased and, thus, fade and potentially be cancelled from our collective memory? Is there an alternative way of keeping the memories of *archival objects* in architecture in case digital archives disappear? The answer lies in the experimental relationship to the architecture archives.

Digital mini-archives, like the Instagram profiles mentioned above, enable architecture's *utopian potential* because of their flexibility, openness to change, and transformability. Thus, experimental projects with *utopian potential* are created based on digital mini-archives. As professor of architecture Mark Wigley claims, experimental design should always be relative to historical architectural references and, thus, to existing archives.<sup>33</sup> However, at the same time, for an architectural design work to be

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<sup>30</sup> Tošić, "Continuity or Discontinuity of Architectural History: Digital Repositories and Social Media as Archives in Architecture Archives of the Future" 132.

<sup>31</sup> Richter Zbirka (@zbirka\_richter), 2024, [https://www.instagram.com/zbirka\\_richter/](https://www.instagram.com/zbirka_richter/)

<sup>32</sup> Richter Zbirka (@zbirka\_richter), 2024, "Project of the Museum of the Revolution of Yugoslavia in Belgrade," Instagram photo, December 21, 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CJEjPHsJNt/>

<sup>33</sup> Mark Wigley, "Unleashing the Archive," *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 2, 2 (Winter 2005): 12.

experimental, it also needs to position itself through new archiving moves.<sup>34</sup> Also, (critical) experimental design could preserve architecture's historical references.

One of the most significant examples of architectural modernism in former Yugoslavia, that has never been built and is thus present only in archival materials, is the Museum of the Revolution of the People of Yugoslavia, an architectural project envisioned by the Croatian architect and artist Vjenceslav Richter.<sup>35</sup> Despite its physical non-existence<sup>36</sup>, this museum is omnipresent in the history of architecture and still vivid in the collective memory. As Richter claims, Museum's purpose and main idea "would have been to safeguard the *truth* about us..."<sup>37</sup> But how is this *truth* interpreted and revealed in the contemporary context of digital archives, and is there *one* or are there *multiple truths*? Although never built, the Museum was and still is present in public architectural and art discourse, primarily through experimental design and artwork projects. Two projects of spatial-temporal representation of the Museum stand out. The first one is the Pavilion of Serbia at the *Venice Architecture Biennale 2014: Fundamentals*, in response to the theme *Absorbing Modernity, 1914-2014*. Rem Koolhaas, director of the *Venice Biennale 2014*, explains the significance of this exhibition for architectural practice: It is "no longer an instrument of information and documentation, but rather an autonomous narrative of a creative attitude, a methodology of production, and a unique means to give form to an original interpretation of society and its transformative processes."<sup>38</sup> The Pavilion of Serbia's installation "14-14" consists of two sections (conceptual and spatial parts): "100 works" in the inner, day lit space, and "Museum of the Revolution", in the *Black Room* (a spatial metaphor for *camera obscura*).<sup>39</sup> The second experimental project is a materialized appearance of the Museum as an architectural model, in the form of the *Eternal Flame* art installation, created by Croatian artist Saša Tkačenko in 2018. Tkačenko makes a scale model of the Museum, molding it in concrete, and places it on a butane gas bottle so that a flamenozzles through warped roof surfaces in the center as an *eternal flame* (a symbol

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Richter's project won at the national architectural competition in 1962, and the construction begun in 1978, but it ceased completely by 1982. "The architectural form which would embody this idea was based on the synthesis of contrasting monolithic, static corpus of the building and its dynamic, moving roof... but its distinctive element would have been a dynamic roof construction made of warped surfaces which would have risen 46 meters from the ground. It would have enabled central lighting of the Museum." Sonja Jankov, "Museum of Revolution and Synthesis in Saša Tkačenko's *Eternal Flame*," *Synaxa – Matica Srpska International Journal for Social Sciences, Arts and Culture* 4–5 (1–2/2019): 83.

<sup>36</sup> This never-completed construction site is now in ruins; its dark basement is now inhabited by homeless individuals and vagrants. A series of steel rod bundles (supporting columns for the above-ground structure) is the only noticeable sign of the structure.

<sup>37</sup> Jankov, "Museum of Revolution and Synthesis in Saša Tkačenko's *Eternal Flame*," 83.

<sup>38</sup> Marco De Michelis and Guido Zuliani, "Fundamentals," *Log* 32 (Fall 2014): 96.

<sup>39</sup> Igor Sladoljev, "14 – 14 Serbian Pavilion at 14th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia," accessed April 22, 2024, <http://igorsladoljev.com/projects/8>.



of hope and new ideas).<sup>40</sup> The critical aspect of this artwork lies in its ironical moment – the eternal flame lasts as long as the gas in the bottle. This installation represents the artist's concept of synthesizing architecture, sculpture and idea.

The memory of the Museum of the Revolution is preserved through experimental projects that remain present in public and architectural discourses. However, what is the role of digital mini-archives in this process? The Instagram profile of Richter Collection @zbirka\_richter has posts about the Museum of the Revolution project (technical drawings and photos of models). Still, there aren't any references to the previously mentioned experimental art and design projects (neither posted nor tagged photos). In the Instagram browser, under the hashtag #muzejrevolucije, one can find different contemporary interpretations of the Museum: numerous photos that show the current state of the Museum's location, announcements for the projection of Srđan Keča's movie "Museum of the Revolution", as well as graphic design<sup>41</sup> and contextual art<sup>42</sup> with the theme of the Museum's architecture and current state. These posts help in sharing and spreading the *utopian potential* of the never-existed Museum into the future of architecture.

## Conclusion

Digital mini-archives in the form of Instagram profiles are the most popular contemporary form of architectural archive. When approached critically, they have many advantages over traditional and other forms of archives. Social media users as architecture archivists and curators are *collectors of difference*. Their Instagram content is heterogeneous, collaged, and transformable and it doesn't belong to just a single category. Architectural content curated this way has inclusiveness, it is open to change, to different interpretations (cross-references of historical sources and contemporary context), and thus, it's transformable. These characteristics, which become transparent through digital mini-archives and by merging the roles of users and archivists, increase the *utopian potential* of architecture and reveal its *utopian dimension*. This *utopian potential* in architecture leads to the creation of experimental design as an alternative form of keeping the history of architecture in collective memory because digital archives constantly change, or can also disappear (be erased). Contemporary architectural discourse must use the advantages of these new forms of archives. Still, architecture critics must be aware of social media users' impact on contemporary architectural design trends and, thus, on shaping the future of architecture.

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<sup>40</sup> Jankov, "Museum of the Revolution and Synthesis in Saša Tkačenko's Eternal Flame," 84.

<sup>41</sup> Moderni u Beogradu (@\_mubgd), 2024, "Stefan Đorđević – Muzej revolucije," Instagram photo, April 13, 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/B-7luGKpqg3/>

<sup>42</sup> Milorad Mladenović (@milorad.mladenovic.71), 2024, "Milorad mladenović – plan za park ušće," Instagram photo, April 1, 2018, <https://www.instagram.com/p/BhBhlJan35t/>

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# NFT: An Episode in Digital Arts

**Abstract:** The development of digital art has been marked by numerous transformative phases, with the rise of NFTs (non-fungible tokens) representing a pivotal moment in its evolution. This paper posits that the ascent of NFT art is closely linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, which catalyzed a shift towards digital mediums and redefined the relationship between art and technology. NFTs not only revolutionized the creation, distribution, and monetization of digital art by embedding databases and data archives into the artwork itself, but they also challenged traditional notions of ownership and value in the art world. This study examines how NFTs altered the perception of digital art, particularly during the pandemic, and investigates the factors contributing to the subsequent decline in their prominence after the initial surge of interest.

**Keywords:** digital arts; NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens); Crypto Art; COVID-19 pandemic; digital archive; art market.

## The emergence of Crypto Art amid the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the extent to which the digital world, which had already become an integral part of our daily lives, has now eclipsed the physical world as the primary domain of human activity. This shift underscores how the physical world, once the primary setting for work and social interactions, has increasingly become an alternative to the digital environment. The quantitative breakthrough of the digital occurred in various walks of life. One can talk about the breakthrough of technologies for controlling our digital, but not only digital, movements: “drones are used to combat the pandemic not only in China but also in Italy and Spain”<sup>1</sup>; they are equipped with applications for measuring the temperature of random passersby and for recognizing their faces, even when they are wearing masks. The pandemic has undoubtedly made social, economic, and class inequalities more visible and added new levels of functioning: differences between those who can protect themselves from infection by staying at home and those who cannot, those who

<sup>1</sup> Slavoj Žižek, *Pandemija! 2* (Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga, 2022), 19.

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have access to vaccines and those who do not, and new forms of exploitation related to the corona-economy have emerged. Transparency has affected another process that, although it began long before the pandemic, gained an extreme variant with the pandemic through the explicit declaration of art and cultural activities as non-essential and their literal removal, which occurred almost overnight.<sup>2</sup> This is a process of marginalization of art.

However, not everything is so bleak in the relationship between the pandemic and art. On the contrary, one could speak of a sort of blossoming, especially if we talk about, for instance, the art market. After the onset of the pandemic in 2019 and the subsequent stagnation that spilled over into 2020, this stagnation was eliminated at the beginning of 2021, at least according to the art market. The first thing that was revived after the initial pandemic impact was precisely the art market. This is confirmed by the statistics of Christie's, one of the oldest and most eminent auction houses, which controls about 95% of the global art market and which reported a 75% increase in revenue compared to the year before. Another indicator of the relatively quick and influential recovery of the market is yet another breakthrough. In March 2021, digital artist Beeple sold his work *Everydays: The First 5000 Days* for seventy million dollars. This is unprecedented because, for the first time, a digital work was valued at so many millions. Moreover, it was the first time something intangible, without a physical dimension, something that is essentially a database, a digital archive containing information about all its previous owners, was sold in an auction house with the longest tradition in selling art objects. Digital art has finally gained its market model of functioning and has become profitably sustainable, which was not the case before and is probably the reason it was previously relegated to a separate niche compared to contemporary art.

This market breakthrough, which spilled over into the story of the breakthrough of digital art, is connected with the emergence of NFTs and Crypto Art. NFT (non-fungible token) is a cryptocurrency associated with the blockchain technology, one of the leading technologies in the field of information technology for storing and adding large amounts of data. With the introduction of non-traditional currencies, first Bitcoin and later many others, this technology has been applied in the distribution and transactions of cryptocurrencies. The key difference between transactions with traditional currencies compared to cryptocurrencies is that the former are realized through a 'third party', namely banks, while the latter are conducted in a decentralized manner, through a network maintained by so-called miners. "Blockchain is a distributed method of adding and storing large amounts of data from various domains such that only verified data is added and, once added, these data cannot be altered."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Museums Around the World. In the Face of COVID-19*. UNESCO Report (2021). Anne-Sophie V. Radermecker, "Art and culture in the COVID-19 era: for a consumer-oriented approach," *SN Business & Economics* 1, 1 (2021): 1–14.

<sup>3</sup> Miodrag J. Mihaljević, "Bitcoin, Blockchain Technology and Cryptography – An Illustration of Certain Issues," *Annals of the Branch of SANU in Novi Sad*, No. 16 for 2020 (2021): 42.

The blockchain technology is based on cryptography, which is the foundation for maintaining network information security. Crypto art emerged when this technology for distributing large amounts of data and cryptocurrency transactions was applied to visual digital content. An NFT is a digital certificate of authenticity that guarantees ownership of the purchased digital file, regardless of its presence and distribution on the network. They were first used in the gaming industry, then with CryptoKitties, in sports, and eventually in art.

It could be said that everything started with CryptoKitties. They, in fact, play an important role in the online space. There is data showing that in the early days, the largest number of internet users visited to watch funny cat videos, particularly on YouTube, making the earliest visual NFTs CryptoKitties. “Without a doubt, CryptoKitties played a huge role in raising awareness about the ownership of digital assets. Who knows where we would be now without them?”<sup>4</sup>

Images of virtual kittens began to sell in 2017 and were the most popular NFTs for the following two years. In July 2020, the NFT market began to surge, gaining significant attention in March 2021 with the aforementioned sale when Beeple ‘overnight’ became the most sold living artist, right after Hockney and Koons. In the first four months of 2021, NFT transactions exceeded two billion dollars, ten times more than in the entire 2020.<sup>5</sup>

This sudden market breakthrough of NFTs and crypto art is closely followed by other art institutions. In the same year (June 10, 2021 – September 15, 2021), this phenomenon received its first institutional historicization with the organization of the exhibition *PROOF OF ART – A brief history of NFTs* (Francisco Carolinum Museum, Linz). This historical overview begins with the earliest examples of computer, video, and digital art and ends with the metaverse, a virtual space where this exhibition was also realized alongside the museum. The NFT exhibition was also part of the Venice Biennale 2022, further confirming the integration of NFTs and crypto art into official institutional channels. A common formulation is that this represents a significant shift not only in digital art but in art in general, raising the question: what kind of shift is it? Is a technological breakthrough a prerequisite for an artistic breakthrough? Does a market breakthrough open up possibilities for an artistic breakthrough? Or is it a complete commodification of art, considering that even a digital file, which can be reproduced a million times, has gained commodity status? On the other hand, whenever NFTs and crypto art are mentioned, it is usually in the context of investment, buying, selling, and the market, which raises another question: is this even art?

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<sup>4</sup> Matt Fortnow and Terry QuHarrison, *The NFT Handbook* (New Jersey: Wiley, 2022), 113.

<sup>5</sup> Matthieu Nadini et al. “Mapping the NFT Revolution: Market Trends, Trade Networks, and Visual Features.” *Scientific Reports* 11, Article number: 20902 (2021).

## NFT market vs. art market

The initial idea for NFTs was to protect artists by allowing them to control their copyright and finances and manage themselves independently of the existing gallery system.<sup>6</sup> It is believed that the key novelty brought by NFTs is decentralization: anyone can create an artwork and present, distribute, and sell it through online platforms, often referred to as the first global movement. This formulation is debatable, given that we have been living in a global world for more than two decades, but it certainly has the technological support to function globally. In addition to decentralization and globalization, it is also associated with democratization because, unlike traditional collections that are exclusive, hidden, and often inaccessible to the general public, NFT collections are online, always available and visible. Another advantage of these collections is that they cannot be stolen or copied because there is a digital record of ownership and sale available to everyone. Additionally, all those in the ownership chain earn from the sale of the work, not just the last owner, which is the case with the traditional market. Finally, to have your works in NFT collections and sell them, it is not necessary to be part of an existing gallery system: you are your own gallerist. Everything sounds great, doesn't it?

As time goes on, however, it has become evident that there are far more similarities between the traditional and NFT markets than initially assumed. Increasingly, the conclusion is that despite decentralization, openness, and accessibility, the NFT market suits major players and global tycoons who are constantly seeking new investment opportunities. It turns out that the NFT market is ideal for this, as one does not need to be an art lover, know anything about it, or even have a certain affinity for art, which is generally the case with traditional collectors, to buy crypto art and have a profitable investment. When comparing the traditional and NFT markets, data shows that 1% controls 60% of the traditional market, while 1% controls 50% of the NFT market.<sup>7</sup> This leads to the conclusion that the difference is minimal, meaning that the crypto market also operates within a neoliberal model characterized by significant inequality (“the famous 1%”). This calls into question the decentralization and democratization touted as its main advantages. The takeover of the NFT market by large capital is confirmed by last year's sale of Beeple's work for seventy million dollars, which occurred amid a mega-crisis, “[...] faster and larger than any we have experienced in the last century, and perhaps even in the last few centuries”<sup>8</sup> – likely the biggest in the history of capitalism.

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<sup>6</sup> “The only thing we'd wanted to do was ensure that artists could make some money and have control over their work.” Anil Dash, “NFTs Weren't Supposed to End Like This,” *The Atlantic* (2021), [https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/04/nfts-werent-supposed-end-like/618488/?utm\\_medium=offsite&utm\\_source=medium&utm\\_campaign=all](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/04/nfts-werent-supposed-end-like/618488/?utm_medium=offsite&utm_source=medium&utm_campaign=all), acc. on August 16, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Jon Ippollito, “Contemporary Conversations: Non-Fungible | The New Market for Rare Digital Items,” Sotheby's, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6jcTllpUmg> (2021), acc. on August 16, 2024.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

There is a legitimate joke about Marxists having correctly predicted twelve out of the last three capitalist crises. But if any Marxist had ever suggested that the worst crisis in late capitalism would be precipitated by a bat virus, even the comrades most inclined to catastrophism would have shaken their heads and wondered what drug had induced this hallucination.<sup>9</sup>

Whenever the mentioned artist talks about his works, he mainly discusses how their market price has increased.<sup>10</sup> These are digital drawings with a cyberpunk aesthetic that critique consumer culture and serve as a daily commentary on current events in the world. They were created over 15 years, with the initial idea of drawing something on the computer every day to record his progress, following the ‘famous’ ‘no day without a line’ principle.

Thus, in the midst of the digital, technologically networked media space, an old technique of craft perfection was revived, which was the subject of avant-garde criticism for reducing the artist to a craftsman and art to the retinal, or as Duchamp would say, “enough of the dumb painter”. This is also the starting point for a series of works by Raša Todosijević, titled *No Day Without a Line*, in which he literally draws lines, with the number varying according to the ‘significance’ of the place or institution where they are exhibited. Beeple, one might say, has truly mastered the use of drawing software, as his drawings resemble frames from dystopian video games, but the main impression is that such drawings have been seen countless times, which brings us back to the question of originality, authenticity, and uniqueness.

Good old Benjamin wrote in 1936 that the emergence of technical reproducibility is not only related to the introduction of new media, photography, and film, but also completely changed the way art functions. For this reason, issues concerning the relationship between originals and copies are no longer relevant, as reproduction has become the dominant type of image in modern culture. However, the question of originality and authenticity has not lost its importance, primarily because it serves the art market, which takes precedence in the art theory and retains it to this day.

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<sup>9</sup> Andreas Malm, *Corona, Climate, Chronic Emergency* (New York: Verso, 2020), 109.

<sup>10</sup> It is interesting that as many as three of his works were on the list of ten best-selling NFTs:

1. Beeple, *Everydays – The First 5000 Days*, \$69 million, March 2021, Christie’s;
2. Beeple, *Crossroads*, \$6.6 million, February 2021, Nifty Gateway;
3. Kevin Abosch, *Forever Rose*, \$1 million, February 2018, GFTO;
4. Pak, *Metarift*, \$904,413.47, March 2021, MarkersPlace;
5. Steve Aoki and Antoni Tudisco, *hairy*, \$888,888.88, March 2021, Nifty Gateway;
6. Pak, *Finite.*, \$809,789.40, March 2021, Foundation;
7. Beeple, *The Complete MF Collection*, \$777,777.77, Nifty Gateway, December 2020;
8. Chris Torres, *Nyan Cat*, \$561,000, February, 2021, Foundation;
9. Trevor Jones and Jose Delbo, *Genesis*, \$552,603.98, October 2020, MakersPlace;
10. FEWOCiOUS, *The EverLasting Beautiful* by FEWOCiOUS, \$550,000, March 2021, Nifty Gateway

Sarah Cascone, “Here Are the 10 Most Expensive NFT Artworks, From Beeple’s \$69 Million Opus to an 18-Year-Old’s \$500,000 Vampire Queen,” *Artnet* (2021), <https://news.artnet.com/market/most-expensive-nfts-1952597>, acc. on August 16, 2024.



Therefore, photography spent most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century seeking an appropriate model to secure its status as an art object. This was achieved when a way was found to differentiate between originals and copies, which the nature of the medium itself does not recognize. This difference is formal, but it allowed it to cross into the market. The same process of assigning authenticity is undergone by the digital record. With the advent of NFTs, this process was recently completed. Blockchain played a key role in this. This technology provided a solution to the previously unsolvable problem of how to secure commodity status for a digital record that can be copied infinitely. A connection was made between art and NFTs, the digital and the tangible, and thus CryptoKitties led us into crypto art.

Sudden rise of the NFT market began in 2017 and coincided with a surge of interest in blockchain technology from the art market. At that time, there was also a growing narrative about virtual reality, which had been developing since the 1960s, albeit with significant interruptions and revivals, up to the present day. The art market, however, began to take a keen interest in blockchain because its proponents promised to solve the problem of ownership and provenance, not only for physical objects like paintings and sculptures but also for digital records. And they succeeded! It could be concluded that this is one of the reasons why the emergence of NFTs is considered a significant leap in art, as the issue of ownership and provenance is crucial in establishing the market and any other value of an artwork. It could be said that Hans Haacke's work "Seurat's 'Les Poseuses' (Small Version), 1888 –1975", in which he displays a series of documents with transaction data from the period indicated in the title, showing the rising price of this work, represents a precursor to blockchain, in the same way that certificates of authenticity can be found in the works of Yves Klein and Robert Morris.

Blockchain technology provided a solution to the problem of money duplication in the digital space, which could then be applied to all digital records. It turned out that certain codes could be isolated within the blockchain that could be guaranteed as unique. When these codes are 'attached' to specific digital items (which can be a variety of digital records) – images, gifs, memes, texts, or sounds – they bestow uniqueness and originality upon them. As we can see from the field of art, as soon as something can be proven original, it can be sold! It matters little whether the item is physical or digital. The guarantee of originality turns it into a commodity ready for the market. Thus, for market needs, the idea of originality has once again been revived, along with a series of artistic attributes from the previous paradigm, primarily the aesthetic component and uniqueness (the best-selling items in the NFT market are rare digital objects, i.e., those that are less circulated on platforms).

However, the reality on the ground is completely different, and we come to this realization when we ask a seemingly simple question: what are you buying when you buy an NFT, when you can see the same image online, copy it, or take a screenshot? The second question is why you would buy it at all. The answer to the second question can be intuited and is not so much about viewing and enjoying as much as about

investing: it does not matter that you can see it everywhere; what matters is that you can own it and sell it. The answer to the first question is even more amusing: when you buy an NFT, you are not buying a digital record itself, as it is not on the blockchain; only the transaction data are on the blockchain, so you are essentially buying a link.

“Basically, NFTs are a big receipt floating in the sky. That’s all they are...”<sup>11</sup>

## **NFT and networked world**

Each NFT is a node in a network and is connected to other NFTs, so by its purchase, you also become part of the network. In this network, you are partly a patron, someone who supports artists by buying their NFTs; partly a collector, partly a hoarder, whether viewed as a syndrome, disorder, or something archetypally familiar to us; and partly an investor, since the NFT market is like any other market, where you can profit or lose, and partly an artist, as you can create NFTs yourself. The problem with this last point is that you can be a good investor, but that does not mean you are a good artist, and vice versa. But that, it seems, is not even important. What is important is that digital art has finally obtained its economic model of functioning, and not only that, but this model is applicable to the ‘biggest players’ in the market.

What has changed, however, is that it is no longer necessary to be Christie’s to be part of this buying and selling chain. This leaves room for those without large capital to “fit” into the chain, expanding the concept of collecting, which is no longer necessarily an exclusive activity. This, in turn, supports the expansion of the dominant neoliberal model. However, everyone in the buying and selling chain is connected through transactions with everyone else, opening possibilities for introducing heterogeneous network connections, beyond hierarchical structures typical of conventional market models. By showing that NFT networks are modular, research confirms that each NFT can be seen as a node in a network (network of NFTs), and that they are interconnected. What connects them are semantic similarities, same buyers, and approximately the same timeframe in which the transactions are made.

What has also been shown is that the network comprises different clusters, which can be traced through collections, and that they represent specific communities (underlining community structure). Interestingly, despite the divisions into clusters, these communities are not isolated, as buyers purchase and sell digital works belonging to different collections. “This simultaneously guarantees that the network is not dominated by large cliques.”<sup>12</sup> It could be said that the potential of the NFT network and crypto art lies precisely in these modular, heterogeneous, open, and non-hierarchical connections, which open up possibilities for potential progress, something not currently happening in any other segment except this market. However, the greatest challenge digital art faces at this point is how to avoid to completely sink into the neoliberal model of functioning.

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<sup>11</sup> Jon Ippollito, “Contemporary Conversations: Non-Fungible | The New Market for Rare Digital Items,” Sotheby’s (2021), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6jcTllpUmg>, acc. on August 16, 2024.

<sup>12</sup> Nadini et al., “Mapping the NFT Revolution.”

The pandemic has made the interconnected world visible and transparent. As we have seen, the pandemic initiated a breakthrough in the digital realm on various levels: from markets and tracking and controlling technologies to our ability to learn, teach, open exhibitions, and attend online forums. It seems that we are being prepared for the next step in this process to come: metaverse no longer only a game becoming part of our everyday environment. NFTs are a product of this interconnected world, a steppingstone toward the metaverse, which is already well on its way and which we may or may not experience. We can assume that we will have not just one, but several metaverses, and that in all of them, we will need digital items; in one, we might buy a crypto cat or dog, and in another, we might walk it. NFTs are a bridge to a digital economy. Entering the digital economy is inevitable in all other walks of life, including art, so the question is not whether this is good or bad, but how, besides the transactional potential that currently dominates crypto art, we can also preserve the critical potential. This is particularly important if we have in mind that anything or almost anything can be an NFT, from crypto cats to digitized Warhol prints; the question remains: are NFTs art or just monetized commodities.

Art has long been a commodity, and this connection, cleverly disguised by the attributes of the sublime, aesthetic, and autonomous art object, was exposed by the Dadaists and Duchamp when he directly transferred a urinal from a shop to a gallery. Later, Warhol spoke openly about it, even working in the “Factory”, and added business (business art) to the mentioned attributes. Today, there is no longer a need to hide it; on the contrary, it is emphasized as an advantage, progress, and breakthrough in art. In the neoliberal world that we live in, profit has become the highest value, its starting point, and its outcome, and crypto art is a response to all of that. It seems that what Thomas McEvelley feared in the 1990s, and to what Belting refers when speaking about the global art, has happened: “The problem is no longer that artworks will end up as commodities, but that they will begin as such.”<sup>13</sup>

This is also the reason why it is still too early to talk about a shift in art: at this moment, we can talk about a shift in the market, aligning the dominant market model with art and upgrading it: the appropriation of digital art by capital, as confirmed by Christie’s. How and in what way this will affect art, and whether it will even be called art, remains to be seen.

Considering this market shift and the radicalization of the process of marginalizing art, it could be said that art in the pandemic era is characterized by two extremes, the coexistence of two processes, two faces seemingly opposed: the strengthening and expansion of the blockbuster art model, and on the other hand, rapid process of transforming artists and freelancers into a precarious category of socially endangered people. Nevertheless, we should resist reducing these processes to the well-known dual matrix inherited from the previous century, that is, the division into high and low art, mainstream and alternative, because: “The time of traditional dualistic oppositions

<sup>13</sup> Hans Belting, “Savremena umetnost kao globalna umetnost,” in *Slike/Singularno/Globalno*, ed. by Jovan Čekić and Maja Stanković (Beograd: Fakultet za medije i komunikacije, 2013): 223.

that guided social thought and geopolitical cartographies is over. The possibilities of conflict are still present, but they involve multipolar systems that are incompatible with aligning under Manichaeic ideological banners.”<sup>14</sup>

The division into high and low art is constituted by the following differences: in content (in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, this was abstraction versus motifs from popular culture), in medium (traditional artistic media vs. new media, new artistic practices), and in the exhibition system (museum-gallery in the first case and mass communication media in the second). Today, this difference is not constituted by content (take for example Koons’ markedly banal motifs taken from the media world, as an unavoidable example of blockbuster art), nor by medium (Banksy’s graffiti and street art interventions and their auction sales), nor by the presentation system (NFTs are not part of the museum-gallery system yet are sold at Christie’s). The difference is present only at the level of economy. Between the aforementioned two extremes there is a whole spectrum of different financial-production frameworks that artists work within, and the pandemic has not caused this division; it has only sharpened this spectrum to extremes. Thus, it is not about a dual division, just as the world today cannot be viewed in a bipolar Cold War key, which is constantly being pulled out of mothballs and imposed in the inability to think of something new, multipolar. “Can’t you see that the pandemic is just a costume rehearsal for a global state of emergency?”<sup>15</sup>

The pandemic made the interconnected world tangible and visible, but also highlighted inequalities; it revealed the marginalized position of art and simultaneously finalized the process of the financialization of art. The pandemic marks a leap into the digital world, which we no longer separate from the previously known real world. It is an overt leap into a controlled world, controlled externally (where we move, what we watch, who we chat with...) and now internally, under the skin (collecting biometric data with regards to what is happening in our bodies).<sup>16</sup> “One can imagine a chronic emergency that plays out in a concatenation of disasters: one pandemic after another, one climate impact after another, blow succeeding mighty blow until the foundations are too damaged and the whole system starts to totter.”<sup>17</sup>

The pandemic has radicalized populism, so in addition to the traditional, we can also talk about a new populism. Here’s how Žižek differentiates between old and new populisms. In the traditional populism, everything negative for a certain regime was not allowed to be heard in the public space. Today, as Žižek says, obscenity is an integral part of populism: anyone can say anything without any responsibility, and this is a strategy used by the authorities themselves. In such an environment, even when the truth is spoken, it appears obscene and thus masks itself, sounding like untruth. In this key, speaking the truth becomes just one of many obscene things, just a

<sup>14</sup> Feliks Gatari, *Tri ekologije* (Beograd: Fakultet za medije i komunikacije, 2022), 13.

<sup>15</sup> Žižek, *Pandemija!* 2, 145.

<sup>16</sup> Yuval Noah Harari, “The World after Covid,” FTWeekend Digital Festival, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWo4OrGhGxI> (2021), acc. on August 16, 2024.

<sup>17</sup> Malm, *Corona, Climate, Chronic Emergency*, 114.

variant of fake news (“The function of obscenity here is very precise: it should be an indicator of ‘media honesty’”<sup>18</sup>), aimed at provoking emotion and irrational reaction, which are shortcuts to manipulation.

So, where is art in all of this? How can it position itself in relation to all the mentioned changes, fluid values, shifting meanings, neoliberal madness...? Perhaps for a moment, we should take a step back into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Conditionally speaking, we have inherited two approaches to art from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first is the aesthetic approach, which foregrounds the aesthetic dimension and the idea of originality. This high-modernist approach is followed by a postmodernist one, which destabilizes the idea of originality by initiating a series of appropriation practices, but it is incorporated as a detachment from what is being appropriated. The second approach comes from the avant-garde, through neo-avant-garde movements and conceptual art, starting from the idea that art and artistic expression are a form of thinking, not necessarily just creating beautiful objects. One can ask: which of these approaches is operational today in terms of helping us understand art, but also the world around us?

If we start from the first approach, we can conclude that the idea of originality has been completely absorbed and instrumentalized by neoliberal capital, which prioritizes the market and profitable value. With the advent of technical reproducibility, the question of originality has become complex, so Benjamin approaches it from a theoretical angle, introducing the concept of aura and emphasizing difference between traditional and new media, traditional and modern contexts. Today, however, originality is equated with a certificate of originality, as we have seen with NFTs and crypto art: this idea has moved out of the visual, conceptual, and theoretical realms and become a certificate that accompanies the artwork in a chain of transactions.

That such a market influx would occur in art was probably unimaginable even to Yves Klein and Robert Morris. The former, as part of his work *Zone of Immaterial Pictorial Sensibility* (1959), issued certificates of authenticity. He problematizes the beginning of market dominance by reducing the work entirely to the immaterial – the transaction; however, this transaction ends with pouring gold into the Seine, as profit had not yet gained the status of an inviolable value. Robert Morris, on the other hand, introduces a document on the withdrawal of aesthetic value into the work, cynically playing with, like Klein, the relationship between the market and the idea of originality (*Document*, 1963). Conceptual art problematizes the reduction of the idea of originality to consensus, convention, and certificate, a mere bureaucratic document confirming it. Today, it is an even more precise document, specifically a code written into a network of other information.

Given the current state of truth in our world – compromised, manipulated, and often obscured by a media landscape that instrumentalizes emotion and irrationality – the emancipatory potential of art appears more critical than ever. Art’s power lies in its capacity to engage with and expose mechanisms of manipulation that distort truth and rationality. However, the irrationality prevalent today does not lead to a deeper

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<sup>18</sup> Žižek, *Pandemija!* 2, 179.

understanding of reality, as in surrealist art, but rather functions to suppress critical thinking, which has become increasingly marginalized and undervalued.

The true emancipatory potential of art, as conceived in the Adornian sense, resides in its role as a ‘message in a bottle’, an open channel to the future, and a catalyst for social change. This potential becomes especially vital as we approach a future where artificial intelligence, guided by existing patterns and protocols, increasingly automates decision-making processes. Unlike these predetermined systems, art remains a domain where imagination can transcend existing frameworks, offering novel perspectives and introducing elements that escape standardized solutions. This potential for innovation and experimentation, reminiscent of how Robert Morris and Yves Klein’s introduction of certificates of originality eventually reshaped our reality, underscores art’s unique ability to think beyond the constraints of the present and envision alternative futures.

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# The Transformative Role of Digital Tools in Comic Book Preservation

**Abstract:** Traditionally viewed as static repositories, archives are now seen as dynamic entities capable of continuous reconfiguration and reinterpretation. This study examines how digital practices in comic book archiving maintain historical and emotional integrity, while making these artefacts relevant to contemporary audiences. This paper explores the theories of Wolfgang Ernst, Michel Foucault, Lev Manovich, and others in order to explain digital archiving as a dynamic and interpretive act that shapes historical narratives and cultural memory. Digital restoration of comic books focuses on preserving the original aesthetic and historical context, while recoloring revitalizes visual elements to enhance appeal. Reimagining involves comprehensive reinterpretation and aligns with new media theories in order to offer fresh perspectives on historical narratives. The discussion shows how these practices democratize access to cultural heritage, transforming archives into active sites of cultural engagement and potentiality. By balancing technical precision and interpretive insight, digital artists and archivists aim at ensuring that comic books remain vibrant and meaningful cultural treasures for future generations.

**Keywords:** digital; archive; comic books; restoration; recoloring; reimagining.

## Introduction: From print to digital, the evolution of comic books

From the moment of their inception in the late 19th century until today, comic books went through a significant process of transformation and evolution, going from basic black-and-white sketches all the way to the vibrant digital masterpieces. The earliest forms of comics typically appeared in newspapers.<sup>1</sup> The superhero genre emerged in the 1930s with the creation of Superman in *Action Comics No. 1*. This genre quickly gained popularity, leading to the Golden Age of Comics, marked by the iconic superheroes such as Superman, Batman, Captain America etc., and became a cultural phenomenon that reflects and shapes societal values and ideals to this day.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rocco Versaci, *This Book Contains Graphic Language: Comics as Literature* (New York: Continuum), 2007, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Robertson, "Truth, Justice, and the Birth of the Superhero Comic Book, 2017," retrieved from the Digital Public Library of America, <https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/truth-justice-and-the-birth-of-the-superhero-comic-book>, acc. on August 2, 2024.



Graphic novels, a new form of visual storytelling that often tackled mature themes that appealed mostly to adult audiences, emerged as a distinct and separate form of sequential storytelling in the 1980s, which offered much more complex narratives and sophisticated art than traditional comic books did.<sup>3</sup> Japanese manga, which gained global popularity in the late 20th century, has also significantly influenced comic book culture worldwide with a broad range of genres and styles.<sup>4</sup>

Comic book manufacturing in its essence is a collaborative action that involves various roles in the production. Writers are responsible for developing storylines and scripts, while artists (sometimes referred to as pencilers) create visual representations of those scripts. Inkers add depth and detail to pencils, colorists bring it to life with color, and letterers add dialogues and captions. At the beginning of the 20th century, comic book artists based their craft heavily on traditional hand-coloring techniques, limited palettes and manual application methods. These early techniques often resulted in inconsistencies and became worse over time due to the limitations of available materials and technologies.<sup>5</sup> With the development of digital technologies in the 21st century, comic book production, preservation, and restoration got a remarkable technological upgrade. Newly developed digital tools such as Photoshop offer unlimited color spectrum and precision, a type of technology that was previously unimaginable for artists to attain. This shift not only improved the production quality of illustrations overall, but also preserved the original artistic intent by allowing artists to create consistent and high-quality reproductions.<sup>6</sup> Distribution methods for comics went through several iterations and changes since their inception as well. Initially, comic strips were distributed through newspapers. Then in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, specialized comic book shops appeared beside newsstands. The rise of digital distribution platforms in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, as the latest iteration of distribution channels, has revolutionized access to comics, making them available globally through various online retailers and digital subscriptions.<sup>7</sup> This created the need to transfer comic books from print to digital format which led to the creation of electronic files, digital archives, and other artistic practices and opportunities.

Preserving the original artistic intent in mass-produced comics today poses significant challenges. The collaborative nature of production means that each creator's contribution must be maintained and respected. Additionally, physical materials used in early comics, such as low-quality paper, are prone to deterioration over time, which further complicates preservation efforts. Digital archiving, on the other hand, offers solutions to these challenges by enabling the preservation of high-quality digital versions of original works, ensuring that the artistic intent and cultural significance are maintained with care for future generations of audiences. Or in the words of Tom Nesmith:

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<sup>3</sup> Versaci, *This Book Contains Graphic Language: Comics as Literature*, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Gravett, *Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics* (New York: Harper Design, 2004), 156.

<sup>5</sup> Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (MA: Kitchen Sink Press, 1993), 187.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

The postmodern outlook suggests an important new intellectual place for archives in the formation of knowledge, culture, and societies. It helps us to see that, contrary to the conventional idea that archivists simply receive and house vast quantities of records, which merely reflect society, they actually co-create and shape the knowledge in records, and thus help form society's memory.<sup>8</sup>

This implies that even though archiving is a form of mediation, it is also more than just that. The intersection of technical skills and archival interpretation in digital comic book restoration, recoloring and reimaging shows us how much evolving role digital artists have in preserving cultural heritage of comic books. Today's contemporary art and theory often represent the archive as a somewhat dynamic and contested space where various historical narratives are being constructed and reconstructed over time. In this paper, my aim is to explore the technological themes and theories of how and why digital restoration, recoloring, and reimaging are being used in digital archiving of comic books and what implications that has on digital archiving and comic books.

### **Preserving authenticity: The art and science of digital comic book restoration**

When it comes to preserving comic books as a print media art form, the significance of comic book restoration lies not only in preserving their physical form but also in maintaining the cultural and historical narratives that were embedded within these comics in the first place. Physical restoration of comic books involves the manual repair of physical copies, which may include tasks such as mending torn pages, deacidifying paper, and retouching faded colors using traditional art materials. While physical restoration aims to preserve the tangible artefact, it is often labor-intensive and can only slow down, not prevent, the degradation of materials.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, digital restoration uses advanced technology to repair and enhance digital versions of comic books. This method can create high-quality reproductions that maintain the visual integrity of the original work without further physical handling, thereby preserving the original artefact's condition. A crucial step in digital comic book restoration is digital scanning and cleaning, which is both a technical and interpretive task.<sup>10</sup> This process requires not only technical skill but also an artistic understanding of what constitutes the comic book's authentic state. It can be argued that technical process of digitization itself can be seen as a form of historical mediation, where temporal layers of the past are made dynamically present within the digital medium, even when the

<sup>8</sup> Tom Nesmith, "Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives," *American Archivist* 65, 1 (2002): 26–27.

<sup>9</sup> Ariellazo, "Comic Restoration: What You Should Know," GoCollect, last modified March 13, 2021, <https://gocollect.com/blog/comic-restoration-what-you-should-know>, acc. on August 2, 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

outside world vanishes.<sup>11</sup> This means that digital tools (such as Photoshop) enable artists to examine and restore various aspects of the comic book, ensuring that even the slightest elements are preserved with high precision. This level of detail is crucial for maintaining the comic book's original aesthetic and historical integrity, allowing artists to capture nuances that contribute to the comic's authenticity. However, archive is not merely an accumulation of documents meticulously organized according to an all-encompassing classification and imposed power structures. It is also a dynamic and interpretive space where decisions about what to preserve and how to present it influence the way history and culture are understood.<sup>12</sup> Michel Foucault explains it the following way:

The archive defines a particular level: that of a practice that causes a multiplicity of statements to emerge as so many regular events, as so many things to be dealt with and manipulated. It does not have the weight of tradition; and it does not constitute the library of all libraries, outside time and place; nor is it the welcoming oblivion that opens up to all new speech the operational field of its freedom; between tradition and oblivion, it reveals the rules of a practice that enables statements both to survive and to undergo regular modification. It is the general system of the formation and transformation of statements.<sup>13</sup>

In other words, we can look at archives as if they are systems of knowledge production engulfed in statements that reflect and shape societal discourses. This means that we can see the restoration process as a means of not just preserving individual works, but also as a means to maintain and reinforce the cultural narratives and artistic practices of their time. When we digitally restore comics, we are engaging in the act of selecting which elements of these works to preserve, thus influencing how they will be interpreted by future audiences. This act of restoration is then a form of historical mediation, where we determine the significance and meaning of these cultural artefacts in the context of our present understanding and technological capabilities.<sup>14</sup> These decisions contribute to the construction of historical knowledge, influencing which aspects of the comic are highlighted and which may be inadvertently minimized or altered. By acknowledging these factors, artists and restorers can strive to be more transparent and deliberate in their work, ensuring that the restored comics faithfully represent their original context and artistic intent while also being accessible to contemporary audiences.

This can also be interpreted as a form of remediation, where new media re-configure old media, thus affecting how archival materials are understood and

<sup>11</sup> Wolfgang Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 57.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 72.

<sup>14</sup> Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2, 1–2 (2002): 1–19.

experienced.<sup>15</sup> It can be argued that new media are doing exactly what their predecessors have done: presenting themselves as refashioned and improved versions of other media.<sup>16</sup> This process of remediation enables digital tools to reimagine and reinterpret traditional comic book art, enhancing its visual and narrative appeal for contemporary audiences. In other words, the desire for immediacy leads digital media to borrow avidly from each other as well as from their predecessors.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, digital reconstruction of comic books draws upon and transforms earlier artistic techniques. By employing advanced digital methods, reconstructed artwork is not merely a reproduction but a transformation that enhances the original content's depth and detail. This transformation shows us that remediation always operates under the current cultural assumptions about the media that are being remediated.<sup>18</sup> This further suggests that digital reinterpretation of comic books also reflects and responds to contemporary aesthetic and cultural values. Therefore, the restoration process is both a technical and a cultural act that reshapes the manner in which archival materials, such as comic books, are understood and experienced in the digital age.

Furthermore, the archive can become a living and activated site that we can use to rethink art and its institutions. According to Lev Manovich's theory, database logic of new media (which means not having beginning, middle and end) contrasts the traditional narrative forms with its structure of individual items of the same significance.<sup>19</sup> This means that in the process of comic book restoration, we can see that a restored comic book is not just restored as a linear narrative, but also as a database of images and textual elements. Each restored element then becomes a discrete piece of data that can be manipulated, stored, and retrieved, which makes the concept of new media a form of cultural expression with modularity and variability. Another approach to this argument is that this type of digitization process often reduces complex artefacts to mere data, which can undermine the authenticity of the original objects. This reductionist approach can then further lead to a loss of contextual and material aspects that are essential for understanding the historical and cultural significance of the artefacts.<sup>20</sup> While this might be true for some artefacts, in the case of comic books archiving, the artist's engagement adds new elements to the process that enable archived files to keep their artistic value. And in combination with modularity, variability and remediation, readers can experience restored comic books in multiple ways through various desktop and mobile digital media such as laptops, tablets, phones and apps, which effectively expands their artistic, cultural and historical value.

*Action Comics No. 1*, which introduced Superman to the world, stands as one of the most iconic examples of a comic book restoration. Originally published in

<sup>15</sup> Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 45.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>19</sup> Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 194.

<sup>20</sup> Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive*, 71.

1938, this comic book has suffered significant degradation over decades (see image #1).<sup>21</sup> The paper has yellowed, the ink has faded, and physical damage has occurred. This made digital restoration process crucial in preserving this seminal piece of comic book history. Restoration experts digitized the entire comic book using high-resolution scanners. This process required careful handling of the delicate pages to avoid further damage. After digitizing the images artists proceeded to the next phase, which was the Photoshop cleaning process. Technical experts removed stains, repaired tears, and corrected color fading of comic book's physical appearance while also restoring its readability and visual appeal (see image #2).

Perceiving digital archives as not only time capsules but also as depositories of alternative futures suggests that archives hold potential narratives and futures that have yet to be realized. In other words, digital comic book restoration process opens up possibilities for reinterpretation and reimagining of the past and provides a foundation for a space where alternative histories and futures can be further explored while maintaining the original artistic intent and improving the quality and consistency of comic book illustrations.

### **Revitalizing visuals: The impact of digital recoloring on comic books**

Digital comic book recoloring, another essential process in the preservation of visual art of comics, shows us the transformative potential of digital archives. Marvel Comics has embarked on an extensive journey to recolor its classic comics for their Marvel Masterworks series. A notable example of this effort is the recoloring of *The Silver Surfer* series.

The recoloring process here involves several steps. First, artists scan the original comic book pages to create high-resolution digital versions (see image #3). Then, based on the original color composition, they use advanced digital tools, like Adobe Photoshop and Clip Studio Paint, and they recolor pages, correct any color fadings and fix inconsistencies. This recoloring process also allows for the enhancement of hues and the introduction of more vibrant color palettes, which were not possible with the original printing technology. This modernized color palette helps attract new readers while maintaining the emotional and narrative integrity of the original artwork. In the provided images from *The Silver Surfer*, we can see the dramatic difference between the original (see image #3) and the recolored versions (see image #4). With the enhanced visual appeal, the Marvel Masterworks series demonstrates how digital recoloring can breathe new life into these stories, making them accessible and engaging for contemporary audiences. Furthermore, Wolfgang Ernst's theory of digital memory provides another layer of understanding. Ernst discusses how digital archives and restorations can alter the perception of historical artefacts, preserving them in a dynamic form.<sup>22</sup> In other words, *The Silver Surfer's* digital recoloring not

<sup>21</sup> Les Daniels, *Superman: The Complete History* (San Francisco CA: Chronicle Books, 1998), 33.

<sup>22</sup> Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive*, 128.

only preserves the comic, but it also revitalizes it by transforming classic comics into visually enhanced digital versions.

Roland Barthes, in *Camera Lucida*, discusses how certain visual elements can trigger deep emotional responses,<sup>23</sup> which implies that archives can be seen as dynamic repositories of human experience and memory. As for the digital realm, Wolfgang Ernst argues:

From the development of mathematical stochastics and statistical dynamics in the nineteenth-century thermodynamics (Ludwig Boltzmann's and Josiah Willard Gibbs's insight into the nature of entropy) up to Norbert Wiener's Cybernetics, the historical mode describing temporal processes has been confronted with alternative modelings of time. When it comes to describing media in time, this aporia becomes crucial, because one can no longer simply subject media processes to a literary narrative without fundamentally misreading and misrepresenting their *Eigenzeit*. Historical media narratives take place in an imaginary time. Storage technologies, on the other hand, take place in the symbolic temporal order, and the contingent can now be dealt with by stochastic mathematics as implemented in real-time computing.<sup>24</sup>

This means that a form of archival entropy can develop and manifest itself as data corruption or loss of original context during a digital preservation process. In terms of digital recoloring, the importance of preserving the original color intent and context is as essential as updating the visual presentation. The definition of an archive, therefore, is not confined to its physical structure or the documents it houses. Instead, archives embody narratives, emotions, and cultural significance of their content, see image #4. Scott McCloud's theory of color in storytelling shows us the importance of the role of color in shaping reader's experience. McCloud argues further that colors are not just some mere decoration on a comic book page, but actually an essential element that affects mood, tone, and emotional resonance, which compliments Barthes' theory as well.<sup>25</sup> Thus, digital recoloring not only preserves but also revitalizes the emotional and visual appeal of comic books. Lev Manovich argues that digital media, such as video games for example, enable new forms of cultural expression, narration and interaction.<sup>26</sup> These types of media by their nature have the technological ability to turn passive archives into dynamic, participatory platforms. This process involves not just technical adjustments but a remaking of the artwork's potential to convey emotions and narratives, or in the case of comic books, recolored pages. Another role of digital media is in shaping human cognition and cultural practices, which aligns

<sup>23</sup> Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 21.

<sup>24</sup> Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive*, 58.

<sup>25</sup> McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, 190.

<sup>26</sup> Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 214–216.

with the idea that archives, through processes like digital recoloring, can foster new ways of engagement and thinking about art.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, digital recoloring demonstrates how these archives can serve as platforms for alternative narratives and futures. By revisiting and reimagining classic comic books, we uncover new layers of meaning and significance of old art pieces. Recolored comic book archive, therefore, can serve as one form of a model for how archives can function as repositories of alternative futures. This means that recolored digital comic book archive can then become a site of continual reinterpretation that evolves with each new interaction.

### **Reinterpreting classics: The role of digital reimagining in modernizing comic books**

Digital comic book reimagining is a transformative technique that reinterprets original comic book artwork using advanced digital methods to create (in a sense) a new version of a comic book page. On the occasion of their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020, Marvel Comics released a digitally reimagined version of one of their most popular comics, *Star Wars: The Original Trilogy*.

Colors in the comic book got a completely new and overhauled look, with a new color palette that included richer, more vibrant hues and more nuanced shading. Using advanced digital tools, the artist added shading, highlights, and other effects, bringing a new level of depth and detail to the artwork that was not possible with the original printing technology (see images #5 and #6). The image #6 shows us a colored page from the original first printing, while the image #5 shows the reimagined new version. Modern visual effects were also applied to enhance the overall look and feel of the comic, making it more appealing to contemporary digital readers.

The role of comics as a medium today constantly evolves and adapts, while it reflects broader cultural shifts and technological advancements through the power of visual storytelling.<sup>28</sup> This dynamic nature of comics parallels the evolving nature of digital archives, which, through reimagining practices, challenge traditional notions of preservation and static documentation. This indicates that digital reimagining of comic books does not merely concern preservation but also enhancing and transforming the medium for modern audiences. Ethical considerations in this process to bear in mind include respecting the original artist's vision (where possible depending on intellectual property ownership), as well as the original narrative context. This means that when engaging with digital cultural artefacts, artists must pay close attention to ensure that new artistic elements complement the existing material rather than detract from it.<sup>29</sup> This can bring contemporary critique of traditional social hierarchies and what constitutes high and low art, as well as where these digital archives in the age

<sup>27</sup> N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 13.

<sup>28</sup> McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, 23.

<sup>29</sup> Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 136.

of social networks belong today, as well as if they are part of contemporary culture or not, considering the fact that they are a collection of data, just like social networks.<sup>30</sup> So if we compare social media, for example an Instagram filter on a photograph, to a reimagined comic book page, we can see similarities in both structures. The original photo was remade with the use of a filter in a similar manner as the original comic book page was reimagined in color, which makes both of them digital cultural artefacts. Another notion to question here is whether these digital archives can act as sites of potentiality, where the past is not just preserved but is constantly reinterpreted and reactivated to address contemporary issues and envision future possibilities.<sup>31</sup> By enhancing the visual appeal of comics through modern digital techniques, reimagining can make these works more engaging without compromising their original plot or character development. This approach respects the original creator's work and provides a balanced integration of new and old, fostering a dialogue between the past and the present.<sup>32</sup> The archive, thus, becomes a site of continuous creative exploration, where unfinished or alternative narratives can be explored and expanded upon suggesting that the reimagining process is a testament to the evolving and dynamic nature of comic books in our digital age.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the evolving nature of archives, as demonstrated through the digital restoration, recoloring, and reimagining of comic books, highlights the dynamic and interpretive potential of these repositories. When archiving a comic book with any of these processes, artists must ensure that their interventions complement the existing material rather than detract from it. In other words, by redefining what constitutes an archive and by exploring new techniques for preserving and engaging with cultural artefacts such as old comic books, artists can become digital archivists that open up new possibilities for how we understand and interact with the cultural heritage of the art form of the comic book medium in the future. And that clasifies comic books as a form of a digital archive of a Foucaultian statement.

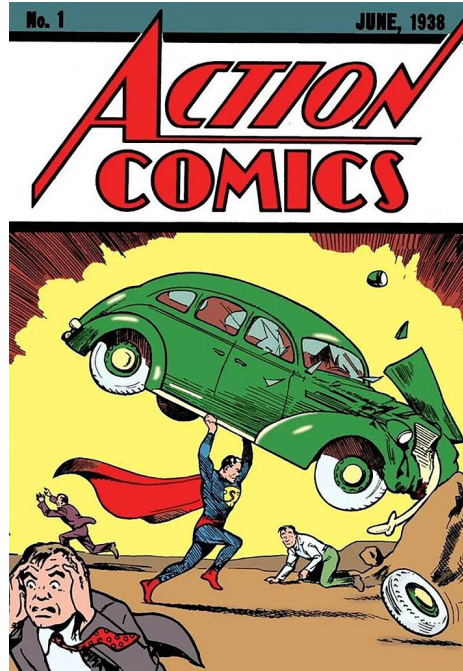
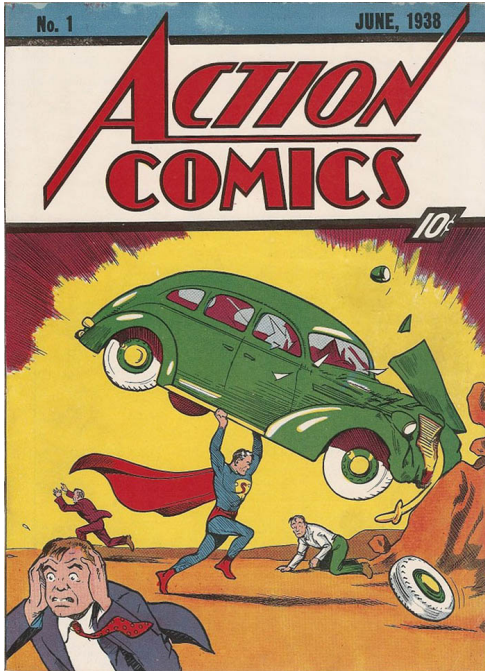
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<sup>30</sup> Lev Manovich, *Cultural Analytics* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2020), 150.

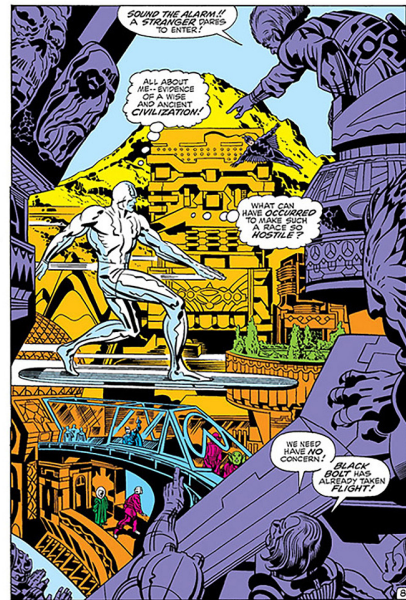
<sup>31</sup> Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive*, 14–15.

<sup>32</sup> Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 80.

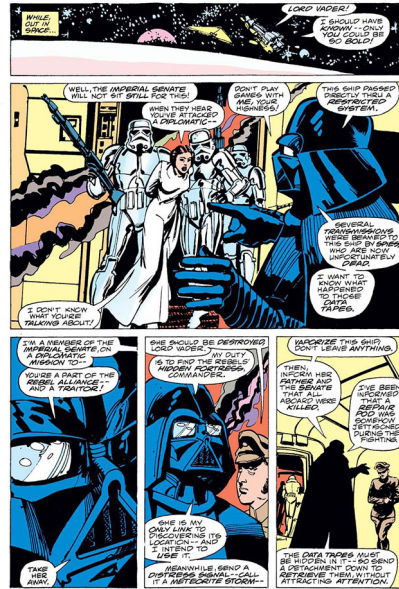
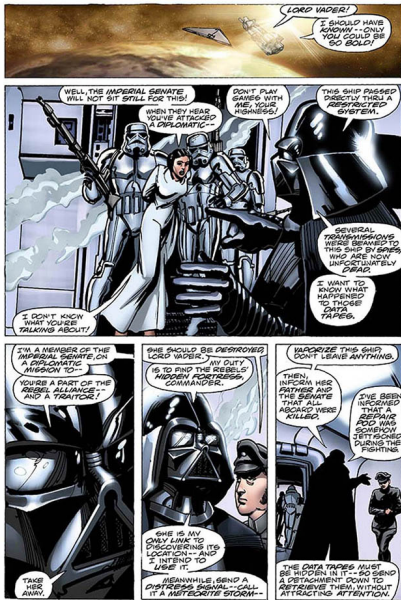




Images 1 and 2: Cover Illustration; Art: Joe Shuster; Property of DC Comics



Images 3 and 4: Comic Book Interior Page; Art: Jack Kirby; Property of Marvel Comics



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## **Cultural Therapy and Concern for the Archive. The Case of Documentary Video Archives by Tomáš Rafa<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** In this paper, the author explores current perspectives on contemporary art projects through the concept of the archive. By applying a theoretical framework termed “concern for the archive”, the author aims to elucidate complex relationships between the archive as a medium and the situated practices of contemporary art. The paper examines contemporary art as a form of temporary memory storage, particularly through the analysis of Tomáš Rafa’s documentary films. It addresses two key questions: What specific aspects of concern for the archive can be identified in political or activist contemporary art? How does concern for the archive differ from archival care, and why is this distinction important?

In the first section, the author discusses the “zones of contact” in political activist art, highlighting the formation of dialogical structures and distinguishing them from scientific research and purely documentary creation. The second section traces the layers of artistic training in Grzegorz Kowalski’s renowned studio at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where the author gained experience in organizing and documenting collective workshops. This part reveals the specifics of documentary video creation with its activist and archival overlaps.

In the final sections, the author outlines a theoretical framework for interpreting documentary video pieces in relation to the concepts of archive, cultural trauma, and cultural therapy.

**Keywords:** documentary; video; archive; memory; contemporary art; activism; archival care; archival concern; cultural trauma; cultural therapy.

### ***Zones of contact. Political art activism and cultural therapy***

Tomáš Rafa has been documenting Europe’s emerging nationalism and neo-fascism since 2009. He has also monitored and documented how Europe has handled the refugee crisis since 2015. The distance we try to maintain to the flow of news images tends to dissolve when we are faced with Rafa’s portrayals. At close range, they confront us with raging mobs who spew out their hatred against immigrants, refugees and other

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minorities. His video reports show panic and despair of refugees at various European frontiers, people fainting from exhaustion, terrified children and parents pressed against barbed wire fences marking national borders. As if to fend off this brutal reality, Rafa also engages in a form of political art activism – with both vitalizing and therapeutic ambitions.<sup>2</sup>

This is how Joa Ljungberg, the curator of the exhibition *The New Human* organized at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, described the work of Tomáš Rafa. In the following study, I will tackle the relationship between cultural trauma, archive and cultural therapy through the interpretation of his artistic and activist projects. The artist and activist Tomáš Rafa spent several years pondering the question of what to do with the walls that municipal governments had built between two groups of inhabitants. A wall as a given and immovable border has become a central motif in his artistic projects. A border that can only be physically bypassed or – transformed. I will explore the archive of video films that record happenings and creative painting workshops initiated by the artist and activist Tomáš Rafa. They were made alongside the then newly built walls separating the Romani community from the majority population. The whole series is named *The Walls of Sports* and was made between 2009 and 2013 in several Romani settlements located in Eastern Slovakia: in Michalovce (2009, 2011), Sečovce (2012), Ostrovany (2012), and Veľká Ida (2013).

The author ironically appropriated the series title from a term introduced by local governments, as this designation was intended to suppress the problematic nature of the walls in public communication. Lenka Kukurová summarizes the artist's activities in the Romani environment, noting that negotiations with the local authorities, although remaining covert, are always an integral part of the process and have direct influence on the outcome, as the local authorities have censored the paintings on the walls on several occasions. According to Kukurová, painting the wall “can be seen as an active symbolic and perhaps even therapeutic approach to solving the problem”.<sup>3</sup> According to Kukurová, the symbolic dimension of *The Walls of Sports* also has a subversive aspect, since the walls are the municipality's property and the municipality is not only responsible for their construction, but also approves final design of the painting. Do *The Walls of Sports* render visible something that would otherwise seem natural to everyone? What is the role of documentary film and photography in relation to the artistic event itself, which represents a collective work resulting from the artist's collaboration with the Romani community, volunteers and, ultimately, the municipality? If we build a wall, we are turning our backs on someone, closing

<sup>2</sup> Joa Ljungberg, “The New Human,” Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 21. 5. 2016 – 5. 3. 2017. Participating artists Adel Abdessemed, Ed Atkins, Robert Boyd, Esra Ersen, Harun Farocki, Kerstin Hamilton, Daria Martin, Santiago Mostyn, Ursula Mayer, Adrian Paci, Tomáš Rafa, Frances Stark, Hito Steyerl, Superflex and Ryan Trecartin. Moderna Museet. “About the Artworks,” <https://www.modernamuseet.se/stockholm/en/exhibitions/the-new-human/about-the-artworks/>, acc. on June 20, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Lenka Kukurová, “Umenie v rómskych osadách. Umelecké projekty Tomáša Rafu zamerané na rómsku problematiku [Art in Romani settlements. Art projects of Tomáš Rafa focused on Romani issues],” in *Tomáš Rafa, Art Aktivista. Art and social activism* (Warsaw: Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, 2019), 13.

ourselves off to safety and shielding ourselves from seeing the hopelessness of poverty and social exclusion with the excuse that we are protecting someone on the other side of that wall. A wall is a barrier that we cannot see through. The concrete walls in Rafa's photographs are tall and intimidating. The Romani and non-Romani are absorbed in their work, fully focused on the paint rollers at the end of long rods which touch the surface of the wall and cover it with layers of paint. The children, splashed with paint, are in raptures of joy. What Tomáš Rafa records above all is a great work happening. A selection of unpretentious motifs is used for painting the walls – colors of the rainbow, a recurring enlarged motif of a football, silhouettes of players, and the Romani flag symbol. It was precisely the use of the red *chakra* (wheel), symbol of the international Romani flag on the segregation wall of Veľká Ida in the summer of 2013, that “underlined the ethnic background from which the political decision to build the wall stemmed.”<sup>4</sup> The concrete brutality of the segregation wall does not disappear behind the painting. It remains as present as if the painting were not there. It can only be overcome by repeated human activity, which will eventually lead to the wall being removed.<sup>5</sup>

Tomáš Rafa's documentary films are arranged into two units and are accessible to the public as an online archive on two web platforms. *New Nationalism. The Documentary Video Archive* focuses mainly on the geopolitical space of Central and East-Central Europe, including Germany and Ukraine. It presents an extensive collection of documentaries shot between 2009 and 2019 and depicting events in public spaces, most often demonstrations and escalated clashes of opinions. Thus, side by side are placed videos recording moments of confrontation and escalated emotions involving different social groups: neo-Nazis, police, pro-Russian sympathizers, anarchists, migrants, representatives of the queer community, hooligans, feminists, religious activists, anti-capitalists, soldiers...<sup>6</sup> The second set of documentaries from 2011 to 2022, that focuses on activities in excluded communities by recording painting workshops and *The Walls of Sports* series, can be found on a web platform called *Art Aktivista* with the subtitle *Art Therapy in Socially Excluded Locations*.<sup>7</sup> The specificity of this archive of film documents becomes clearer when we compare it to self-reflexive approaches of anthropological research, as both have *fieldwork* and *collaboration with the community* at their core. Unlike scientific research, its goal isn't really the investigation of a selected community, but rather the creation of alternative structures in form of dialogue (workshop, therapy, biennial) that are continuously being recorded. The archive does not focus exclusively on life in Romani communities, but rather

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>5</sup> In the following years, Tomáš Rafa, together with other activists, organized painting workshops in the village of Sečovce, which led to establishing the Art Activist civic association and organizing the Sečovce Biennial of Art Above the Walls, and subsequently also to a presentation in the format of an exhibition at the East Slovak Gallery in Košice, curated by Diana Klepoch Majdánková. Art Aktivista, “Exhibition. Sečovské bienále umenia vo VSG,” <https://artaktivista.sk/exhibition-ponad-mury-2021/>, acc. on February 20, 2024.

<sup>6</sup> New Nationalism Documentary Archive, <https://your-art.sk/>, acc. on February 21, 2024

<sup>7</sup> Art Aktivista. Art Therapy in Social Excluded Locations, [https://artaktivista.sk/category/dok\\_film/](https://artaktivista.sk/category/dok_film/), acc. on February 21, 2024 please, check this page URL, when you go there it says page not found..

follows *zones of contact*. Rafa is interested in the possibilities of activating creative potential (mainly, but not exclusively, in children). Therefore, it is not enough that these people are *recorded* on film, but at this point “one must go further and ask whether in each case the form of such an exposure – framing, montage, editing, rhythm, narration, and so on – encloses them (that is, alienates them and, finally, exposes them to disappearance) or whether it frees them (by exposing them to appear before us, giving them a power of appearance or apparition).”<sup>8</sup> In *The Walls of Sports* (2012), the apparition is a young Romani preacher. At first, we only hear his voice and then he comes in front of the camera. He quotes the *Gospel of John*, chapter 15, verse 16, and then says: “You may well say that you will never go there and so on, but if God wills and has plans for you, you will come.” The unintentional overlapping of the meanings of coming and plan in a biblical and literal situational sense points to a higher will in the presence of this encounter.

### Facing the limits of documentary

Lenka Kukurová described the production process as follows: “Rafa created and edited video footage from these artistic events as well as condensed a process that spanned several days into a few minutes. The videos contain no commentary, and the sound remains authentic, sometimes overlapping with Romani music recorded on the spot. Watching the footage in a sterile gallery setting highlights the contrast and conflict of the two worlds.”<sup>9</sup> Kukurová’s text implicitly suggests that the protagonists of Rafa’s documentaries are in danger of becoming, not of their own volition, identity props of a gallery spectacle.<sup>10</sup> So the question is: Does Tomáš Rafa’s exposition liberate the Romani from Ostrovany, Sečovce and other locations by giving them the power to appear before us, to reveal themselves as beings worthy of a name, that is – not to be just a mass of figureheads? And if so, how is this power delegated from the filmmaker to the subjects being filmed?

During his studies in Professor Grzegorz Kowalski’s studio at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Tomáš Rafa acquired skills related to conducting workshops, which proved to be very useful for his work with the Romani people. Based on the experience gained during the workshops, he first paid attention to preparing the situation and then withdrew from it, thus giving participants the freedom to act independently.<sup>11</sup> As one of the youngest graduates of the famous studio, Tomáš Rafa relies on the intermedia practices of studio exercises called *Common Space, Individual Space*

<sup>8</sup> Georges Didi-Huberman, “People Exposed, People as Extras,” *Radical Philosophy* 156 (July/August 2009): 17, [https://www.radicalphilosophyarchive.com/issue-files/rp156\\_article2\\_peopleexposed\\_huberman.pdf](https://www.radicalphilosophyarchive.com/issue-files/rp156_article2_peopleexposed_huberman.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Kukurová, “Umenie v rómskych osadách,” 13.

<sup>10</sup> In an interview with Karolina Plinta, the artist claims that for the first three or four years, he avoided the gallery setting, but the situation changed in 2011 after he became a finalist of the Oskar Čepan Young Artist Award and curators became more interested in his films. Karolina Plinta, “That Is the History. Tomáš Rafa in Conversation,” *Block Magazine*, <http://blokmagazine.com/that-is-the-history-tomas-rafa-in-conversation/>, acc. on February 20, 2024.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

carried out since the 1980s. Students and lecturers, united on the basis of equal rights, jointly engage in communicative situations using exclusively non-verbal means – visual forms, signs, and gestures. The initial position is the individual space that they emerge from into a common sphere of possible interactions. A movement of each participant can trigger a spontaneous reaction of the other. This draws students' attention to the communicative nature of art and develops their sensitivity to the presence of spectators.<sup>12</sup> Among other Professor Kowalski's pupils, Rafa is probably the closest to Artur Zmijewski, who has long been involved in filmmaking in relation to issues of democracy.<sup>13</sup> Zmijewski also explores the communicative nature of art in his films, using model situations such as workshops to confront conflicting opinions and positions in escalating situations.

One such example is Rafa's film *Them* (2007), which features representatives of antagonistic political and religious groups. But unlike Zmijewski, inserts no narrative into his video films. He does not aim for a critical impulse, but rather invests in an emotionally charged authenticity. He often accentuates this with a shaky camera in motion, for example in scenes where he drives a car into a Romani settlement or enters Romani dwellings. The viewer is repeatedly gnawed by the suspicion that the *exposition* capitulates in advance to show the problem in its entirety. Why don't the elected officials of the municipal councils, whose responsibility was to make the decision to build the segregation walls, appear on camera? Why is there nothing that refers to the reasons why the segregation walls were erected? Rafa's video documentaries therefore seem more like a recording of a happening than an investigative authorial film. Yet they do not make a *trademark image* of the Romani community, their social status, and the extreme poverty. According to Georges Didi-Huberman, a film can only be politically just if it gives space and a face to the nameless, to those who are not part of the usual social representation.<sup>14</sup> In addition to collecting video documentaries, Tomáš Rafa's online archives are collections of affective gestures captured on video and in photographs, revealing the dark, instinctive interfaces of democracy, where freedom of expression mixes dangerously with expressions of hatred, and protection of the community mixes with racism and ethnic exclusion. The confidential or trusting relationship with the camera lens is based on a different principle for the subjects of the second archive, i.e. for instance the Roma from Ostrovany or Sečovce, than it is for the reports from the *New Nationalism* series. However, in both archives, even though they do not explicitly refer to each other, we observe that they complement each other thematically. While the former traces symptoms, the latter suggests and shows possible solutions.

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<sup>12</sup> Recording of the film *Common Space, Individual Space* is available at Filmoteka Muzeum, <https://artmuseum.pl/en/filmoteka/praca/kowalski-grzegorz-kowalnia-obszar-wspolny-obszar-wlasny?age18=true>, acc. on August 16, 2024

<sup>13</sup> The evidence that the artists communicated among themselves is a workshop that they conducted together at the Museum of Contemporary Art Leipzig. GfZK Leipzig, "Artur Zmijewski und Tomáš Rafa: Alien. Workshop," <https://gfzk.de/2015/artur-mijewski-und-tomas-rafa-alien-workshop/>, acc. on February 21, 2024

<sup>14</sup> Didi-Huberman, "People Exposed, People as Extras," 22.



## Concern for the archive

In contemporary art, by *concern for the archive* I mean artists working with the complicated temporality of apparatuses representing cultural memory, and I see these practices as alternative returns to unfulfilled beginnings or unfinished projects. In this regard, I refer to Aleida Assmann's assertion that memory as an artistic creation does not derive from making it accessible and ensuring its reliable usability, rather it is, at best, therapy after loss, an inventory of loss.<sup>15</sup> Wolfgang Ernst polemicalizes against the archive as a place and metaphor of collective memory, exploring the archive in a technological sense, as a mnemonic apparatus governed by strict rules like an administratively programmed system. Ernst notes the conflicting modes of time in an archive that is subject to entropic processes and material decay.<sup>16</sup> Contemporary art can effectively draw attention to the precarious position of the archive between order and chaos. Sven Spieker addresses the threats of destruction as well as possible degradation and obsolescence of storage media, all of which affect the transmission of information, using the concept of entropy in relation to the established symbolic order.<sup>17</sup> Jacques Derrida leads us to the concept of violence, the violence of the archive itself, as well as archival violence. What Derrida calls "archive fever," or *mal d'archive*, is the actual manifestation of aggression and a destruction drive, which contradicts the conservative forces and threatens the archive with the possibility of finitude, the possibility of complete oblivion.<sup>18</sup> Ariella Aïsha Azoulay attempted to understand the effects of this destructive drive within the abstract archival machinery, primarily through the study of Israel's state archives, which hold documents about displaced and executed Palestinians. Azoulay warns us not to view the archive solely as an institution that preserves the past, as if its content does not directly influence us, but proposes to define the archive as a shared space based on citizens' rights to access and interact with the archive. Finally, it is Ariella Azoulay who articulated that the essence of the archive lies in violence.<sup>19</sup> Since decolonial practice emphasizes the need to deconstruct and question modernism and its structures of power such as an archive, let us summarize this using two of its main terms: archival care and archival concern.

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<sup>15</sup> Aleida Assmannová, *Prostory vzpomínání. Podoby a proměny kulturní paměti*. Prague: Univerzita Karlova Nakladatelství Karolinum (Praha 2018), 403–404. According to Assmann, active and passive acts of forgetting are a necessary and constructive part of cultural practices. Aleida Assmann, Canon and Archive, in: Astrid Erll, and Ansgar Nünning, eds., *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 97–99.

<sup>16</sup> Wolfgang Ernst, "Archive, Storage, Entropy. Tempor(e)alities of Photography," in *The Archive as Project. The Poetics and Politics of the (Photo)Archive*, ed. Krzysztof Pijarski (Warsaw: Fundacja Archeologia Fotografii, 2011), 56–57.

<sup>17</sup> Sven Spieker, "On the Question of Archives and Entropy in Contemporary Art (Legrady, Muntadas)," in *The Archive as Project. The Poetics and Politics of the (Photo)Archive*, ed. Krzysztof Pijarski (Warsaw: Fundacja Archeologia Fotografii, 2011), 120.

<sup>18</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression* (transl. Eric Prenowitz) (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3–11.

<sup>19</sup> Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, *Potential History. Unlearning Imperialism* (London, New York: Verso, 2019), 234–35.

The Greek word “ἐπιμελία” (*epimeleia*) can be translated into English as “care”, but also as “concern”. “Concern” can be understood as a call for reflection, for rediscovery and reevaluation of inherited stereotypes. Concern for the archive goes beyond the physical preservation of records and extends to ethical, legal, and administrative aspects of archives. Concern differs from care in the sense of nurture, such as securing the common good, creating safe spaces and inclusive practice as well as sensitizing relationships. Care and concern/responsibility are closely related, but concern/responsibility goes beyond caring about what we might characterize as fears, doubts, and mistrust of cultural, social, and economic structures built upon the legacy of the nation-state. Care, together with the adjectivized “radical care”, appears more and more often in discussions about art, work, and collective efforts.<sup>20</sup> In connection to the right of self-determination, the concept of self-care presents itself, which could otherwise be defined as a parallel to decolonial practice. Rolando Vázquez argues that in contrast with modern aesthetics, decolonial aesthetics posits the primacy of the relation over abstraction and authorship.<sup>21</sup> In the case of archiving in the postsocialist spaces, “concern for the archive” means questioning our deeply held patterns and beliefs, rethinking our role in the systems that sustain capitalism and nationalism as well as developing awareness of heightened sensitivity to language and dialogic forms of exchange. The concept of decoloniality and self-care might also be associated with collective therapy, in which artistic activities can function and at the same time support historical awareness and cultural self-governance.

### **Cultural trauma and cultural therapy**

Regarding the analysis of the aforementioned works documenting *Walls of Sports*, we can explore the construction of walls both as a factual occurrence and as an imagined phenomenon, employing the term cultural trauma in the context of a social group.<sup>22</sup> The key concepts with which Hungarian art historian, art critic and cultural theorist Edit András operates in various sociological and psychological planes are diagnosis, trauma, symptom and treatment. Edit András discusses the concept of trauma in connection with the removal of both physical and mental wall ruins between the former West and the East. Subsequently, she points to the transfer of trauma from the psychological sphere to the cultural area of literary scientist Cathy Caruth. According to Cathy Caruth, one of the effects of trauma is its delay, which allows the

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<sup>20</sup> Hi'ilei Julia Kawehipuaakahaopulani Hobart, and Tamara Kneese, “Radical Care. Survival Strategies for Uncertain Time,” *Social Text* 38, 1/142 (2020): 1–16.

<sup>21</sup> Rolando Vázquez, *Vistas of Modernity. Decolonial Aesthetics and the End of the Contemporary* (Amsterdam: Jap Sam Books, 2020), 31.

<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey C. Alexander, “Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma,” in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, Piotr Sztompka (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2004), 9–10.

individual to suspend his or her shock.<sup>23</sup> One of the central theses of Edit András is that trauma can provoke symptoms of amnesia in relation to collective memory and socialist past. Edit András claims that contemporary artists can instinctively or consciously recommend effective treatment methods.<sup>24</sup>

Cultural trauma and cultural therapy are exactly what Tomáš Rafa wanted to focus on when he initiated, organized and documented his painting workshops and *The Walls of Sports* series. It may seem to some that care precedes an archive, as if it were an integral part of the creation of archives in their systematic classification and organization which culminates in the archival order. The connection between the practice of contemporary art and archival care is therefore significant in that the result is not necessarily some kind of archival order. The described interest in archive, relationships, meandering, and unfolding can be called decolonial practice, because archive as such is a colonial project and this interest also represents preoccupation with violence, that the existence of archive is also based on.



**Fig. 1.** Tomáš Rafa, Summer painting workshop for kids in the Romani settlement in Sečovce, 2015, colour digital photography. Courtesy of the artist.

<sup>23</sup> With regards to the discussion over Cathy Caruth's 1996 *Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, Narrative, and History*, see: Wulf Kansteiner and Harald Weilnböck, "Against the Concept of Cultural Trauma," in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 229–31.

<sup>24</sup> Edit András, *Kulturální převlékání. Umění na troskách socialismu a na vrcholcích nacionalismu* [Cultural Dressing up. Art on the Ruins of Socialism and on the Peaks of Nationalism]. Hradec Králové: Galerie Moderního Umění, 2023, 12–24. The Czech publication is a selection of texts from two books written by Edit András and published in Hungarian. Edit András, *Kulturális atöltözés. Művészet a szocializmus romjain*. Budapest: Argumentum Kiadó 2009. Edit András, *Határsertő képzelet. Kortárs művészet és kritikai elmélet Európa keleti felén* [Imaginary Transgression. Contemporary Art and Critical Theory in Eastern Europe]. Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont 2023. For the discussion on the book see: Daniel Grúň, Pavlína Morganová, Martin Škabraha, "Solidarity Could Get Us Out of This Situation. An Interview with Edit András," *Sešit pro umění a příbuzné zóny* [Notebook for Art, Theory and Related Zones] 36 (2024): 167–88.



**Fig. 2.** Tomáš Rafa, Painting on the segregation wall in Ostrovany, 2012, colour digital photography. Courtesy of the artist.



**Fig. 3.** Tomáš Rafa, Summer painting workshop for kids in the Romani settlement in Sečovce, 2017, colour digital photography. Courtesy of the artist.

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**BEYOND THE MAIN TOPIC**



ART+MEDIA

**Ivana Miladinović Prica and Laura Emmerly**

“Different New Music in Yugoslavia”: The Earliest Minimalist Manifestations

**Andreja Kulunčić**

“Anti-monument: The Way to a Forgotten Historical Event”. Participation as a Tactics for Creating New Memory

**Seyed Farhad Tayyebi and Yuksel Demir**

Extensive Exploration of the Preference Correlations between Architectural Features and Musical Attributes

## **Laura Emmery**

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# **“Different New Music in Yugoslavia”: The Earliest Minimalist Manifestations<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** Some of Yugoslavia’s most radical musical manifestations unfolded during the 1970s and 1980s. Aided by postwar Yugoslav cultural programs, the iconic Student Cultural Center (SKC) in Belgrade – a student-managed “safe space” for free expression and creativity – opened its doors in 1971 and instantly became a magnet for experimental musicians throughout the Western and Eastern Blocs. A group of rebellious composers and performers – Opus 4 and the Ensemble for Different New Music made some of the largest strides in Yugoslav music history and defined a new era of avant-garde and a unique brand of minimalism, influenced by performance and conceptual art, Cage-style experimentalism, Fluxus, and the use of multimedia. This study briefly illustrates their robust vision that connected the East with the West in a fruitful exchange of ideas, despite the geo-political division of the world at the time.

**Keywords:** Yugoslav experimental music; Yugoslav minimalist music; Yugoslav neo-avant-garde; conceptual music; Opus 4; Ensemble for Different New Music; Student Cultural Center in Belgrade (SKC); music festivals.

## **The formation of the Student Cultural Center (SKC) in Belgrade**

The year 1968 was marked by great turmoil and demands for social, cultural, and political change. Protests around the globe signified the escalation of social conflicts as people took to the streets to voice their dissent against wars, repression of civil liberties, the rise in left-wing politics, political, military, and dictatorial systems, colonization, and clashes between mainstream and counter-culture, among other issues. Yugoslavia was no exception. The demonstrations in Belgrade in the summer of 1968 were the first mass protests in the country since the Second World War. Students demanded solutions to several social and civil rights issues, such as high unemployment in the country, repression of societal inequalities, federally endorsed violence, and limitations to the freedom of the press.

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<sup>1</sup> This brief essay is derived from a book, *The Origins of Yugoslav Musical Minimalism: Exhibition at the Cultural Center Parobrod* (Belgrade: UK Parobrod and G.L.O.R.I.A., 2024) by Laura Emmery and Ivana Miladinović Prica, which accompanied the exhibition of the same title, displayed May 25–June 3, 2024, at the Cultural Center Parobrod [UK Parobrod] in Belgrade, Serbia.



Demonstrations in Belgrade escalated when the police violently stormed the University of Philosophy, barricaded by students and professors. Following an intense week of protests, in his televised address on June 9, 1968, President Tito announced that he would agree to the students' demands. While Tito never followed through on his promise, in an act of compromise, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia gifted students a building in the center of Belgrade – a student-managed "safe space" where they could freely express their views and creativity. This marked the birth of the iconic Student Cultural Center, which officially opened its doors on April 4, 1971, to coincide with the celebrations planned for the Students' Day in Belgrade.<sup>2</sup> The first fifteen years of operation of the SKC represent the center's "Golden Era." With events showcasing the newest trends – from conceptualism, performance art, happenings, minimalism, and Fluxus to the emergence of a new wave in Yugoslav popular music – the activities at the SKC reached a peak of popularity.

Envisioned as the first multi-purpose space where students could explore their artistic vision in all spheres, the SKC featured a movie theater and concert halls, smaller concert stages, a dance hall, art galleries, libraries and reading rooms, a club restaurant, and a garden. The scope of innovation and originality of artistic activity at the SKC surpassed everyone's expectations. With its groundbreaking event programming, the SKC became a hotspot for the new avant-garde scene, not only in Belgrade but the entire Yugoslavia, and a magnet for international collaborations. The center's first significant international event, "Aprilski susreti" [April Encounters: Festival of Expanded Media], was founded the following year on April 4, 1972. It was conceived as an interdisciplinary artistic program that would transcend the boundaries between art forms. It gave further rise to the New Art Practice and became the birthplace of a unique brand of Yugoslav musical minimalism.<sup>3</sup>

By the mid-1970s, experimental and alternative music programming at the SKC expanded, first at the hands of its first music editor Branislava Šaper (1971 to 1978), and then the rebellious young composers and performers from the Music Academy in Belgrade – the Opus 4 collective and Ansambl za drugu novu muziku [Ensemble for Different New Music]. Wanting to go beyond the aesthetic emanating from the traditional Music Academy, the Electronic Music Studio Belgrade, and music that was featured at the Music Biennale in Zagreb, they helped shape the *new* avant-garde music movement in Yugoslavia – an aesthetic that was inspired by American minimalism, the Fluxus, conceptual art, and the use of multimedia. They

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<sup>2</sup> April 4 designates the Students' Day in Belgrade. It marks students' protests of April 4, 1936, against fascism, during which a student lost his life. The city organizes many student-centered activities on this day, including sporting competitions, concerts, and academic competitions.

<sup>3</sup> For more on the Yugoslav New Art movement, see Ješa Denegri and Marijan Susovski, *The New Art Practice in Yugoslavia: 1966–1978* (Zagreb: Gallery of Contemporary Art, 1978). For further studies on the SKC art and music scene, see Amy Bryzgel, *Performance art in Eastern Europe since 1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017); Ješa Denegri, "СКЦ као културни феномен и уметничка сцена," in *Ово је студентски културни центар. Првих 25 година* [This is the Students Cultural Center. The First 25 Years], 1971–1996, ed. Slavoljub Veselinović (Belgrade: Studentski kulturni centar, 1996), 51–66; and Denegri, *Studentski kulturni centar kao umetnička scena* (Belgrade: Studentski kulturni centar, 2003).

initiated unprecedented international collaborations by organizing experimental music festivals. As musicologist Ivana Miladinović Prica notes, these young composers played an essential role in forming the SKC's overall avant-garde artistic profile for more than a decade,<sup>4</sup> and defined the center's "Golden Era" of the 1970s and 1980s.

### Music at the Student Cultural Center

Unlike the New Art movement, boldly headed by Marina Abramović and her peers at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade,<sup>5</sup> music activity at the SKC did not find its footing in the avant-garde scene during its initial year. The first music concert at the Center was held on May 20, 1971. As described in press clippings and without much publicity, it was an intimate concert of Baroque chamber music. However, by the following year, music concerts produced at the SKC were moving toward experimentalism, and numerous notable music ensembles, competitions, festivals, and concert series were organized soon after. On April 6, 1972, at the First April Encounters, the SKC programmed its first experimental music concert, featuring Acezantez – a Croatian avant-garde chamber group founded by Dubravko Detoni (b. 1937). The four performers, playing piano, organ, drums, and clarinet, filled the capacity of the SKC's Grand Hall, captivating an audience of 250 guests past midnight.

The music division at the SKC quickly caught up with other progressive departments of the SKC and started modernizing its programming. Under Šaper's leadership, the Center produced many concerts in collaboration with other recently established institutions and festivals, such as the Belgrade International Theater Festival (BITEF) and the Belgrade Music Festival (BEMUS). The most significant event, perhaps, was the *Muzička moderna* [Musical Modernism], a concert series produced in collaboration with the Third Program of Radio Belgrade – a national-broadcast radio station specializing in the promotion of experimental and avant-garde music.

By the early 1970s, the new postwar generation of Yugoslav composers was still catching up to Western modernist trends and clashing with the traditionalists who controlled higher education. By necessity, the Student Cultural Center became a crucial space for innovative artists to acquaint themselves with and freely practice Western compositional techniques. These young artists – composers and performers – promoted their own works across Yugoslavia and introduced the Yugoslav audiences to the trends from abroad by holding listening sessions of newly acquired albums (such as the music by John Cage and Steve Reich), organizing guest lectures (notably, Mauricio Kagel led a workshop on May 31, 1974), and programming music by composers outside of Yugoslavia. Furthermore, composers of the SKC Music Division created new opportunities for like-minded students across the region – from music

<sup>4</sup> Ivana Miladinović Prica, "The Cage Effect from a Serbian Perspective," in "Serbian Musical Avant-Gardes," ed. Laura Emmery, special issue, *Contemporary Music Review* 40, 5–6 (2021), 608.

<sup>5</sup> These young experimental student artists – Abramović (b. 1946), Slobodan Era Milivojević (1944–2021), Neša Paripović (b. 1942), Zoran Popović (b. 1944), Raša Todosijević (b. 1945), and Gergelj Gera Urkom (b. 1940) – are commonly referred to as the "Belgrade Six".

academies in Zagreb, Ljubljana, Skoplje, and Belgrade – to meet, collaborate, and engage with one another.

When Miroslav Savić took the role of the next editor of the SKC Music Division on January 1, 1978, music programming underwent a significant shift. The new editorial board set forth five principal goals: (1) to affirm young Yugoslav composers; (2) to emphasize the notion that the multimedia creative work should be simulated through performance and by providing information about it; (3) to offer lectures and organize manifestations dedicated to particular topics; (4) to establish a creative space for various ensembles and artists whose artistic interests align with those of the Music Division; and (5) to engage in a robust publication of cassettes, records, music scores, and special editions.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the new editorial board initiated a music series *Proširena muzika* [Expanded Music], whose principal aim was the “performance of actions that are primarily musical but can be realized in a variety of extra-musical media, thus revealing a different nature of music.”<sup>7</sup>

With their goals defined, the new young editors of the SKC Music Division translated articles on American experimental and minimalist composers in their publication *Nova/minimalna muzika* [New/Minimalist Music], including John Cage’s “The Future of Music – Credo” – a text they regarded as truly “visionary” – Michael Nyman’s “Minimal Music, Determinacy, and New Tonality” (1974), and Steve Reich’s “Music as a Gradual Process” (1969 [1968]).<sup>8</sup> In 1976, they also held the first public listening sessions of the recordings by Cage and La Monte Young at the SKC. Concerts featuring music by Cage, Kagel, Charlemagne Palestine, Goffredo Petrassi, Włodzimierz Kotoński, and Karlheinz Stockhausen were becoming common, and Yugoslav musicians were taking part in performing and recording all-contemporary music repertoire. Among them, performances by Nada Kolundžija (b. 1952), one of the foremost pianists in the country to specialize in contemporary music by Yugoslav and composers from abroad, are significant. Kolundžija’s 1979 concert of the entire opus of Arnold Schoenberg’s piano pieces and the 1980 performance of John Cage’s *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano stand out as first performances of these works in the country. Kolundžija’s recording of the latter was the second recording of these pieces in Europe, after the British pianist John Tilbury’s 1975 recording. Indisputably, Kolundžija’s performances were crucial to the dispersion and reception of Cage’s (and post-Cagean) experimental music in Yugoslavia.

Naturally, the promotion of new music and the creation of national and international collaborations were primary objectives of the new editorial board. However, establishing the SKC as a genuine space of free experimentation was imperative to the young students, who were not receiving any support or approval from their professors at the rigidly traditional Faculty of Music (FMU)– students who were implementing

<sup>6</sup> Miroslav Savić, “Muzički program” [The Music Division] in *Studentski kulturni centar: prvih deset godina i posle* [The Student Cultural Center: The First Ten Years and Beyond] (Belgrade: Studentski kulturni centar, 1981).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Miroslav Savić, *Nova/Minimalna muzika* [New/Minimal Music] (Belgrade: Studentski kulturni centar, 1977).

newer musical trends like minimalism were barred from passing their qualifying exams.<sup>9</sup> The most rebellious composers of this generation were Milimir Drašković (1952–2014), Miodrag Lazarov Pashu (b. 1949), Miroslav Savić (b. 1952), Vladimir Tošić (b. 1949), and Miloš Raičković (b. 1956). The first four formed an influential composers' group, Opus 4, and the latter was one of the initiators of the formation of the Ensemble for Different New Music. Together, these young composers and performers reshaped and revolutionized the music programming at the SKC.

## Opus 4

The members of the Opus 4, each with a distinct voice but united in their exploration of new approaches to music, were primarily composers but also performance and multimedia artists, who implemented texts, film, photography, video, and other media in their concerts. The collective was a unique phenomenon in the musical life of Yugoslavia at that time. Vladimir Tošić posits that the formation of such a composers' collective was an avant-garde act in itself. He further elaborates that, from today's perspective, it is difficult to speculate what exactly led to the formation of the collective, whose mission, concept, and purpose the society did not understand at the time.<sup>10</sup> Tošić specifies four principal reasons that contributed to the formation of Opus 4: (1) the need for unrestricted exploration of each member's individual questions; (2) to learn about contemporary music and techniques; (3) to change the attitudes of traditional thinking about music in the country; and (4) the need to present their art to the public.<sup>11</sup> In other words, these young composers took it upon themselves to learn about contemporary music, explore the limits of musical language and media, create, experiment, and promote their musical innovations, which they could not attain at their academic institution, and change the mindset of the audiences (Example #1).

The first performance by the members of Opus 4 (although not yet formally operating under that name) took place on May 20, 1976, at the Grand Hall of the Student Cultural Center. The concert was initiated and organized by students, despite the objections by the Department of Composition and Orchestration at the Faculty of Music. However, editors of the Art Division at the SKC – namely Biljana Tomić, the editor of the SKC Art Gallery – supported the young students, recognizing that their expression provided a “musical counterpoint to the predominantly conceptually oriented art scene” at the SKC.<sup>12</sup> The program of this debut concert featured the works by

<sup>9</sup> All five composers (Drašković, Lazarov Pashu, Raičković, Savić, and Tošić) studied composition with Vasilije Mokranjac. Although sympathetic to the young students' interests in experimental music, Mokranjac's support was not enough to overrule the conservative majority.

<sup>10</sup> Vladimir Tošić, *Opus 4: Dokumenti* [Opus 4: Documents] (Belgrade: Studentski kulturni centar, 2001), 14. In addition to the Opus 4 composers, Zoran Belić Weiss, Paja Stanković, and Dragana Žarevac, among others, also experimented with sound in their conceptual and performance pieces, probing the boundaries of the musical and the anti-musical.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 14–18.

<sup>12</sup> Miroslav Savić, “Situacija muzika” [The Music Situation], in *Ovo je Studentски културни центар: првих 25 година* [This is the Students Cultural Centre. The First 25 Years], 1971–1996, ed. Slavko Timotijević (Belgrade: Studentski kulturni centar, 1996), 163.

only two composers – several arrangements of *10* by Savić (for solo piano; for piano four hands; and for tam-tam) (1974–76) and *Fragments* and *Mélange* by Tošić.<sup>13</sup> The pieces performed at this concert were the first presentations of minimalist/reductionist music by Yugoslav composers. Savić's *10* – a reference to the binary numbers "1" and "0," which represent sound and silence, respectively – is a student work from 1974 and a significant achievement for the composer. With it, Savić demonstrated a "break from Messiaen" and a "connection to serial and minimalist/reductionist principles."<sup>14</sup> Not knowing much about minimalism formally, which the young composers were not allowed to pursue at the FMU, *10* represented Savić's creative independence, one of the foremost principles of Opus 4. Tošić's *Mélange* (1975) is the earliest example of minimalist/reductionist work in Yugoslavia. In addition to the new compositional style, which was hardly known in Yugoslavia at that time, the graphic notation of the score was jarringly new for the traditional academic circles in Belgrade.

The activity of Opus 4 lasted through 1982, with their last public concert held on June 10, 1982, at the Twelfth International Festival of Experimental Music in Bourges, France. After its dissolution, members of the group continued to be active within the Ensemble for Different New Music.

### **Milimir Drašković (1952–2014)**

From the very beginning of his career, Milimir Drašković showed an interest in integrating multimedia, including installations, video projections, and performance art in his compositions. Not considering his music "minimalist" in style until 1988 (with *HPSCHD I*, 1988, followed by *HPSCHD II*, 1990, both for harpsichord), John Cage's experimentations and the Fluxus resonated more with him. While Drašković's minimalist pieces are rather simple – they are based on a strict repetition of small segments, which he treats as a series – his multimedia and conceptual works illustrate daring innovation and originality.

Drašković was intrigued by the absence of sound, especially Cage's treatment of silence. In his conceptual work entitled *Muzika u Beogradu* [Music in Belgrade] (1978), he presents a blank score of music, just with the title written on it. *Dirigent* [Conductor] (1979) is another conceptual work that has no music in it. Per Drašković's inscription on the "score" (published as a booklet in 1981), it lasts for 22'14" and features thirty slides of Drašković, clad in a tuxedo, holding a baton, and making various gestures and facial expressions. Most of the slides are blurry, conveying motion. Each image portrays Drašković in a different position (i.e., gesture) and from a new angle, as if he were instructing specific sections of the orchestra and the audience were listening. Lazarov Pashu described this project as both a musical piece that one cannot hear and "a literary

<sup>13</sup> Although Lazarov Pashu's work is listed in the program, it was not performed due to technical difficulties.

<sup>14</sup> Miroslav Savić, *Animirani brojevi | Animated Numbers: 10 kompozicija za klavir(e) | 10 Piano(s) Compositions* (Belgrade: Vertical Jazz, 2016), 26.

work that does not rest on any linguistic signifiers,"<sup>15</sup> while Mirjana Veselinović regards Drašković's works as a prime example of the "destruction of the institution of music," much like John Cage did with his experimentations at the New School in New York.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to blurring the lines between music and silence, gestures, conceptual art, performance art, and multimedia, many of Drašković's works also exhibit Cage's principles of indeterminacy and aleatory. Lazarov Pashu named these types of works *ideosemas* – combining the notions of an "idea" and "semiosis" – to denote "the entire body of works with contextual and immanent structural properties."<sup>17</sup> In Drašković's opus, the concept of *ideosemas* is illustrated in works such as *Opera* (1979), 1–12 (1980), *Klavir, Op. 4, No. 1* (1980), *Video, Op. 4, No. 1* (1981) and *Muzički magazin* [Music Store] (1982) (Example #2).

### **Miodrag Lazarov Pashu (b. 1949)**

Miodrag Lazarov Pashu notes that he was particularly influenced by John Cage – especially his events and happenings, stating that Cage was "an irreplaceable figure of 20th-century music [...] because he made the very notion of research and experiment aesthetically relevant"<sup>18</sup> – and Vladan Radovanović (1932–2023) – an avant-gardist and pioneer of electronic music in the country. Pashu's distinct and notable conceptual works – "ideosemas" – comprise meta-music/meta-linguistic media (Example #3), exemplified in his two 1982 cycles: twenty works in *Muzika koja se misli* [Music that is thought about] and twenty-two works in *Muzika koja se čita* [Music that is read]. The former features a numbered list of specific ways to think about each piece. For instance, "No. 10" only has one line of text, which directs the participant to think about the notion that one need not necessarily think about music or performers in a musical way.

### **Miroslav "Miša" Savić (b. 1954)**

As Editor-in-Chief of the Music Division at the Student Cultural Center, the role he assumed in 1978, Miroslav "Miša" Savić launched a program *Proširena muzika* [Expanded Music], founded the international festival *Druga nova muzika* [Different New Music], which ran annually from 1984 through 1986, and in 1987 he organized the First Festival of Computer Music in Yugoslavia, "Lična muzika" [Personal Music]. Savić played a significant role in the success and visibility of Opus 4, the Ensemble for Different New Music, and in general, all musical activity at the SKC, including

<sup>15</sup> Miodrag Lazarov Pashu, "Druga nova muzika – srećne druge nove uši" [Different New Music – Happy New Different Ears], *Zvuk* 2 (1985): 80.

<sup>16</sup> Mirjana Veselinović, "Stvaralačka prisutnost evropske avangarde u nas" [The Creative Presence of European Avant-garde Music] (PhD diss., Univerzitet umetnosti, 1983), 33–37; "Teze za reinterpretaciju jugoslovenske muzičke avangarde" [Theses on the Reinterpretation of Yugoslav Musical Avant-Garde], *Muzički talas* 30–31 (2002).

<sup>17</sup> Miodrag Lazarov Pashu, Miroslav Savić, and Milimir Drašković, *Primeri ideosema / Examples of Ideosemas* (Belgrade: Milimir Drašković, 1983), 2–3.

<sup>18</sup> Miodrag Lazarov Pashu, "Povodom serije ploča DISKOS-SKC" [On the occasion of DISKOC-SKC records series] (Belgrade: Studentski kulturni centar, 1981).

performances, publications, listening sessions, documentation, and festivals (and later electroacoustic/computer music).

Savić's early oeuvre explores limitations of music by writing pieces that push the boundaries of experimentation in his music, multimedia and electroacoustic works, body art, performance art, events, and happenings. He first demonstrated a departure from serialism, which he had to learn as a student, in *10 for piano* (1974), a piece based on "minimalist and reductionist" principles,<sup>19</sup> in which the composer maintains specific relations among pitch, dynamics, and durational series so that a particular element in the pitch series corresponds to a particular element in the other series. With the formation of *Opus 4* and *Ensemble for Different New Music*, Savić created several renditions of the work, including a version for the gong (1976), which premiered on May 20, 1976, at the SKC (Example #4).

Savić created many other works that oppose the notions of sound and silence, incorporate the human body as an instrument of art itself, and present music conceptually. Some examples include *Dve pozicije* [Two Positions], *24 sata/akord* [24 Hours/Chord], *Svirati / ne-svirati – ne-zvuk / zvuk* [Play / Not-Play – Not-Sound / Sound], and *Zagrejani kružeći zvuk klavira* [Heated–Circulating–Piano–Sound], from 1978.

Quite a prolific composer in minimalist style, as well, Savić's method may be generally characterized as "integral serialism" – a technique in which several processes of repetition and reduction (such as pitch, rhythm, or text) occur simultaneously, albeit in a free manner. A prime example of this technique is a series of "ABC" compositions, especially his three pieces from 1983 – *ABC Music*, *ABC Music for Conga*, and *N.N. for Piano* (later reconstructed as *ABC Music for Piano*) – and *ABC Bossa Nova* (1985). *ABC Music for Conga*, for instance, comprises 34 patterns that are repeated individually according to specified parameters. Each pattern contains three pitches, A, B $\flat$ , and C (hence the title of the work),<sup>20</sup> four solfege syllables, re, mi, fa, and sol, and rhythmic patterns of notes and rests. Through the course of composition, the solfege syllables are gradually replaced by three notated pitches, and rhythmic patterns turn into a steady pulse.<sup>21</sup>

### **Vladimir Tošić (b. 1949)**

Vladimir Tošić debuted his piece *Mélange* in 1975 (Example #5). At that time, this piece was the first composition written in minimalist style in Yugoslavia, and thus represented a radical departure from the musical practice and a direct defiance against the "establishment." The work, featuring graphic notation and minimalist techniques of repetitions and reductions, caused quite a stir among the musical "elites." Tošić identifies the process of reduction as the primary basis of his music written in this

<sup>19</sup> Savić, *Animirani brojevi* | *Animated Numbers*, 26.

<sup>20</sup> In Serbian music notation, which follows the German system, the letter "B" designates the B $\flat$ .

<sup>21</sup> Marija Masnikosa, "Serbian Late Twentieth-Century Neo-Avant-Garde: Minimalist Music by Vladimir Tošić and Miroslav Miša Savić," in "Serbian Musical Avant-Gardes," ed. Laura Emmery, special issue, *Contemporary Music Review* 40, 5–6 (2021), 638.

style. He defines reduction as a “deliberate and consistent reduction of the number of elements on which a work is built,” which occurs through the principles of “reduction of sound and the reduction of procedures.”<sup>22</sup> For Tošić, the reduction of the sound affects four basic elements – pitch, duration, dynamic level, and timbre – a method he uses in *Mélange*, for instance. Thus, the sound color and tension change through the process of systematic increase and decrease of these parameters. Many of Tošić’s minimalist compositions feature an identifying characteristic: the melodic and harmonic language is built on eight notes, C, G, E, B $\flat$ , D, F $\sharp$ , A, B, a sequence derived from every other pitch of the overtone series, a collection he termed his “aliquot mode.”

While Tošić is foremost a minimalist (i.e., reductionist) composer – and still is the most representative “minimalist” composer in Serbia – he has also explored multimedia and conceptual art, especially during his tenure with Opus 4. For instance, in *Ne/mogućnost* [Im/Possibility] (1981), the author presents a series of 39 slides in which a hand is seen approaching the piano and then retracting from it. This composition, with no actual sound, done entirely in the medium of photography, “condemns the event of sound to impossibility,” as Miladinović Prica proposes.<sup>23</sup> Tošić explains that he experimented with the visual element in his works for two principal reasons – out of curiosity and necessity (to represent his ideas that the traditional music notation could not convey). Namely, he explains that he has always encountered music in two ways – through sound and sight – and thus decided to represent it only visually.<sup>24</sup>

### **Ansambl za drugu novu muziku [Ensemble for Different New Music] (ADNM)**

ADNM made a debut on December 7, 1977, on the stage of the Student Cultural Center in Belgrade, performing Miloš Raičković’s music (Example #6). An altering group of musicians, the initial members at the time of their debut were Nada Kolundžija, Anđelka Marjanović, Aleksandar Damnjanović, Dragan Ilić, Olgica Antić, Slobodan Todorović, Ksenija Zečević, Miroslav Savić, and Branka Parlić. Fashioned as a student ensemble, the ADNM was an explorer and herald of minimalist music by young composers, students at the Faculty of Music – Raičković, Savić, Tošić, Drašković, Lazarov Pashu, and Katarina Miljković, among others. Since these composers viewed the post-war European musical avant-garde (integral serialism and aleatory) as the “principal new music,” they named their practice “different new music,” emphasizing its causation and kinship with American minimalism, experimentalism, and the Fluxus.

With the support of Savić, the Music Editor at the SKC at that time, ADNM was the primary force in diffusing minimalist music to all regions of Yugoslavia during the 1970s and 1980s, giving concerts across the country, as well as in Hungary, Austria, Germany, and Italy. Determined and passionate about promoting the new musical

<sup>22</sup> Vladimir Tošić, *Redukcionistički principi konstitucije muzičkog dela* [Reductionist Principles in the Constitution of a Musical Work] (Belgrade: Faculty of Music, 2017), 16.

<sup>23</sup> Miladinović Prica, “The Cage Effect from a Serbian Perspective,” 614–15.

<sup>24</sup> Vladimir Tošić, *Речи о музици* [Words About Music] (Belgrade: Faculty of Music, 2018), 177.



style across Yugoslavia and Europe, they organized international festivals of minimalist (and expanded media) music and collaborated with European and American composers (including Robert Moran, Michael Fahres, Hans Otte, and Victor Ekimovsky). As such, ADNМ – constituting one of the very few groups in Eastern Europe to perform minimalist music – contributed to minimalism's international diffusion in the European neo-avant-garde circles, whose activities were labeled as the "new artistic practice," in addition to creating a unique aesthetic within the Yugoslav context.

### **Miloš Raičković [Milos Raickovich] (b. 1956)**

When Miloš Raičković and his friends took the grand stage at the SKC on December 7, 1977, it was both an act of defiance to the "dogmatic" Faculty of Music and a liberating experience for the composer. Only six months earlier, the pieces presented at this concert had caused an uproar at the Faculty of Music, where Raičković was a student of composition. Inspired by Steve Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians*, Raičković wrote a 35-minute minimalist piece, *Permutacije* [Permutations] for three pianos and 18 hands, which he presented as his final project, resulting in the jury of his professors giving him a failing grade. Raičković later expanded the work to form a cycle, *Permutations I–V*, each piece constituting an individual "event" framed around a different procedure of pitch permutations. Following the initial presentations of *Permutations* at the SKC, Raičković reprised the same program with the ADNМ at the Studentski centar sveučilišta [University Student Center] in Zagreb on February 24, 1978, and then a month later, on March 11, 1978, he returned to the SKC in Belgrade with two other composers-performers – Aleksandar Damnjanović and Katarina Miljković – to present a new version of *Permutations III*. A year later, *Permutations III* and *V* were performed at the Music Biennale in Zagreb on May 13, 1979, sharing the program and the stage with the Michael Nyman Band. Raičković revived the entire cycle at the third rendition of the Festival for Different New Music, held on May 18–22, 1986, at the SKC.

By 1979, Raičković started composing in a new style, which he termed, "New Classicism" – a blend of minimalism and the "Viennese Classical and early Romantic" styles. In these works, the form is "classical" (for instance, a sonata form) but tonally, the music is reduced to only a few pitches. However, Raičković does not see anything "reductionist" about his music in working with a small number of pitches. This new approach offers Raičković's tonal music a "new quality" and a "new energy," enabling him to express his feelings while satisfying the need for a clear and coherent musical language.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Valentina Radoman, "From Minimalism to Classicism: A Composer's Journey. Interview with Miloš Raičković," *New Sound International Journal of Music* 38, 2 (2011): 9.

## Festivals of Minimalist Music

Opus 4 and the Ensemble for Different New Music promoted a unique brand of Yugoslav musical minimalism, Fluxus, and experimentation across Yugoslavia and abroad. For instance, Miloš Raičković and the ADNМ performed at the Festival of Minimalist Music, February 20–24, 1978, at the Music Salon at the Zagreb University Student Center and at the Music Biennale Zagreb on May 13, 1979. Together with Opus 4, the Ensemble also played at the Belgrade International Theater Festival (The Sound of BITEF) on September 27, 1982, on the stage of the Atelje 212 Theater.

The student-run music editorial board of the SKC was initiated in 1978 by Opus 4, Raičković, and Miloš Petrović, with Miroslav Savić as the Editor-in-Chief. During Savić's tenure, the SKC founded the international festival *Druga nova muzika* [Different New Music], which ran annually from 1984 through 1986. As the culmination of music experimentation in Serbia (and Yugoslavia), these festivals served as a cultural exchange between both Blocs during the Cold War and provided international visibility for Yugoslav composers and ensembles. As Miladinović Prica argues, "[they] put Belgrade onto the map of the artistic network, becoming a European center for minimalist and experimental music."<sup>26</sup> But perhaps even more notably, these festivals turned a spotlight on musical minimalism – a style that was little understood or valued in Yugoslavia at that time.

In 1980, Michael Fahres (b. 1951), a German-born composer based in the Netherlands, founded *Das Europäische Minimal-Musik-Projekt* [the European Minimal Music Project] in Utrecht, together with Hans Emons, Wim Mertens, and Ernst Vermeulen. In 1982, they published a collection of papers on minimalism,<sup>27</sup> which included an essay on Yugoslav minimalism by Miroslav Savić (1984), and maintained a database of minimalist composers.<sup>28</sup> Fahres also organized the International Exposition of Minimal Pieces, which featured minimalist music recorded on over 200 audio cassette tapes that had been circulating in Europe since 1980.<sup>29</sup> In 1983, the SKC's Music Editorial Board invited Fahres to Belgrade, where his exposition was displayed at the Cultural and Informative Center of the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>30</sup> The SKC and Fahres also presented a workshop and two concerts, while the SKC Filmforum produced a film, *Prašina u Beogradu* [Dust in Belgrade] that featured works and performances by European minimalist composers.<sup>31</sup> Ivana Miladinović Prica posits that

<sup>26</sup> Ivana Miladinović Prica, "Beyond the Divide: The Different New Music Festival in Belgrade (1984–1986)," in "Serbian Musical Identity," ed. Laura Emmery and Ivana Medić, special issue, *Contemporary Music Review* 41, 5–6 (2022), 592.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Fahres, *Das Europäische Minimal-Musik-Projekt* (Munich: Goethe Institut, 1982).

<sup>28</sup> Ian Pace, "The Historiography of Minimal Music and the Challenge of Andriessen to Narratives of American Exceptionalism," in *Writing to Louis Andriessen: Commentaries on Life in Music*, ed. Rose Dodd (Eindhoven, the Netherlands: Lecturis, 2019).

<sup>29</sup> Miladinović Prica, "Beyond the Divide: The Different New Music Festival in Belgrade (1984–1986)," 596.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Zoran Zolomun, dir., *Prašina u Beogradu* [Dust in Belgrade] (Belgrade: Filmforum SKC, 1983).

Fahres's 1983 visit and engagement with the SKC Editorial Board led to the formation of the Different New Music Festival the following year.<sup>32</sup>

The 1984 Festival was organized by Savić and Drašković in collaboration with Michael Fahres. The five-day inaugural event, held on May 16–20 (Example #7), was the young composers' largest undertaking, with the primary aim to "reaffirm the work of composers and ensembles specializing in the performance of 'different new music.'" By "different new music," they meant any style of music that was standing in opposition to conventions and was rather exploring innovative techniques and processes, such as reductionism and repetitiveness, was also using new forms of realization, like media expansion, ambiance, and time-space limitation, and creating novel experiences, such as conceptualism and meta-approach.<sup>34</sup>

The festival organizers programmed the works by leading experimental and minimalist composers, juxtaposing artists from the United States (Steve Reich, Robert Moran, and Frank Zappa), Europe, and Yugoslavia (Savić, Drašković, Tošić, Aleš Gasparič, Milan Graovac, Boštjan Perovšek, and Miloš Petrović). Luc Ferrari and Hans Otte, among others, were in attendance. Hungarian experimental group 180-as Csoport (founded in 1979), Slovenian ensemble Saeta (founded in 1977), and the Ensemble for Different New Music were the featured performers.<sup>35</sup> In their annual SKC activity report, Savić and Drašković observed that the festival not only gathered a representative group of European minimalist composers but that, for the first time in Yugoslavia, it provided a comprehensive picture (in terms of the variety of styles and featuring different generations of composers) of minimalist music.<sup>36</sup> Lazarov Pashu's essay on the festival points out that the event "radically expanded the canon of contemporary music in Yugoslavia" but that, unlike their counterparts from abroad, Yugoslav composers were not "constrained" within a "single medium" of minimalism, but operated within a wider range of expanded media by including music, video, and performance art in their works.<sup>37</sup>

The festival also screened a 40-minute experimental film *Dust in Belgrade*, directed by Zoran Solomun (1983), recorded during Fahres's artist residency in Belgrade. Set to the music of Arvo Pärt, Karel Goeyvaerts, Fahres, Louis Andriessen, and Carlos Santos, it features Fahres walking and driving around Belgrade on a gloomy, rainy day while narrating his thoughts on minimalism. One segment of the film takes

<sup>32</sup> Miladinović Prica, "Beyond the Divide: The Different New Music Festival in Belgrade (1984–1986)," 596.

<sup>33</sup> Miroslav Savić and Milimir Drašković, "Druga nova muzika" [Different New Music], in *The Different New Music Festival, Bulletin No. 1* (May 16–17, 1984), ed. Miroslav Savić (Belgrade: Studentski kulturni centar, 1984), 2.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Other composers that took part in the program were: Michael Fahres, Hans Otte, and Klaus Runze (Germany); Luc Ferrari (France); Louis Andriessen, Diderik Wagenaar, Joop van Erven, and Armeno Alberts (Netherlands); Chinese-Swiss composer Tona Scherchen-Hsiao; Victor Ekimovsky (USSR); László Melis and Béla Faragó (Hungary); and Paul Pignon (UK). See the Appendix section in Miladinović Prica (2022, 609–13) for a complete list of composers and performers at the 1984 festival edition.

<sup>36</sup> "SKC 1984 Izveštaj," 12 (SKC Archive).

<sup>37</sup> Lazarov Pashu, "Druga nova muzika – srećne druge nove uši," 86.

place inside the SKC – in Fahres’s words, “the center of minimalism in Yugoslavia” – and features experimental videos of “three of the most active minimalist composers” in the country – Savić, Lazarov Pashu, and Drašković. The videos effectively capture each composer’s personality and individuality, but also the level of their artistry and daring innovation. Savić’s video *M* (for piano) depicts the composer appearing and disappearing from view by ducking behind a piano while a hamster eats atop the piano lid. In Lazarov Pashu’s *Istorija funkcionalne tonalnosti* [The History of Functional Tonality], the composer is sitting on a chair inside a phone booth, singing *do-mi-sol* patterns in major and minor keys. Drummer Borivoje Pavićević, with a cigarette in his mouth, is performing Drašković’s *Drummer /s/* for the drum set. The SKC Filmforum captured the first two festivals on film, providing a historical record of these events.<sup>38</sup>

Even though the second festival, held in 1985, was smaller in terms of participants and performances, it demonstrated an even greater authenticity and creative freedom for Yugoslav composers. The Ensemble for Different New Music performed minimalist works by five Yugoslav composers: Savić (*ABC Bossa Nova*), Lazarov Pashu (*Vreme 3* [Time 3]), Ognjen Bogdanović (*Fade*), Marjan Šijanec (*The Shedding of Leaves Makes the Trees Invisible*), and Veljko Nikolić (*Tlan* [Soil]). The opening piece of the festival was Savić’s *ABC Bossa Nova*, conducted by Šijanec. It featured a girls’ choir singing solfege syllables together with members of the ADNМ playing bossa nova rhythmic patterns on a wide range of percussive instruments (conga, bongos, whistles, maracas, and other drums and tubes). The performance was nothing short of spectacular. It encapsulated the organizers’ vision of presenting “different” music, not only highlighting the stark contrast to the traditional mode of expression at the Faculty of Music but also presenting a distinct type of minimalist music – minimalism with a greater variety of style and individuality – as Savić stated in his closing remarks. The event captured the zeitgeist of the 1980s cultural life in Yugoslavia, with the SKC as its epicenter.

Due to insufficient funding, the third (and last) rendition of the festival, held in 1986, featured only Yugoslav composers. Among the returnees – Drašković, Lazarov Pashu, Savić, Tošić, Raičković, and Šijanec – the works by Dušan Bogdanović, Nataša Bogojević, Brina Jež, Boris Kovač, Stevan Kovač Tikmajer, and Vlastimir Trajković were also programmed. Unlike the previous two editions of the festival, which only featured the newest works by all participants, the 1986 festival was envisioned as a “retrospective” of Yugoslav minimalist music.<sup>39</sup> It included some of the earliest minimalist pieces in Yugoslavia (such as Raičković’s *Permutations* [1976–78] and *Flying Trio* [1979]), alongside works composed in the 1980s and those commissioned by and premiered at the festival. The festival illustrated the Yugoslav composers’ relentless quest to reach new heights in expression and experimentation (for instance, Tošić’s *Četiri ne/zavisna događaja* [Four In/Dependent Events], a piece written for four

<sup>38</sup> Zoran Solomun, dir., *Druga nova muzika, SKC Beograd, 16–20. maj 1984*. [Different New Music, SKC Belgrade, 16–20 May 1984] (Belgrade: Television Belgrade, 1984); *Drugi novi festival, SKC Beograd, 10–12. maj 1985*. [Second New Festival, SKC Belgrade, May 10–12, 1984] (Belgrade: Television Belgrade, 1985).

<sup>39</sup> Miladinović Prica, “Beyond the Divide: The Different New Music Festival in Belgrade (1984–1986),” 601.

different ensembles, in which four groups can simultaneously perform in different spaces or even different cities) and working with a wide range of media.<sup>40</sup> For instance, Dušan Bogdanović and Raša Todosijević displayed their sound and multimedia installations at the SKC Art Gallery, while Milimir Drašković presented his films *Opera* and *Orgelwerke*.

Distinct from other music festivals in Serbia (and hardly anywhere in Yugoslavia), and envisioned fully as festivals of experimental and minimalist music – “minimalist” as understood, adapted, and practiced by Yugoslav self-taught, curious, and authentic composers – these renditions of the Different New Music Festivals fully displayed various “cultural impulses” that were unfolding in Yugoslavia at the time. As Miladinović Prica posits, “[the festival] attested to the existence of parallel systems of culture in Yugoslavia, the neo-avant-garde that operated outside the boundaries of its dominant (mainstream) culture.”<sup>41</sup>

## Conclusion

While academic and professional institutions shunned these young composers and their experimental minimalist aesthetic, the artists found modest support among their peers. For instance, the review of the first concert (May 20, 1976) by members of Opus 4 was published in the magazine *Student*. It effectively captures the energy and excitement of the debut performance, conceptually choreographed in detail. Their peer critic writes the following observations:

- the audience is seated
- the lights are turned off except for one dim beam reflecting the piano on the stage
- a young woman [Nada Kolundžija] appears on the stage, wearing a colorful tunic and jeans, and sits at the piano; the concert officially begins
- unusual music is heard [*10 for piano* by Miroslav Savić], which sounds very suggestive, owing to the performer’s concentration
- after her performance, another young woman [Ksenija Zečević] appears on the stage and with an exaggerated expressivity plays Vladimir Tošić’s *Fragments* for piano
- as the concert continues, young men, clad in jeans, enter and exit the stage, and in all seriousness perform their colleagues’ works.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Tošić’s *Four In/Dependent Events* – for string quartet; wind quintet; piano and electric piano; and vibraphone and marimbaphone – premiered at the Student Center in Zagreb in 1985. In the first part of that performance, all four groups performed in separate halls without listening to one another while the synthesis of their performance was transmitted over the radio in real-time. In the second half of the concert, all four groups played in the same hall, while the radio broadcast the performance by only one ensemble (i.e., one “in/dependent event”). Vladimir Tošić in correspondence with Laura Emmery, November 20, 2021.

<sup>41</sup> Miladinović Prica, “Beyond the Divide: The Different New Music Festival in Belgrade (1984–1986),” 602.

<sup>42</sup> M. N. Mirmar, “Muzika ovde i sada” [Music Here and Now], *Student* (May 25, 1976), n.p.

Already with their first public performance, the young composers made quite an impression and a statement with their outfits, presentation, and musical style. They pushed the boundaries of a classical music concert and captivated the audience. The critic continued:

The pieces performed occupied everyone's full attention and elicited countless emotions and an unusual thought process: one could particularly feel the passing of time [...]. Although on account of their outfit, the composers and performers appeared somewhat nonchalant, their performance and attitude proved everyone wrong. First of all, they were much more professional than some of their colleagues who, on stage, during pauses, tell jokes or chew gum. It is clear that they did not want to put emphasis on themselves, which was most obvious during the performance of Tošić's *Mélange*, during which the performers (now dressed in black, so as not to draw any attention to themselves), moved to the darkly lit part of the stage. Music alone intended to evoke interest in the audience, which is exactly what happened.<sup>43</sup>

Vladimir Tošić confirmed the critic's observations, noting that the performance acutely announced characteristics of music that *Opus 4* would continue to develop in their future pieces and presentations – music based on the principles of reductionism, repetition, and atypical instrumentation.<sup>44</sup>

Certain critics pointed out the lack of support that the young composers were getting at their home institutions. For instance, following Raičković's debut at the SKC with the *ADNM*, a year and a half later (December 7, 1977), Dragan Mladenović wrote a review titled, "Није изненађујуће то са професорима" [The Situation with Professors is Not Surprising]. Referring to Raičković's professors at the Faculty of Music, who a few months earlier had dogmatically rejected his piece because it was written in the minimalist style, Mladenović focuses on the novelty of Raičković's approach to composition:

The music of Milos Raičković, a young composer from Belgrade (with his bad luck, a student at the Faculty of Music), who recently performed at the Student Cultural Center, is divorced from the 19th-century form. The concert was especially interesting because it confirmed that this divorce is not only formal but also substantive, thus, it is definitive. Raičković deliberately runs away from an expression that is grounded in the principle of conflict and opposition—from a traditional harmonic structure. His music is based on a captivatingly calm flow and a predictable process of ordinary and unpretentious musical language.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Tošić, *Opus 4: Dokumenti*, 24.

<sup>45</sup> Dragan Mladenović, "Није изненађујуће то са професорима," *Омладинске новине* (December 17, 1977), 10.

Although academic institutions, still deeply rooted in traditionalism, did not legitimize the efforts by Opus 4, the Ensemble for Different New Music, and Miloš Raičković, by the early 1980s, audiences and critics could no longer deny their impact and popularity, as illustrated by numerous articles and reviews of their performances, compositions, recordings, as well as interviews in mainstream newspapers and magazines. With a growing public interest in minimalism (and experimentalism), Opus 4 and Ensemble for Different New Music, through their individual explorations and collective activity, created a significant impetus toward the proliferation and creation of new poetics in Serbia (and Yugoslavia), which to this day remain essential.

Despite their relatively short existence, Opus 4 became a phenomenon. Influenced by American minimalism and Cage-style experimentalism, the works of Opus 4 merged music with performance art, conceptualism, Fluxus, and audio-visual media. Opus 4, together with the ADNM, which was working under the auspices of the music editorial board of the SKC and continued to perform their music and those of other minimalists, defined the music program at the Student Cultural Center and reshaped new art in the 1970s and 1980s Yugoslavia. Miladinović Prica argues that the groups' practice may be viewed as an "authentic local practice that pursues radical modernism"; that is, while the composers of Opus 4 worked on the "European cultural periphery" and away from any leading European cultural centers, "[they] received stimuli from various sources, which they processed and developed into independent, autochthonous, and experimental artistic practice."<sup>46</sup> Opus 4 became synonymous with the concept of the neo-avant-garde in the late 1970s and early 1980s in Belgrade, Serbia, and Yugoslavia, and the ADNM, whose activities were labeled as the "new artistic practice," created a unique aesthetic within the Yugoslav context.

The development of this unique brand of Belgrade-based Serbian and Yugoslav musical minimalism, within an alternative artistic scene and in opposition to academic institutions, attests to the multifarious distinct types of minimalism and experimentalism in European music. Alongside British, Dutch, German, and Hungarian composers and ensembles during the mid-1970s through the mid-1980s, Opus 4 and ADNM represented some of the principal exponents in the diffusion of minimalism in Europe.

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<sup>46</sup> Miladinović Prica, "Beyond the Divide: The Different New Music Festival in Belgrade (1984–1986)," 593.

### Visual examples



**Example #1.** Opus 4: (left to right) Milimir Drašković, Vladimir Tošić, Miodrag Lazarov Pashu, Miroslav Savić. Tašmajdan Park, Belgrade, ca. 1980. Photo by Vladimir Tošić. Used with permission.



**Example #2.** Milimir Drašković, *Dirigent* [Conductor] (1979), 30 still photographs 18 × 24 cm. Photo by Nebojša Čanković. Used with kind permission.





**Example #3.** Miodrag Lazarov Pashu, *Semaziomuzika: 13 struktura, 13 pozicija i stajanja* [Semasiomusic: 13 Structures, 13 Positions and States] (1980), for one performer. Premiered in 1981 at the SKC. Photo by Nebojša Čanković. Used with kind permission.



**Example #4.** Miroslav Savić, *10 for gong* (1976). (Left to right): Miodrag Lazarov Pashu, Vladimir Tošić, and Miroslav Savić. Photo by Nebojša Čanković. Used with permission.

Mélange

4/4 = 69

Piatto  
ø60cm  
Gong  
ø80cm  
Timpano  
in D  
Piano\*

ppp ped. sempre pp ppp

pp ppp laissez vibrer pp laissez vibrer

**Example #5.** Vladimir Tošić, *Mélange* for piano, timpani, gong, and cymbals (1975), the first page of the score. This work constitutes the first example of minimalist music written in Yugoslavia. Composer's personal archive. Used with permission.



**Example #6.** Miloš Raičković conducts the Ensemble for Different New Music in their debut concert, performing *Permutations* for 3 pianos, 18 hands. December 7, 1977, SKC in Belgrade. Photo by Nebojša Čanković. Used with kind permission.



# DRUGA NOVA MUZIKA DIFFERENT NEW MUSIC

Studentski kulturni centar, Beograd  
16–20. maj 1984.

Cetvrtak, 17. maj  
14.00

**Milen Graovac**  
Zvučni trag  
(Projektat se realizuje u podzemnom prolazu na Terazijama)

Cetvrtak, 17. maj  
17.00

**Michael Falves**  
The Functionality of Music  
(Impredesaje)

Cetvrtak, 17. maj  
20.00

**Armeno Alberts**, piano  
**Andre Groen**, percussion  
**Eugene Flores**, percussion  
**Fraus van Giffen**, flauta

**Program**

— **Armeno Alberts**  
— Continuous Music (20') /1980/  
— Piano Piece (10') /1983/  
— The Beauty and the Beast (6') /1984/  
**Joop v. Ersm**

— Three Etudes (18') /1980/  
**Frank Zappa**

— The Black Page (7') /1976/  
**Tona Scherchen-Hisao**

— V (17')

Cetvrtak, 17. maj  
22.00

**HOŘI FLAJTA**

**Program**

— **Miroslav Misa Savić**

— 12 orata muzičke škole-

— **Milimir Drašković**

— Za H.F. i M.O.

— Priказivanje TV filma

— **Prisina u Beogradu**

(produkcija Filmoformna SKC)

**Program**

Nedelja, 20 maj  
18.00

**Paul Pignon**

Convergim (Ka sredistu)

(Projektat se realizuje na ulicama grada i u bašti SKC)

Nedelja, 20. maj  
20.00

**Milimir Drašković:**

— Drugi novi orkestar /1984/  
(Ansamblu za drugu novu muziku, Hor flauta, SAETA, BAMB...)

— **ANSAMBL ZA DRUGU NOVU MUZIKU**

— **ANSAMBL ZA DRUGU NOVU MUZIKU**

— Nada Kolumbić, klavijature

— Olgica Antić, klavijature

— Miroslav Petrović, klavijature

— Miša Savić, klavijature

— Marjan Siljanec, udaraljke

— Nenad Nikolić, udaraljke

— Paul Pignon, ten. sax

— Svetlana Todić, flauta

— Tešman Živanović, violančelo

**Program**

— **В. Емисловский**

— **MANDALA** /1983/  
**Vladimir Totić**

— Hromosomije /1983/  
**Robert Moran**

— Lithuanian Spin /1983/  
**Miroslav Petrović**

— **MELODIA** za glas i pokret /1984/  
— Izvodi Dragana Đaković

## DRUGA NOVA MUZIKA Studentski kulturni centar, Beograd 16–20. maj 1984.

Studentski kulturni centar organizuje prvi festival mini-male muzike pod nazivom "Druga nova muzika". Najniže "druga nove muzike" obuhvata one situacije muzičke izvedbe u čijoj nameni su nastali određeni kao što su redukcija, nepotpunost, procesualnost i sl. (Sa obzirom na konceptualni postulat, satim medijski producentski, ambijentalni, vremensko-prostorna omeđenost i sl. (Sa obzirom na oblik realizacije) i konceptualnost, nastupista i sl. (Sa obzirom na karakter muzičkog materijala i dobijanja). Sadržajna minimalna muzika, koja je u muzičku teoriju uveo Michael Nyman u knjizi "Experiments in Music: Music and Poetic Notation", relativno je skromnija ali zadovoljivo precizna polim sloj je osnovni razlog za operativnost za ovaj termin. Izvodi "Druga nova muzika" izvedena predstavljaju izraz "minimalne" u našem jeziku čiji ovaj naziv još nepopularnijim kada su u pitanju domaći autori (kao se u razlici od razlika i na njemu najpopularniji status) sa su razlici da se on zameni time još naglasiti.

Programna koncepcija festivala "Druga nova muzika" pre svega ima zaštitu da, pored terminološke preciznosti, reafirmira i rad autora i ansambala koji se bave izvedbom "druga nove muzike". Taj rad je prisutan u našem muzičkom životu skoro deset godina i potpuno je uključeno u kontinentalni muzički život na tom planu. Predstavljanje ove situacije je drugi cilj festivala imajući u vidu i to da se stvore odlične predstavljanje širke spektra autora i izvođača — od afirmisanih do potpuno nepoznatih, ali uvek uvek. Kao drugi važan moment u konceptualnom festivalu treba istaći i njegova komunalnost koja bi trebalo da doneka izmeni tradicionalno nepovoljan i neadekvatan odnos publike i institucije prema novim muzičkim pojavama.

**SREĆENE DRUGE NOVE USI**

Miroslav Savić  
Milimir Drašković

Sreda, 16. maj  
20.00

**Luc Ferrari**, direction

**Paul Dubouillon**, pianiste

**Publio Guccio**, percussion

**Programme**

**Luc Ferrari**

— Préface pour piano seul (15') /1983/  
— Presque Rien no. 1, ou le lever du jour au bord de la mer (bande seule — 25') /1970/  
— Cellule 75, force du rythme et cadence force pour piano, percussion et bande (35') /1975/  
— 1975/

Sreda, 16. maj  
22.00

**Hans Otte**, klavir

**Program**

**Hans Otte**

— Das Buch der Klänge

Petak, 18. maj  
17.00

**Razgovor sa autorima i izvođačima, ubesnicima festivala**

Petak, 18. maj  
22.00

**A 180s CSOOPORT**

(GROUP — 1980)

**Program**

— **Steve Reich**

— Piano Phase

— Music for Pieces of Wood

— Octet

**Bela Férage**

— The Spiders Death

**Lazlo Mella**

— Etude for Three Mirrors

Petak, 18. maj  
22.00

**Klaus Runze / Jutta Nussbaum**, from A. I. A.

(Performing group "Arts in Action", Cologne)

**Klaus Runze**

— Metaphrasia

— Performance in two parts

**Action Playing on the**

**Piano (Klaus Runze)** with

**LivePreparation (Jutta Nussbaum)**

— **Recursive Wall-Painting** on a paper surface

(Klaus Runze) and movement projected in silhouette (Jutta Nussbaum)

Subota, 19. maj  
20.00

**Gerard Bouwehuis**, piano

**Cees van Zeeland**, piano

**Programme**

**Diderik Wagenaar**

— **Preis**

— **Symphony for Two Pianos and ad libitum**

— **Clou** (40') /1977/  
**Louis Andriessen**

— **De Staat (The Republic)**

(40') /1972–76/  
Subota, 9. maj  
22.00

**SAETA** — skupina za eksperimentalno glasbo,

— Ljubljana, Jugoslavija

— **Ibiza Kongo**, glas

— **Miloš Bašin**, toljaka, slovenska ljudska glasbila

— **Aleš Gasparič**, flauta, picalo

— **Božidar Perovšek**, alt, klavirnet, harmonika, elek-

— **troukustično delo**

— **Uroš Sever**, trobenta

— **Hugo Sekorčija**, saksofon

— **Stjepan Valentičič**, film

**Karantena (25')**

— **Idgja: Aleš Gasparič**

— **obrada: SAETA**

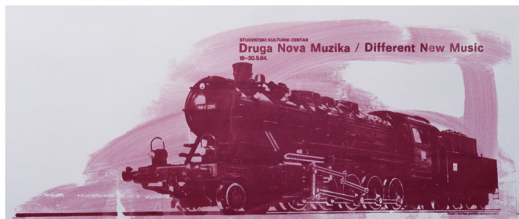
— **Miniaturo (27')**

— **muzika: Božidar Perovšek**

— **obrada: SAETA**

— **film: OM produkcija**

— **izvodi: SAETA i OM produkcija**



Studentski kulturni centar, 11000 Beograd, M. stta 48

Direktor: **Ljubomir Klasić**

Muzički program:

— **Urednik: Miroslav Misa Savić**

— **Koncepcija i organizacija festivala:**

— **Miroslav Misa Savić i Milimir Drašković**

— **Štampa: "ISTOKAMP"**, Dobruša 6, 11000 Beograd

Festival ponosi:

— **RTV Beograd**

— **Kulturni i informativni centar SR Nemačke u Beogradu**

— **Fondacija Gaudemus, Amsterdam**

— **Radio Bevo**

— **Štoboden Ilc**

Example #7. Festival Druga nova muzika / Different New Music, May 16–20, 1984, SKC, concert program. SKC Archive. Used with permission.

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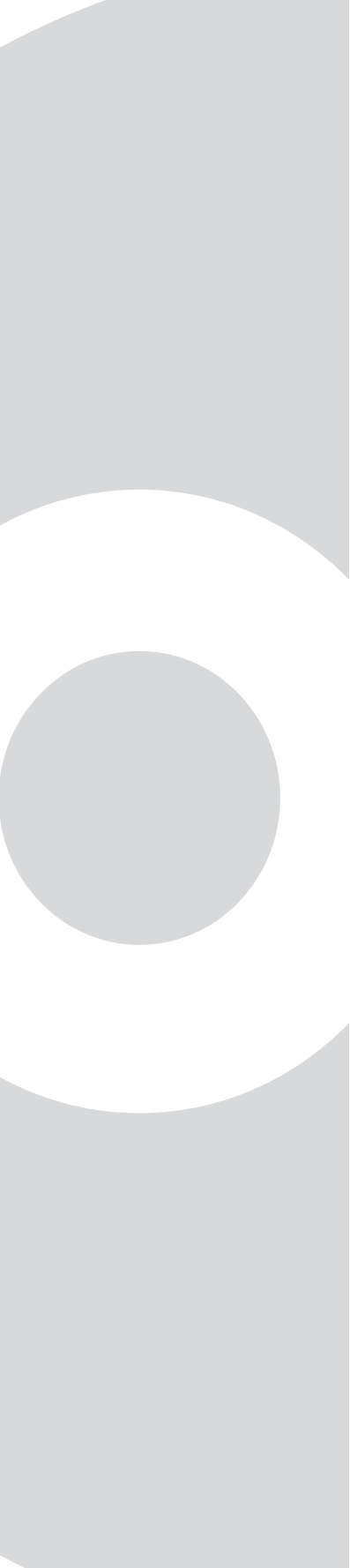
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## **"Anti-monument: The Way to a Forgotten Historical Event". Participation as a Tactics for Creating New Memory**

**Abstract:** In this text, I will address historical memory as an ethical obligation and a means of intervening in the process of social change, with a particular emphasis on the problem of excluding women from main historical narratives. My analysis is set in relation to the marginalized historical episode of the political camp for women in Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur. I will explore how tactics of socially engaged artistic practice can effectively bring this forgotten historical episode into public focus and integrate it into institutional frameworks. Special attention will be given to the concept of the anti-monument as an innovative critical approach to the memorialization practices of violent heritage. The anti-monument involves the public in the process of memory transmission, allowing everyone to seek information and respond according to their own interest, and by building their own memory, become carriers of memory, and take responsibility for the future.

For the purpose of this paper, I will refer to the case study "850 Women for 850 Women", which I initiated and have been leading since 2021 within the artistic project "You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It", as a concrete example of participatory building of a collective anti-monument and repositioning towards memory. This participatory practice indicates how artistic interventions can actively transfer memory from the past through present collective action into the future. The paper provides insight into ways artistic tactics establishes connection with marginalized histories and strengthens collective memories with the idea of historical justice and inclusion.

**Keywords:** anti-monument; socially engaged art; 850 Women for 850 Women; political camp; women; Goli otok; Sveti Grgur.

In presenting the thesis that an anti-monument more effectively brings traumatic and untold histories closer than conventional monuments, I rely on several key theoretical approaches: theories of memory in cultural studies, memory activism as a strategic marking of contested pasts, feminist critique of male historicism, and participatory artwork. Theories of memory in cultural studies enable understanding the formation and transmission of collective memory through cultural practices and



their impact on identity and collective consciousness. I analyze memory activism as a means of destabilizing dominant historical narratives and opening space for marginalized voices, contributing to the creation of a more just and inclusive society. Through the feminist critique of male historicism, I explore how gender dynamics shape historical memory and commemoration, especially in the context of women's neglected histories. Participatory artwork offers a methodological approach in creating an anti-monument, opening space for community involvement in the process, thereby empowering marginalized voices and creating new forms of collective memory. Memorialization in this context is seen as a dynamic agent of social change, not just as an act of commemoration. Memory becomes a means of critical intervention with the idea of historical justice and inclusion and the establishment of new cultural practices. As a case study, I consider the marginalized historical episode of the political camp for women in Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur, which operated from 1950 to 1956 and imprisoned over 850 women. Through the collection and interpretation of existing documents, information, recorded statements, records, and interviews with collaborators – anthropologist Renata Jambrešić Kirin and psychotherapist Dubravka Stijačić – and the participatory actions of invited participants in making clay sculptures over several years, we have built a web and physical archive as two different tactics of creating, interpreting, and preserving memory. This text documents participatory work as a possible way of intervening in the social fabric, exploring how an anti-monument can actively participate in shaping one's present and future, critically positioning itself towards memory and forgetting.

### **Memorialization in the contemporary context**

Societies that actively work on remembering and forgetting, identifying memorialization with some kind of ethical obligation, reposition themselves concerning the past, present, and future.<sup>1</sup> According to Aleida Assmann, memory is an important resource for reimagining national collectives and for constant transformation of cultural norms in society.<sup>2</sup> Conventional monuments erected in the name of a ruling ideology are one-dimensional in their interpretation of one's past and cannot replace responsible memory.<sup>3</sup> Besides obliging us to remember a specific historical event, monuments also give us a clear interpretation and gesture, that is, corporeality towards such a distinguished memory. This raises the question of not only what we remember, but also how we remember and what kind of social and cultural practices we develop. Rituals of mourning and commemoration are often associated with a collective performative act during which memory is built and a sense of belonging to the community is created.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alaida Asman, *Oblici zaborava* (Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek, 2018), 6–10.

<sup>2</sup> Aleida Assmann, "Foreword," in *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism*, ed. Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wustenberg (New York, London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2023), 1.

<sup>3</sup> James E. Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (Winter 1992): 267–96.

<sup>4</sup> For newer interpretations of the performativity of commemoration, see Marija Đorđević, *Jugoslavija pamti*

We live in a historical moment in which memorialization accompanies the strengthening of national narratives supported by authoritative governments, while conversely (or in parallel with it) in socially responsible communities, it becomes an agent or tool of social change.<sup>5</sup> Memorialization in the contemporary context can take on the task of rethinking already existing and building new material objects of memory with the idea of historical justice and inclusion and the establishment of new cultural practices. In their *Handbook of Memory Activism*, Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wüstenberg write about memorialization in the contemporary context and define memory activism as a "strategic marking of the contested past" that aims to achieve political changes.<sup>6</sup> Memory thus becomes a way of intervening in the process of social change. Memory activists, emphasizing the forged nature of official narratives, offer an alternative that disrupts the existing social and political order. Activist practices can have unwanted and long-lasting consequences even in those cases where they failed to change the official narrative.<sup>7</sup> Certain dominant historical narratives are reinterpreted, and marginal and neglected historical events are included. Such an approach to memory, besides reinterpreting history, implies finding contemporary material objects of memory and performative acts with new reference frameworks.

The state in which I live was formed by the violent dissolution of the previous one, which opens many questions of marginalized, forgotten, ignored, erased, hidden, silenced, and similar strategies towards the past.<sup>8</sup> One of the marginalized and less important historical directions in such a framework is certainly women's history, particularly that which was violent and found itself outside the historical lines that ensure the legitimacy of the order. Marginalized women's histories are not utilitarian, they are not homogeneous and cannot be monopolized. Rather, they could be said to disturb. They are fragile, silenced, fragmented, often present in traces, mostly silenced and ignored.<sup>9</sup>

### Critique of omitted histories: HERstory

Her story (HERstory) is rarely inscribed in his (HIStory). While HIStory is predominantly shaped from a male perspective, HERstory is often perceived as opposed or marginalized. Male patriarchal society and its constitutions are established by the fact that "woman does not exist", meaning she is not a bearer of historically significant events, discoveries, artistic works, or important everyday activities. This

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(Belgrade: Evropa nostra Srbija, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> Assmann, "Foreword," 1.

<sup>6</sup> Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wüstenberg, *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism* (New York, London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2023), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Gutman and Wustenberg, *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism*, 353.

<sup>8</sup> See the strategies of forgetting in Asman, *Oblici zaborava*, 19–23.

<sup>9</sup> See *Rat nema žensko lice* (Zagreb: Edicija Božinović, 2019), a book by the Nobel Prize laureate Svetlana Aleksijević, about the shame that decorated Soviet female fighters feel today for their active contribution to the victory in the Second World War.

approach continuously reinforces gender stereotypes. Promoting *her story* focuses on women's historical narratives, experiences, and contributions while simultaneously raising questions about gender equality and inclusion. Introducing the female perspective opens up the possibility for reinterpretation of gender roles, but also the way we remember historical events. In other words, women's history is not the adoption of a male perspective but the awareness of one's personal experience, the subjectivization of bodies interacting with trauma and personal actuality.

Critical consideration of the historical representation of women's roles simultaneously calls for the integration of a multidimensional analysis that takes into account the complexity of gender identity.<sup>10</sup> Reinterpreting the dominance of white heterosexual male narratives, considering various forms and overlaps of identity – race, class, sexuality, disability, ethnic origin, and other possible dimensions – deepens the understanding of the complexity of human experience and different perspectives. Following previous considerations about conventional monuments, the question arises whether they can depict all the complex aspects of life and actions throughout history? Should we think differently about historical representation, simultaneously raising questions about multiple possibilities for visualizing memory? Reinterpretation and expansion of traditional methods of commemoration through anti-monuments allow for a deeper and more inclusive understanding of the past.

### **Anti-monument: a critical approach to violent past**

I consider the concept of the anti-monument an innovative critical approach to the memorialization practices of violent heritage, a possible strategy for the aforementioned question of recontextualizing history towards justice and inclusion. The anti-monument involves the public in the process of memory transmission, whereby each individual, depending on their interests, seeks information and answers, and by building their own memory, becomes a transmitter of memory, simultaneously taking responsibility for the future.

The very concept of anti-monument (counter-monument, contra-monument) emerged in contemporary art as an opposition to conventional monuments, that is, to the monumentalization of the past. The term was developed in 1992 by historian James Young in the text "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today"<sup>11</sup> explaining how conventional monuments do not replace responsible memory because they are one-dimensional in interpreting the past from the perspective of those who erect them, say the state in the name of the ruling ideology. In contrast, anti-monuments de-monumentalize the ambiguous symbolism of emptiness, giving multi-perspectivity by including memories of the marginalized as well as active participation of their visitors. Anti-monuments use materials and rituals that are transitory, relying on the power of words and gestures rather than the power of depicting

<sup>10</sup> See Françoise Vergès, *Dekolonijalni feminizam* (Zagreb: Multimedijalni institut, 2023).

<sup>11</sup> James E. Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (Winter 1992): 267–96.

war or triumph.<sup>12</sup> The political content is redefined; testimonies become part of life.<sup>13</sup> According to sociologist Todor Kuljić, conventional monuments celebrate the cult of war, heroes, victory, etc. through a one-dimensional ideological matrix; contrary to them anti-monuments are multidimensional, oriented towards alternative memories, antiheroes, and society. Anti-monuments do not impose but seek memory, leaving space for a more democratic collective memory. By including personal experiences of the marginalized and the visitors themselves, they decentralize a specific memory by insisting on self-reflection. With such an approach, Kuljić believes, visitors themselves become the monument.<sup>14</sup> It is problematic to close memories "in monuments" because in doing so, we also relieve ourselves of the duty of remembering, and thus of re-analyzing the past and the victims of crimes we ourselves committed.<sup>15</sup> By coining the term counter-monument, Young stimulated a rich debate about monuments, both conventional and anti-monuments. Topics such as deconstruction of memory, aesthetics of monuments, ethics of memory, political instrumentalization, introduction of a more democratic procedure for erecting monuments, etc. were discussed. These discussions also include an analysis of possible risks of counter-monuments to remain insufficiently noticed, marginal, in some cases too conceptual or abstract.<sup>16</sup>

Curator and art historian Bojana Pejić<sup>17</sup> considers collective amnesia an important aspect of a particular national identity as well as collective memory. Working on memory depends on class, gender and power relations that determine what is remembered or forgotten, who remembers and with what intention. In other words, the construction of collective memory or amnesia always involves a certain politics of memory. Individual and collective forgetting, according to Assmann, functions as a graphite pencil, we draw an image we have of ourselves, we shape a biography. In other words, what we have forgotten (or remembered) together is the foundation of a national identity.<sup>18</sup>

In the countries created by the breakup of Yugoslavia, monuments often serve to record and objectify history as forms of material testimony, regardless of the accuracy of the narrative itself. Monuments become evidence in constructing stories of heroism or national suffering. However, what happens with women's history, especially that which preceded the fall of the previous state, history that is fragmented, changed, silenced or adapted to political needs?

<sup>12</sup> Marcio Seligmann-Silva, "Anti-monuments: Between Memory and Resistance," *Between* X.20 (November 2020): 152.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>14</sup> Todor Kuljić, "Antispomenik," in *Tanatopolitika* (Beograd: Čigoja, 2014), 333–65, <http://www.zsf.rs/autori/antispomenik/>, acc. on January 5, 2024.

<sup>15</sup> Young, "The Counter-Monument."

<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed discussions about the monuments, see Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003) or Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, ed., *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Bojana Pejić, "Spomenik Zoranu Đinđiću: Kultura sećanja i politika zaborava," *Vreme* 866 (9. 8. 2007), <https://www.vreme.com/kultura/kultura-secanja-i-politika-zaborava/>, acc. on December 10, 2023.

<sup>18</sup> Asman, *Oblici zaborava*, 24.

## Unspoken stories

Within my research, I use a specific historical topos – a political camp for women in Goli otok and Sveti Grgur – observing it as a place of realization of the repressive action of the state party apparatus at a certain historical moment. The Goli otok political prison camp was created as a result of Josip Broz Tito's opposition to the Cominform's policy.<sup>19</sup> The goal was to "re-educate" members of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia who were disloyal or critical of the regime. It is a historical event with strong social consequences<sup>20</sup>, which completely excluded women's history and hence established once again the domination of a patriarchal society. The historical case is all the more interesting because it shows how communism adopted patriarchal models of gender role division, regardless of the existence (and later abolition) of the Antifascist Front of Women (AFW) and declarative gender equality.<sup>21</sup>

The political camp for women in Goli otok and Sveti Grgur was established in 1950, a year after the men's camp, and it was closed in 1956. It was a place of suffering and humiliation for over 850 women from all parts of socialist Yugoslavia. Brought without trial, female prisoners underwent a particularly harsh camp torture; many of them were forced to show cruelty to fellow inmates by torturing them in order to save their own lives. Silence, shame, humiliation, and harassment marked them for life. Ignoring gender-specific traumatic historical heritage, considering it either unimportant or equal to male experiences,<sup>22</sup> results in the withdrawal of women from the public sphere, especially politics and social movements in the fight for a more just and humane society, warns anthropologist and feminist theorist Renata Jambrešić Kirin.<sup>23</sup> The historical lesson that repeats itself is a reminder of the traditional (patriarchal) place of women in society as mothers, wives, friends, or sisters of fighters. She is an accompaniment, a shadow, a support. Jambrešić Kirin writes about this specific historical case, "The structure of the convicts shows that this was not merely an aping of Stalinist methods and *Russian camps for relatives of 'traitors of the Homeland*, but punishment, by and large, of politically fully fledged and self-aware women, most of them members of the Communist Party, who believed that they really were equal to their (powerful) comrades in their hold on the levers of power."<sup>24</sup> She concludes that

<sup>19</sup> Cominform was the coordinating body of the communist parties of nine countries under the domination of the USSR. In 1948, due to disagreement with the policy of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, a resolution was issued declaring the actions of the Yugoslav leadership to be anti-Soviet and hostile.

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed account of the Goli otok political camp, see Martin Previšić's book, *Povijest Goli otok* (Zagreb: Fraktura, 2019).

<sup>21</sup> For an analysis of the complex dynamics of gender (in)equality during and after the Second World War in Yugoslavia, see Jelena Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans: A History of World War II Resistance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

<sup>22</sup> In the men's political camp in Goli Otok, over 13,000 people were imprisoned, and the tortures they endured were harsher and more monstrous. There are over 200 books and several scientific papers that testify to this.

<sup>23</sup> Renata Jambrešić Kirin, "Šalje Tito svoje na ljetovanje! kažnjenice u arhipelagu Goli," in *Dom i svijet* (Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije, 2008), 80–124.

<sup>24</sup> Renata Jambrešić Kirin, "The Reeducation of Women of the islands Grgur and Goli – Moral Corruption and Ideological Indoctrination" in *You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It*, ed. by Irena Bekić, Renata Jambrešić Kirin, and Andreja Kulunčić (Zagreb: MAPA, 2021), 10–23.

the consequences of such an attitude towards women are still reflected in today's distribution of political power.<sup>25</sup>

As part of our project, we created a database of interviews, testimonies, written texts, lists and individual biographies of female prisoners.<sup>26</sup> After the research work, the archive of testimonies about the life and consequences of living at the camp, I got actively involved in the artistic project "You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It."<sup>27</sup>

(Excerpt from the archive)

Ženi Lebl ended up in Goli otok after recounting jokes about Comrade Tito: "On your hump, St. Gregory, the classic question 'To be or not to be?' began. If you beat – you will be, if you don't beat – you will be beaten."<sup>28</sup>

Vera Winter's testimony on the prisoners' daily moral dilemma: "The one who beat harder, got out faster. Those who resisted stayed longer, but we were all beaten, and we all beat others. In the end we all became executors on some level."<sup>29</sup>

This is how Winter describes the pointless and hard work at the camp: "We carried the stones from the sea to the top of the hill. When the pile on the top would become big enough, we would carry stones back to the sea."<sup>30</sup>

Jelka Zrnić's testimony on the living conditions: "There were days when we got four sips of water before going to sleep. One would count: one, two, three, four... counting meant drinking."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> For more information on the issue of introducing women's history into the dominant historical narrative, see discussion "History/HERstory: Discussion on Women in the History of the Goli Otok Political Camp" between anthropologist Renata Jambrešić Kirin and historian Martin Previšić, <https://www.zene-arhipelag-goli.info/discursive/history-herstory-discussion-of-women-in-the-history-of-the-political-camp-goli-otok/>, acc. on August 21, 2024.

<sup>26</sup> A list of prisoners, interviews, testimonies, written texts are available on the project's website <https://www.zene-arhipelag-goli.info/zatvorenice/>, acc. on December 10, 2023.

<sup>27</sup> For more details on the work, see Andreja Kulunčić, "You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It," (PhD diss., University of Zagreb, Academy of Fine Arts, 2023).

<sup>28</sup> Ženi Lebl, *Ljubičica bela* (Gornji Milanovac: Dečje novine, 1990), 26.

<sup>29</sup> Testimony from video recordings within the project *Osobna sjećanja*, Documenta – Center for Dealing with the Past, which was provided for the project's website [http://www.zene-arhipelag-goli.info/za\\_tvorenice-txt/intervju/](http://www.zene-arhipelag-goli.info/za_tvorenice-txt/intervju/), acc. December 10, 2023.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Dragoslav Simić and Boško Trifunović, *Ženski logor na Golom otoku* (Beograd: ABC product, 1990), 138.

The lack of political rehabilitation stigmatized these victims and left them forgotten. The silence regarding their traumatic history further burdened both prisoners and their descendants. However, as long as forgetting is mixed with memory, it is not absolute. Through traces, processes, and strategies, we can prove its existence.<sup>32</sup>

### Case study: "850 Women for 850 Women"

This case study aims at showing how a forgotten historical episode can be effectively positioned in the public focus and included in institutional frameworks through a socially engaged artistic practice. It is a participatory action that demonstrates how artistic interventions actively transfer memory from the past through present collective action into the future. Unlike most conventional monuments with the primary function of preserving a historical event in a materialized object, collective participatory action does not close, monumentalize, or postpone memory.

Participatory construction of a collective anti-monument through the artistic action "850 Women for 850 Women", which I initiated and have been leading since 2021 within the research-art project "You betrayed the Party just when you should have helped it"<sup>33</sup>, aims to raise the issue of the invisible women's history. The question that we had was how to leave a memory trace that would prevent the erasure, neglect, and re-forgetting of a specific historical episode. In the words of Aleida Assmann, "only if the framework of memory changes in society can memories that had no place before be reintegrated and become subject for reflection."<sup>34</sup>

At the project's exhibition in the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka and at organized workshops in various cities in Croatia, I invited women to create one clay sculpture for each of the prisoners who went through the camp repression in Goli otok and Sveti Grgur. The construction of a collective anti-monument, for me, is artistic tactics that creates a visible artifact for a forgotten historical event but also inscribes a memory trace into the bodies of the participants during the process of making figurines. Working with clay opens an active way for the participants to transfer their experience of encountering a traumatic historical event into a collective artefact. Clay carries a certain corporeality, performativity, and tactility. As the exhibition's curators, Irena Bekić and Anca Verona Mihuleţ, emphasize, "[...] the creation of figurines also becomes a social ritual that allows women participating in the workshop to filter collective memory around a traumatic past. Through the gestures of modeling clay resembling caressing, a new perspective on the representativeness of the female body is brought."<sup>35</sup> Used in this way, clay carries the potential for care when in contact with another person's suffering.

<sup>32</sup> Asman, *Oblici zaborava*.

<sup>33</sup> For more information about the project, see <https://www.zene-arhipelag-goli.info/antispostomenik/>, acc. on January 8, 2024.

<sup>34</sup> Asman, *Oblici zaborava*, 46.

<sup>35</sup> Irena Bekić and Anca Verona Mihuleţ, "Stvaranje antispostomenika," in the exhibition brochure *You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It* (Zagreb: MAPA, 2022). Available on the project's website: [http://www.zene-arhipelag-goli.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/MMSU\\_izložbaRijeka\\_deplijan\\_HR\\_TISAK.pdf](http://www.zene-arhipelag-goli.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/MMSU_izložbaRijeka_deplijan_HR_TISAK.pdf), acc. on January 8, 2024.

Working with the body, with clay, thinking about what the prisoners went through, imagining oneself or someone close in that position, changes the paradigm of memory, and becomes nurturing and supportive. It changes the relationship towards memory and collective history. Nurturing is the opposite of politicization. It is important not to forget, and if we do not forget, then the question arises of how we remember. Making sculptures opens a possibility for a different way of remembering, embedding the emotion of care and nurturing, turning the collective encounter into social psychotherapy for a historical trauma that has no public memorialization.

After the process ends – with the participation of 850 women in the workshops – the collective work will be exhibited as an artefact at contemporary art exhibitions and donated to museums. This act symbolically places the suffering of women in Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur into an institutional context (collection, cataloging, archive, museum), which is guerrilla tactics for a permanent institutionalization of a historical episode.

### **Conclusion: participation as a tactics for creating new memory**

The presented case study provides insight into how artistic tactics establishes a connection with marginalized history and strengthens collective memory with the idea of historical justice and inclusion. It shows how participation in collective creation transforms participants, enabling them to actively engage in sensitizing a forgotten violent historical event. By working with clay, they create bodily memory, which they later transfer as agents to their environment. The significant transformation occurs in the participants and the opening towards further networked becomings. Participants transform while working on sculptures without a predetermined and guided outcome. Changes do not need to lead to some envisioned goal; the essence is in the continuous happening and participation. Dragana Stojanović believes that human body continuously and inevitably merges with its surroundings, becoming a *sensorium*, “the extended set of bodily operations tied to its sensorial, perceptual, and performative aspects.”<sup>36</sup> This, according to the author, could be particularly important in the case of post-memorial histories connected with trauma, as it extends the learning process beyond cognitive material. In the case of the project participants, they create a permanent material – an artefact – fragile, fragmented in material, a peripheral object like the historical episode they dedicated themselves to. Their bodies, the atmosphere in the workshops, collective conversations, my presentation of the prisoners’ fates, collective reading, and listening to interviews are part of the materiality through which new memory traces on a forgotten historical event are built. The mode of learning shifts to sensory and experiential, relying on what the body goes through during the process, contrary to the usual hierarchical transfer of knowledge. We remember by doing.

<sup>36</sup> Dragana Stojanović, “Offline Education and Its Immersive Potential: Memory, Post-memory, and History in the Informational Age”, paper presented at the conference “Why Still Education”, October 5–7, 2022, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade; accepted for publication in *Humanism, Post-humanism, Anti-humanism: Educational Perspectives*, London: TransNational Press, 2024.



Through such collective participatory action, a material trace is made where it was left to erasure and oblivion. The material trace in the artefact and the bodies of the participants are in synergy with all other processes made within the project "You betrayed the Party." It has spread and inscribed information into the space of the present moment on multiple levels.

Time is performative and not linear, memory works through tangible and transformative acts of remembering, where in terms of participants the past becomes the present and is open to further reconfigurations.<sup>37</sup> The change of paradigm that occurs during that process is important. It matters how we feel and what we do with each other and alongside each other while remembering. Through the process of making clay sculptures, history is imprinted in the body as emotion, producing further narratives and affecting the way previous narratives are received. The way of remembering changes, striving to preserve the understanding that we cannot touch the past. The goal is not to absolutely identify with someone who went through Goli Otok and Sveti Grgur, but to maintain an ambivalent position of someone entering from a contemporary point, immersing in the past while retaining one's presence in the moment that we live in. The question arises, how do we co-exist with the past? The point is not to erase the past; on the contrary, the point is to face up to the past, but from this place here – in one's body – together with other bodies that inscribe themselves into our memory through their actions.

Constant questioning and changing tactics in the creation of each new anti-monument are seen as one of the key methods of preventing the unambiguous integration of a historical episode into any of the present ideologies. The anti-monument does not offer only one narrative, does not offer one solution, does not offer one conclusion. It disperses too much, being constantly at the intersection of art – participatory actions – history – memory – testimony – legacy – collective body. It is segmented. We could say that the large number of different materializations successfully avoid one-dimensional narrativization with intent.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.



Antimonument: terracotta figurines created within the artistic project "850 Women for 850 Women", 2022–2024. Photo credit Andreja Kulunčić



Antimonument: detail. Photo credit Andreja Kulunčić



Antimonument: collective action, MMSU Rijeka, 2022. Photo credit Ivo Martinović



Antimonument: collective action, Korenica, 2022. Photo credit Ivo Martinović



Antimonument: detail, Lopar, 2023. Photo credit Ivo Martinović



Antimonument: detail, Tenja, 2022. Photo credit Ivo Martinović

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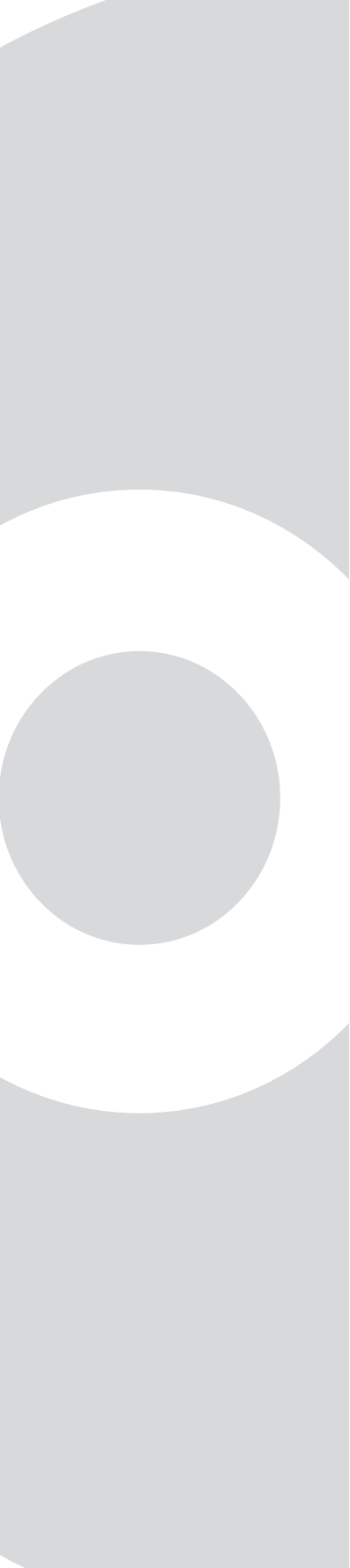
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# **Extensive Exploration of the Preference Correlations between Architectural Features and Musical Attributes**

**Abstract:** This study investigates the correlations between empirically-based preferences for architectural features and self-reported preferences for musical attributes. Altogether, 16 architectural attributes related to architectural complexity, indentation, symmetry, rhythm, pattern, and stress and 36 musical attributes of genres, perceived psychological attributes, Five Factors of Music, and 3-Factors are considered in the study, and their correlations are examined across 61 different demographic classes. In short, after gathering the data, Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis examined the existence of correlation, and Bonferroni correction screened the most reliable ones. Then, categorization and K-mean clustering methods summarized the outcomes to provide a holistic understanding of the discovered correlations. The former reflected a higher number of correlations within genre and FFM in music, and indentation, complexity, and symmetry in architecture. The latter presented interesting correlation trends, including between complicated music and complicated architecture, rap music and the existence of pattern in architecture, and mellow music and simple architectural forms.

**Keywords:** preference correlations; architecture and music; correlated features; architecture and genre; complexity preferences; architectural preferences; musical taste.

## **Introduction**

Many scholars have discussed the robust interrelations between architecture and music, including Schopenhauer, Xenakis, Steven Holl, Le Corbusier, John Cage, Daniel Libeskind, Miles Davis, as well as Goethe, who famously called architecture 'frozen music.'<sup>1</sup>The reciprocal impacts of architecture and music date back to ancient

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<sup>1</sup>Deborah Ascher Barnstone, "Willem Marinus Dudok: The Lyrical Music of Architecture," *The Journal of Architecture* 20, 2 (2015): 169–92.



times<sup>2</sup>, continuethroughthe Renaissance<sup>3</sup>and Baroque periods<sup>4</sup>all the way to the present timescharacterized by technological advances that have enabled more interrelated projects. Bloch City by Peter Cook with towers arranged as music staff,<sup>5</sup>and the Chords Bridge in Jerusalem reflecting the harmony of stringed instruments are the two overt interrelations between architecture and music. However, there are also more covert, in-depth interrelations, such as the analogical similarities between the structure of Miles Davis's jazz and the ribbons of Zaha Hadid's architecture, the superimposed shapes of Eisenman's buildings, Gehry's warping system and the parametric architecture of Schumacher, which according to Veal are the mirror images of each other.<sup>6</sup>Similarly, the Toronto Music Garden by Yo-Yo Ma and Messervey is a spatial translation of Bach's Cello Suit #1 in G Major<sup>7</sup> and, conversely, traces of the Ryoanji Japanese garden can be found in the non-intentional compositions of John Cage.<sup>8</sup>Nowadays, the interrelations between architecture and music have passed the previous limitations, and the number of interrelated projects is increasing in numbers.

Among these interrelations, particularconcepts in one discipline are seen as peer attributes in that other discipline, for instance,musical interval and architectural proportion, as well as time in music and either space or span/distance in architecture.<sup>9</sup> While there have been many attempts to uncover theoretical or technical interrelations, no study to date has sought to explore possible correlations between the personal satisfaction of the considered peer attributes. Does a technical translation of satisfactory proportions in architecture result in pleasant musical harmonies? Given the fact that rhythm plays a central part in both architecture and music, is there a correlation of the preferences between the two?

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<sup>2</sup> Markus Bandur, *Aesthetics of Total Serialism: Contemporary Research from Music to Architecture* (Basel; Boston; Berlin: Birkhäuser, 2001).

<sup>3</sup>Napoleon Ono Imaah, "Music: A Source of Inspiration and Harmony in Architecture: An African View," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 35, 2 (2004): 169–82.

<sup>4</sup>Hare Kilicaslan and Isik Ece Tezgel, "Architecture and Music in the Baroque Period," *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 51 (2012): 635–40.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Fowler, *Architectures of Sound: Acoustic Concepts and Parameters for Architectural Design* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2017).

<sup>6</sup> Michael E. Veal, "Warps, Ribbons, Crumpled Surfaces, and Superimposed Shapes: Surfing the Contours of Miles Davis's 'Lost Quintet,'" in *CENTER 18: Music in Architecture – Architecture in Music*, ed. by Michael Benedikt (Austin, Texas: Center for American Architecture and Design, 2014), 32–41.

<sup>7</sup> Brenda J. Brown, "Music, Landscape Architecture, and the Stuff of Landscapes," in *CENTER 18: Music in Architecture – Architecture in Music*, ed. by Michael Benedikt (Austin, Texas: Center for American Architecture and Design, 2014), 152–67.

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Whittington, "Digging in John Cage's Garden: Cage and Ryōanji," *Malaysian Journal of Music* 2, 2 (2013): 12–21.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas J. Baker, "Integritas: Modern Relationships between Music and Architecture /," University of Washington, Ann Arbor, 1996, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/34793557\\_Integritas\\_modern\\_relationships\\_between\\_music\\_and\\_architecture](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/34793557_Integritas_modern_relationships_between_music_and_architecture), acc. on August 26, 2024.

In addition, many studies confirm the significance of certain attributes in architectural appreciations<sup>10</sup> and musical taste.<sup>11</sup> Among the attributes, some common ones are found influential in the aesthetic preferences of both building features and music pieces; for example, complexity as a significant determinant of musical preferences<sup>12</sup> was found influential when it comes to residential building façade preferences<sup>13</sup> appraisals of storefronts,<sup>14</sup> and building preferences in general.<sup>15</sup> It is interesting to discover if there is any correlation between the preferred complexity level of architecture and music for the same person. Does satisfaction with a simpler architectural form for a specific individual reflect higher levels of appraisal of a simpler musical composition?

This paper aims at investigating the correlations between individual preferences of architecture and music attributes, with an intention to discover if a preference for an attribute in one field may reflect a preference tendency in another field. It is worth noting, without applying a restricted limitation, that this study examines the correlation between a large number of the most common attributes in architecture and music. Despite the questionable essence of such a huge examination, earlier investigations confirmed the do-ability of the study: a study confirmed the possibility of extracting the preferences of a large number of architectural attributes from a limited set of building images<sup>16</sup> and the initial investigative results confirmed the possibility of carrying out the

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<sup>10</sup> Moshe Bar and Maital Neta, "Humans Prefer Curved Visual Objects," *Psychological Science* 17, 8 (2006): 645–48; Keith G. Humphrey and Diane E. Humphrey, "The Role of Structure in Infant Visual Pattern Perception," *Canadian Journal of Psychology/Revue Canadienne de Psychologie* 43, 2 (1989): 165; David H. Silvera, Robert A. Josephs, and Brian R. Giesler, "Bigger Is Better: The Influence of Physical Size on Aesthetic Preference Judgments," *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 15, 3 (2002): 189–202; Paul J. Silvia and Christopher M. Barona, "Do People Prefer Curved Objects? Angularity, Expertise, and Aesthetic Preference," *Empirical Studies of the Arts* 27, 1 (2009): 25–42.

<sup>11</sup> John M. Geringer, "Musicians' Preferences for Tempo and Pitch Levels in Recorded Orchestral Music," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 58, 3 (2010): 294–308; Gabriela Husain, William Forde Thompson, and Glenn E. Schellenberg, "Effects of Musical Tempo and Mode on Arousal, Mood, and Spatial Abilities," *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 20, 2 (2002): 151–71; Adrian North and David Hargreaves, *The Social and Applied Psychology of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Glenn E. Schellenberg and Peter Habashi, "Remembering the Melody and Timbre, Forgetting the Key and Tempo," *Memory & Cognition* 43, 7 (2015): 1021–31.

<sup>12</sup> Josh Gordon and Mark C. Gridley, "Musical Preferences as a Function of Stimulus Complexity of Piano Jazz," *Creativity Research Journal* 25, 1 (2013): 143–46.

<sup>13</sup> Aysu Akalin, Kemal Yildirim, Christopher Wilson, and Onder Kilicoglu, "Architecture and Engineering Students' Evaluations of House Façades: Preference, Complexity and Impressiveness," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 29, 1 (2009): 124–32.

<sup>14</sup> Yasemin Burcu Çakırlar, "Factors Affecting Evaluations of Storefront Designs and Inference on Store Characteristics," Bilkent University, 2010, <http://hdl.handle.net/11693/15093>, acc. on August 26, 2024.

<sup>15</sup> Gordon and Gridley, Musical Preferences as a Function of Stimulus Complexity of Piano Jazz; Thomas R. Herzog and Ronda L. Shier, "Complexity, Age, and Building Preference," *Environment and Behavior* 32, 4 (July 1, 2000): 557–75; Cagri Imamoglu, "Complexity, Liking and Familiarity: Architecture and Non-Architecture Turkish Students' Assessments of Traditional and Modern House Facades," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 20, 1 (2000): 5–16; Pablo P. L. Tinio and Helmut Leder, "Just How Stable Are Stable Aesthetic Features? Symmetry, Complexity, and the Jaws of Massive Familiarization," *Acta Psychologica* 130, 3 (2009): 241–50.

<sup>16</sup> Seyed Farhad Tayyebi and Yüksel Demir, "Architectural Composition: A Systematic Method to Define a List of Visual Attributes," *Art and Design Review* 7, 3 (2019): 131–44.

procedure automatically.<sup>17</sup>In addition, the consideration of a large number of attributes not only uncovers a higher number of significant correlations, but it also provides an opportunity to apply correlation reduction strategies to provide a solid foundation for a more conscious interrelation between the two fields in the future.

## Methodology

A three-step methodology was employed to explore the correlations between the preferences of architectural and musical attributes. As shown in Figure #1, the attributes were first defined, and a survey gathering raw data was prepared and distributed. In the next step, the provided raw data were analysed to extract individual attribute preferences, and the outcomes were filtered to distinguish reliable responses. The second phase, therefore, provided a clear set of attribute preferences for reliable responses. Lastly, Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis examined the correlations between every single attribute within different demographic categories. The outcomes were then filtered twice to skim off the most statistically reliable correlations. The discovered correlations were then summarized to provide a conclusive framework of the correlated attributes. The methodology is explained in more details in the subsequent sections, although elaborate information can also be scrutinized in the provided raw data (see Figure #1).

### 1. Defining attributes & gathering raw data

The architectural and musical attributes are defined based on previous investigations, though they can also be seen as part of the limitations of this study. In a previous paper, the authors applied a systematic method to analyze over 200 diverse architectural forms and thereby extracted the most common visible building attributes.<sup>18</sup>The main attribute reflecting the visual features of a building façade qualities pertains to (i) indentation, which refers to the amount of back and forth, in contrast to being flat, in the building facades, (ii) complexity, concerning the degree of sophistication of the form, (iii) symmetry, which is the degree of axial symmetry in the building façade, (iv) rhythm, as in the repetition of solid architectural elements, in contrast to tiny elements like window dividers, (v) pattern that exists in the building as a result of repeated elements, and (vi) stress, concerning the directions emphasized by structural elements or contours of the building constituents.

Different qualities exist in the above feature categories, each of which is one of the attributes considered in this paper. Within indentation, there are three formal

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<sup>17</sup> Seyed Farhad Tayyebi and Yüksel Demir, "Musical Preferences Correlate Architectural Tastes: An Initial Investigation of the Correlations Between the Preferred Attributes," *Advanced Journal of Social Science* 7, 1 (2020): 96–108; Seyed Farhad Tayyebi and Yüksel Demir, "Musical Preferences Correlate Architectural Tastes: Preference Correlations between Architectural Material Features and Musical Instruments," *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*, June 6 (2022): 1–16.

<sup>18</sup> Tayyebi and Demir, "Architectural Composition: A Systematic Method to Define a List of Visual Attributes."

attributes, including *flat* (no or very few indentations in the building façade), *moderately indented* (existence of some indentations and recesses in the building façade), and *highly indented* façade (existence of a large number of indentations with deep recessed areas in the façade). Within complexity, there are *simple* (buildings with a limited number of elements and without any sophistication in their composition), *moderately complicated* (buildings with some formal sophistication), and *fully complicated* (sophisticated building forms, mostly accompanied by a large number of different architectural elements). Within symmetry, there are four attributes, including *symmetrical* (fully symmetrical buildings), *sense of symmetry* (existence of some balanced elements with clear symmetrical lines; while some elements are not indeed symmetrical, they reflect a sense of symmetry in abstract formal concepts), *partially symmetrical* (some symmetrical elements in an asymmetrical building form), and *asymmetrical* (an obvious asymmetrical formal concept). Rhythm consists of two attributes: *rhythmic* (conspicuous, repetitive elements), and *partially rhythmic* (having a trace of rhythm in small-scale elements). Similarly, the two attributes within the pattern are *regular* (the existence of predictable order in the elements organization) and *irregular* (randomly organized elements). Finally, stress covers two attributes of *horizontal* or *vertical*, reflecting visual emphasis of a specific form. In summary, there are 16 formal qualities that constitute the architectural attributes used in this study. A clear list of attributes and their samples exist is provided in the form of a dataset.<sup>19</sup>

With regard to musical attributes, a review paper summarizing large number of studies introduces four main categories of music taste attributes.<sup>20</sup>(I) Genre as the first identifier of musical taste is identified in numerous preference-related studies.<sup>21</sup>It is one of the main identifiers of musical taste used by scholars, though some theoreticians dislike the use of genre as an assigned label, without having a direct link to actual musical attributes.<sup>22</sup>(II) Perceived musical attributes, also called Perceived Psychological Attributes (PPA), emerged as another reflector of music preference; Greenberg et al. distinguished 38 PPAs including happy, sad, intense, mellow, and so on.<sup>23</sup>(III) The

<sup>19</sup> Seyed Farhad Tayyebi and Yüksel Demir, “Correlations between Architectural and Musical Attributes,” Harvard Dataverse, 2021.

<sup>20</sup> Seyed Farhad Tayyebi, Yüksel Demir, Mehmet Nemitlu, and Can Karadoğan, “Graphical Layout of the Musical Preferences Studies: An Overview on How the Studies on Musical Tastes Are Conducted,” *Art and Design Review* 8, 1 (2020): 6–30.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Schäfer and Peter Sedlmeier, “From the Functions of Music to Music Preference,” *Psychology of Music* 37, 3 (2009): 279–300.

<sup>22</sup> Alinka E. Greasley and Alexandra M. Lamont, “Music Preference in Adulthood: Why Do We like the Music We Do,” in *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition* (Citeseer, 2006), 960–66; Stefaan Lippens, Jean-Pierre Martens, and Tom De Mulder, “A Comparison of Human and Automatic Musical Genre Classification,” in *2004 IEEE International Conference on Acoustics, Speech, and Signal Processing*, 4:iv–iv. IEEE, 2004.; Cory McKay and Ichiro Fujinaga, “Musical Genre Classification: Is It Worth Pursuing and How Can It Be Improved?” in *ISMIR*, 2006, 101–6.

<sup>23</sup> David M. Greenberg, Michal Kosinski, David J. Stillwell, Brian L. Monteiro, Daniel J. Levitin, and Peter J. Rentfrow, “The Song Is You: Preferences for Musical Attribute Dimensions Reflect Personality,” *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 7, 6 (May 9, 2016): 597–605.

five-factor model (FFM), initiated by Rentfrow and Gosling<sup>24</sup> in 2003 and developed in 2011<sup>25</sup> introduces five summarizing attributes of music. The FFM uses MUSIC as an acronym for the five types, namely: Mellow (M-Type), Unpretentious (U-Type), Sophisticated (S-Type), Intense (I-Type), and Contemporary (C-Type). And finally, (IV) 3-Factor is a recently developed categorization based on the PPA. After years of investigation into the concept of musical appreciation, Greenberg and his colleagues organized psychological musical attributes into three dimensions, namely; Arousal (energy level of the music), Valence (sad to happy emotions in the music), and Depth (the sophistication in musical preference distinguishers). Consequently, Genre, PPA, FFM, and 3-Factor are the main musical attribute categories into which all musical appreciation can be placed.

Individual preference correlations between Genre and FFM as well as PPA and 3-Factor have already been investigated;<sup>26</sup> that is, the individual taste for each FFM type can be discovered by their correlated genre satisfaction, and the 3-Factor preferences are revealed by the interrelated PPA satisfaction. Accordingly, the preference rates of particular Genre and PPA can reflect the satisfaction rate of the FFM and 3-Factor attributes. Therefore, for each attribute in the FFM category, two prevalent genres with the highest correlation rates are selected, so that they both would be considered genre attributes and so that their satisfaction rates would reflect the FFM attribute preferences. The FFM category and their correlated genres are M-Type (soul/R&B, pop), U-Type (country, rock & roll), S-Type (classic, Jazz), I-Type (heavy-metal, rock), and C-Type (rap, electronica). Similarly, regarding the fact that 3-Factor attributes have either a positive or a negative value, there are three strongly correlated attributes for each positive value, and two strongly correlated attributes for each negative value: positive arousal (intense, forceful, aggressive), negative arousal (mellow/gentle, calming), positive valence (happy, fun/joyful, lively), negative valence (depressing, sad), positive depth (sophisticated/complex, inspiring, poetic/deep), and negative depth (party music, and dance-ability). Finally, 10 genres and 15 PPA are considered in their own right, and as reflectors of opinions about 11 attributes in FFM and 3-Factor categories. Consequently, this collectively gives 25 selected attributes reflecting individual preferences on 36 considered musical attributes.

After selecting all the attributes, the satisfaction rates of the provided list need to be collected. Regarding the significant impact of the number of participants in correlation-related studies, the best way to collect raw data from a sufficiently large number of individuals is through a survey. Thus, a survey is designed to mainly extract preference rates of the considered attributes, as well as to extract demographic attributes of the participants, which will later be used to classify the responses (Fig. #1). As traces of education and gender bias exist in many musical taste studies, and

<sup>24</sup> Peter J. Rentfrow and Samuel D. Gosling, "The Do Re Mi's of Everyday Life: The Structure and Personality Correlates of Music Preferences," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84, 6 (2003): 1236.

<sup>25</sup> Peter J. Rentfrow, Lewis R. Goldberg, and Daniel J. Levitin, "The Structure of Musical Preferences: A Five-Factor Model," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 100, 6 (June 2011): 1139–57.

<sup>26</sup> Greenberg et al., "The Song Is You."

particularly the significance of age and gender in the correlations between architectural and musical attributes has been confirmed,<sup>27</sup> the first part of the survey contains questions related to age, gender, and education level of the participants.

There are several ways of uncovering architectural preferences. A recent paper that tested eight different methods concluded that the most reliable method – especially for large sample sizes – is to ask participants to rate several building images to reflect their attribute preferences accordingly.<sup>28</sup> By applying this method, participants only need to rate some building images, then the rates are assigned to all the pre-defined visible attributes of the buildings; finally, the average of each attribute's ratings is assumed to be the satisfaction rate of the attribute. To increase the internal validity of the study and examine the reliability of the collected architectural answers, the split-in-half method is also applied to the architectural images, whereby preferences regarding each attribute are asked via two sets of architectural images and, by comparing the two outcomes, inconsistent answers are removed as invalid responses. Thus, 60 building images in two sets are selected in such a way to have each attribute questioned multiple times in different building forms, and participants are asked to randomly rate the building forms via the 7-point Likert scale. All the architectural samples and their associated attributes are presented in the dataset.<sup>29</sup>

The musical can be extracted either from musical pieces or from contextualized questions. Although music samples may generate more accurate data, its time-consuming essence makes it impractical for this study. Therefore, to provide a larger number of participants compensating for its importance in correlation-related study, and as a limitation of the study, the explained questioning method was thus selected, as it is generally used to gather data in many studies of musical tastes. Participants were asked to express their preferences on 15 PPA and 10 genres by giving their answers on the 5-point Likert scale. The FFM and 3-Factor attribute preferences are then extracted based on PPA and genre preferences. It is worth noting that, while the empirically-based architectural responses are on the 7-point scale, the contextualized musical questions are more abstract and cover a wider range of potential tastes and therefore require a more open 5-point Likert scale.

In summary, this survey contains demographic questions around age, gender, and education, architectural questions include 60 building images, and musical questions cover 15 PPA and 10 genres. The survey was distributed worldwide on the QuestionPro platform to randomly-selected voluntary participants whose answers remain confidential and anonymous.

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<sup>27</sup> Tayyebi and Demir, “Musical Preferences Correlate Architectural Tastes: An Initial Investigation of the Correlations Between the Preferred Attributes.”

<sup>28</sup> Seyed Farhad Tayyebi and Yüksel Demir, “Extracting Personal Preferences for Architectural Attributes: Examining the Reliability of Several Direct and Indirect Questioning Methods,” *AM Journal of Art and Media Studies* 22 (2020): 111–34.

<sup>29</sup> Tayyebi and Demir, “Correlations between Architectural and Musical Attributes.”

## 2. Attribute preferences analysis and filtering reliable responses

The collected responses need some calculations to provide a clear list of attribute preferences. For the music section, the 15 PPA's and the 10 genres do not need further analysis as the questions on these are direct, while the preferences for the FFM and 3-factor attributes need to be extracted from the genre and PPA ratings respectively. Thus, the satisfaction range of the attributes in FFM and 3-Factors are analysed by averaging their correlated attributes to each category. To extract the building attribute preferences, as briefly discussed earlier, the buildings' ratings are assigned to their attributes, then, the average rating for each attribute is assumed to be the final satisfactory rating of every single attribute. Therefore, each set of building images provides a set of attribute preferences; comparing the outcomes enables us to apply the split-half method and erase the unreliable responses. Finally, to increase the accuracy of the attribute preferences for each of the valid responses, the attribute preferences are recalculated once more based on the entire set of 60 images. As Figure #1 shows, three sets of attribute preferences are obtained for each participant, by the analysis of the first set of images, the second set of images, and all images.

Once a clear list of attribute preferences is collected for each participant, the unreliable responses need to be filtered out. For the architecture section, participants have to have rated at least 50 buildings within a range of 3 or more to be considered in the analysis. In addition, the mean of the building preferences for each participant must be more than 2 and less than 6, and the standard deviation (SD) of the building preferences must be more than 0.75 to be considered as a valid response. Failure to meet these criteria means the rates are all too similar, either highly satisfying or extremely dissatisfying, and therefore considered unreliable.

Comparing the outcomes for the two sets of building images, the split-half method offers other filtering criteria. As the first criterion, participants with an average discrepancy of more than 1.5 between the outcomes of the first and the second set of images are eliminated. This initial but significant criterion filters out most of the unreliable responses. Besides, the participants with an average discrepancy of less than 0.2 are also omitted; verifying their answers shows that these people rate the buildings mostly similarly, therefore, the extracted attributes' satisfaction ranges are eventually similar. The SD of the discrepancy between the sets can also identify other invalid responses, even if the average of the differences is within the acceptable range. Having a high SD means the outcomes were almost correct for some attributes and disparately wrong for others. Despite its covert essence, considering these people in the correlation analysis could affect the credibility of the study outcome. Thus, as another filtering criterion, participants with a discrepancy SD of over 1.5 are also erased. Once all the unreliable responses are removed, the outcome of the analysis of all the images is considered as the satisfaction rate of the attributes of the remaining participants (Fig. #1).

The data from the music section also need refining before the correlations could be extracted properly. Participants must rate at least 7 out of 10 genres and

10 out of 15 PPA's to be regarded as valid respondents. The assumption is that neutral participants could reduce the strength of the discovered correlations; participants with a preference range of less than 2 are not taken into consideration. In addition, the mean of the rates must be between 2 and 4, and the SD must be more than 0.75 to be considered a valid response. It is worth noting that the aforementioned filtering criteria are only applied to questions relating to genres and PPA, as these also reflect the preferences within the FFM and 3-Factor attributes.

Please consider, architecture and music attribute preferences as raw data of the study are provided in the dataset, published on Harvard Dataverse.<sup>30</sup>

### 3. Analysing the correlations and reporting the valid ones

After filtering out the unreliable responses and establishing clear sets of attribute preferences, the correlations are analysed using the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. This analysis examines the existence of correlations among two sets of independent variables, without being concerned with the causality of the relationships. As a result, regardless of the underlying reasons, the analysis shows possible correlations between satisfaction rates of the architectural and musical attributes. Regarding the fact that the nature of the scoring system has no impact on the analysis outcomes, difference rates between architectural and musical attributes, which are based on 7-point and 5-point Likert scales respectively, has no impact on the Person's end result.

The correlations between attributes are analysed both for all participants, and among different demographic categories. The demographic attributes of gender, education, and age are run through a correlation analysis to discover probable correlations among participant categories. Regarding the number of samples, the gender section divided the participants into males and females. There are five Education categories, regarding academic education in architecture and music: Architect (having academic education in the field of architecture, regardless of their current position), Musician (having academic education in the field of music), Architect-Musician (referring to those who have academic education in both architecture and music), Educated (those who have at least four years of academic education outside of architecture and music), and Non-Academically-Educated, summarized as Non-Educated (those who have no academic education). Age can comprise a different number of categories. In option one, participants are divided into seven categories. In option two, participants are divided into three categories. And finally, age-based classes divide participants into 2 sets of 7 and 3 categories, namely Age\_7\_ and Age\_3\_. Age\_7\_ includes: Age 1: participants Under 18 years, Age 2: 18-24, Age 3: 25-34, Age 4: 35-44, Age 5: 45-54, Age 6: 55-64, and Age 7: 65 and above. Age\_3\_ includes young adults under the age of 25, middle-aged adults aged 25-45 years, old and mature adults which covers all participants over 45.

Further demographic categories can be created by combining two of the factors. The combination of the five Education categories and the two Gender categories delivers ten new demographic classes. In addition, Gender and Age combined create six classes.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



Similarly, Education and Age (the Age\_3\_ module) provide a further 15 demographic classes. However, some of these new categories are deemed invalid as they fail to contain a meaningful number of responses. Lastly, the combination of Age, Gender, and Education creates 30 different categories of participants, 17 of which are valid for correlation analysis based on sample size. Consequently, correlations between the architectural and musical attributes are analysed within 61 different participant classes.

The analysis outcomes need refinements to skim statistically valid and significant correlations. Not all the outcomes from the correlations analysis are. The p-value of Pearson's coefficient analysis demonstrates the statistical validity of the correlation; 0.05 is mostly considered as the critical point, reflecting that the probability of extracting a reliable correlation that was not discovered by chance is 95%. Thus, as the first filtering criteria, correlations where p-value > 0.05 are eliminated. The remaining correlations are then filtered a second time using Bonferroni Correction as the most stringent Multiple Testing Correction. In Bonferroni correction, the corrected p-value = p-value \* number of samples; accordingly, only correlations with a corrected p-value < 0.05 are deemed valid. As an example, if the number of participants in a test had been just 20, the correlation must have the p-value < 0.001 to be able to pass the Bonferroni correction; in this case, the probability of discovering a false correlation is 1 out of 1000, which is of course negligible. Thus, the Bonferroni Correlation Correction, as the second filter, is also applied to the outcomes to skim the most statistically valid and reliable correlations.

Although the raw data as well as every single correlation between the attributes across all demographic classes are provided in the dataset,<sup>31</sup> two summarizing strategies are deployed to provide a more holistic understanding of the discovered correlations, namely category-based and cluster-based. In the category-based outcomes, very simple calculations are used to arrive at a summary of the number of correlations across attribute categories with regard to demographic classes. While for the cluster-based mode, the K-mean clustering method, with Manhattan distance, is applied multiple times to put similar correlation trends in the same cluster and provide a general understanding of the correlations. It is worth mentioning that a large number of calculations are carried out automatically via the VBA code writing in Microsoft Excel Developer, to indicate a few of them: analysing attribute preferences, exploring correlations across large number of classes, and summarizing outcomes.

### **Analysis outcome and discussion**

Once the responses from over 1000 participants were filtered in the ways described above, this study was left with 505 valid responses, mostly from the USA but also from Iran, Turkey, Germany, Denmark, Canada, France, and the Netherlands. Similar ratings to architectural images and lack of survey completion are the two main reasons for a significant drop in the responses that can be deemed valid. The correlations between the architecture and music attribute preferences of valid responses

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

werethen analysed across the 61 demographic categories. Although, full details on the participants, the raw data, and the outcomes of the correlation analysis before and after the filtering are all presented in the dataset,<sup>32</sup>the summary of the outcomes was presented in two modes:category-based and cluster-based. The former, by shedding light on the number of correlations across different attribute categories as well as demographic classes, gives a general insight intothe significance level of the categories with regards to the correlations, to be applied in possible future studies. Otherwise, the latter mode focuses more on the correlated attributes, rather than attribute categories or demographic classes; it shows how specific attributes correlate with each other. Finally, allocating similar correlation trends in the same cluster provides a holistic understanding of the correlations between general preferences of the architectural and musical attributes taken into account.

### Category-based outcomes

As the first outcome, the number of correlations in different demographic classes shows how various demographic attributes impact the number and strength of the discovered correlations; in other words, it points towards the fact that a demographical attribute plays a more significant role in the correlations between architectural and musical attributes and, accordingly, that it is a better participant classifier. Table #1 presents the number of correlations among the demographic categories. Note that the number of valid categories in each demographic class needs careful consideration while interpreting the table. Generally speaking, a higher number of categories means a lower number of people in each demographic class and thusa more homogeneous group of people within; these two reasons strengthen the correlation and increase the r-values. For example, compared to all participants presented in the first row, when these participants are divided into 17 classes in the last row, the average r-value of the correlation rises from 0.14 and 0.23 to 0.47 and 0.58 after the first and the second filter respectively (see Table #1).

There are four different classes while considering one demographical attribute, namely Gender, Education, Age\_3\_, and Age\_7\_. As the table shows, Education and Age\_7\_ showed the highest number of correlations after the first filter, with around 400 correlations with a mean value of around 0.3; otherwise, after the second filter, Education had 61 correlations, while Age\_7\_ presented just 28 valid correlations. Education, compared to Age\_7\_ and other classes, reflected the highest number of correlations and therefore is the most influential demographic factor. It is followed by Gender, which only divides people into 2 classes; it generated the second greatest number of correlations after the second filter had been applied. Lastly, comparing the age-based classes, either Age\_3\_ or Age\_7\_, the stronger outcomes of the correlations in Age\_7\_ are negligible due to the difference between the number of classes, which are 3 and 7. Consequently, among the single-attribute classes, Education was by far the strongest demographic attribute followed by Gender and Age-based classes.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

Among the two-attribute categories, Education/Gender reflected the most robust outcomes and thus was the most influential demographic class. Although Education/Gender and Education/Age, with a similar number of valid classes, showed similar outcomes after the first filter, Education/Gender reflected a much higher number of valid correlations after the second filter; it also possessed the highest ratio of correlations passing the second filter. On the other hand, Education/Age and Gender/Age are of similar significance, since they reflect very similar outcomes, especially when we take into account the number of classes. Consequently, despite a similar level of significance between Education/Age and Gender/Age, Education/Gender was by far the most significant attribute among the two-attribute categories.

Lastly, if we take into account all the demographical attributes, Gender/Age/Education had the highest positive impact on the strength of the discovered correlations. Otherwise, this class, which potentially can divide the participants into 30 categories, requires a huge number of participants to secure the correlation explorations among them. All in all, Gender and Education as well as Education/Gender have the greatest impact on the correlations in practice.

Figure #2 shows the number of correlations that went through the second filter, in each of the attribute categories with regard to the demographic classes; it shows which musical and architectural attribute categories reflected a higher number of correlations, and thus was a better reflector of preferences in another field. Overall, the highest number of correlations were within Genre and FFM, while the PPA and 3-Factor presented lower numbers of correlations. Although PPA can be a better descriptor of musical taste, genre-based categories are more correlated and seemingly are better indicators of architectural taste. With regard to architecture, Indentation, Complexity, and Symmetry showed a higher number of correlations with musical attributes, suggesting that they have the potential to be a better reflector of musical tastes. Despite the huge impact of Stress and Pattern and lastly Rhythm in architectural forms, they provided a lower number of correlations with the musical attributes. Consequently, Genre and FFM in music as well as Indentation, Complexity, and Symmetry in architecture provided the highest number of correlations; they can better reflect the preferences in another field (see Figure #2).

The number of correlations differs across the demographic classes. For the musical attributes, dividing participants based on their Education and Gender provided a higher number of correlations in the Genre and FFM categories; while, PPA and 3-Factor showed more correlations when Education and Age<sub>7</sub> are considered. It means that Education and Gender are critical to the correlations between Genre/PPA and architectural attributes, while Education and Age are the significant factors for the exploration of the correlations related to PPA/3-Factor. Among the architectural categories, the importance of Education as well as both Education and Gender are visible among all the architectural attribute categories. All in all, although a trace of Age exists in the number of correlations related to PPA and 3-Factor, Education and Gender are the two most significant demographical attributes especially when correlation between architectural attributes and either Genre or FFM are addressed.

## Cluster-based outcomes

Various clustering criteria can form various clusters, with dissimilar hierarchical levels. For example, total number of correlations remaining after the first and second filters can result in two different tables of correlations, and accordingly, two dissimilar hierarchies of clustered attributes. Each method has its own drawbacks, which make each one unreliable in isolation. For example, concerning the number of correlations passed, the second filter, as the most reliable outcome, does not cover all the attributes. On the other hand, while correlations passing the first filter do cover all attributes, they do not follow the trends of the stronger correlations after the second filter. Therefore, after various attempts using the K-mean clustering method, three tables of outcomes are considered to acquire a meaningful multi-aspect hierarchy of clusters (Figure#3). The first table of outcomes considered in clustering the attributes with similar correlation trends was the number of very strong correlations,  $r$ -value  $> 0.5$  that have passed the second filter. The number of correlations with  $r$ -value  $> 0.25$  that passed the second filter was the second considered outcome for clustering. Lastly, since the two mentioned significant outcomes did not cover all the attributes, the number of correlations passing the first filter with  $r$ -value  $> 0.25$  was concerned with clustering the remaining attributes. Regarding their level of importance, the outcomes are presented in Figure #3 by the borderline of cells, midpoint dots in each cell either black or red, and the background colour of the cells respectively (see Figure #3).

Despite Figure #3 mainly providing the basis for the attributes clustering, each cell shows whether or not the attributes correlate with each other, before putting them in the same cluster. For instance, it shows that there are positive correlations among different demographic classes between a preference for *sad* music and a *sense of symmetry*, *partial symmetry*, *moderately indented*, and *moderately complicated*. This suggests that people who like sad music also appreciate moderate attributes in a building façade, as opposed to exaggerated architectural features. As another example, a preference for *rock* and *intense music* negatively correlates with a preference for regular patterns in architecture; that is, the more people like rock and intense music, the less likely they are to appreciate the existence of regular patterns in architectural elements. The section that follows discusses stronger correlations, though the graph sheds light on the correlated attributes.

Figure #3 provides the clustering hierarchy in the form of a dendrogram. Since not all the clusters derived from the three mentioned outcomes are univocal, the attributes reflected homogenous correlation trends and univocally presented in the same cluster in different attempts are differentiated by the filled area in the dendrogram. For example, in architecture, *Flat* building façade and *Simple* building forms almost always follow the same trend with regard to correlations with musical attributes; this is represented by the filled area in the dendrogram, though the hierarchical level can also reflect. Similarly, the attributes of a *Sense of Symmetry* and *Partial Symmetry*,

*Moderately Indented* and *Moderately Complex*, and *Highly Indented* and *Fully Complicated* are reflecting the same trends and are accordingly put in the same cluster. There is a similar story for the correlation trends among musical attributes; as an example, sophisticated music, Poetic/Deep, and Positive Depth echo similar trends in terms of correlations with architectural attributes. These attributes are also allocated to the same cluster and greyed out in the dendrogram. Please note, in the dendrogram very few attributes are placed near other interrelated attributes whereas they reflect similar qualities in music; on the other hand, when they do not present similar correlation trends, they are separated by a dotted line in the dendrogram.

Interestingly, in contrast to a larger number of clusters in musical attributes suggesting more alternatives of musical taste, architectural clusters are limited to fewer clusters. The Pattern and Stress category of architectural attributes reflected very autonomous trends which are placed in very separate clusters; while Symmetry, Indentation, Complexity, and even Rhythm have interrelated trends with regards to their correlation with musical attributes. They formed three clusters suggesting the complexity level of the architectural form and confirming the robust impact of the architectural complexity with regard to musical attribute satisfaction.

Figure #4 shows the details of the correlations, after putting together the attributes of the first layer of the dendrogram, which reflected very similar correlation trends. In the top line of each cell are three numbers; on the left is the number of strong correlations ( $r$ -value  $> 0.50$ ) that passed the first filter; in the centre is the number of moderate correlations ( $r$ -value  $> 0.25$ ) that passed the second filter; on the right is the number of strong correlations ( $r$ -value  $> 0.50$ ) that passed the second filter. Demographic classes within which the strong correlation passing the second filter is valid are presented on the bottom line of each cell, and the classes reflected more than one time are shown with an asterisk. Please note that the demographic class numbers are kept consistent in the table provided here and in the dataset.<sup>33</sup> For the sake of conciseness, the correlations are mostly discussed in just one direction, even though all correlations indicate a two-way reciprocal relationship between two attributes. Furthermore, cluster names are presented with a “~” sign showing the most ostensible attribute of the cluster (see Figure #4).

As the figure shows, ~sophisticated~ music reflected the highest number of correlations with architectural form satisfaction. ~Sophisticated~ music positively correlates with either fully symmetrical or asymmetrical, partially rhythmic, and rhythmic forms among the *architect-musicians*, and ~fully-complicated~ among both *male* and *female architect-musician*. *Female architect-musician* also shows a positive correlation between classic music and ~fully-complicated~ building forms. Thus, the more an *architect-musician* likes sophisticated music, the more likely they are to be interested in complicated, rhythmic, apparently asymmetrical, or fully symmetrical architectural forms. Similarly, *mature musicians* showed a positive correlation between the preferences of ~sophisticated~ music and ~fully-complicated~ and asymmetrical building forms; that is, the more *mature musicians* like sophisticated music, the more

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

likely they are to be interested in complicated architectural forms with an asymmetrical essence. In addition, *male musicians* reflected similar trends between preferences for jazz and ~fully-complicated~ as well as ~sense of symmetry~ in buildings. All in all, among *architect-musicians*, *male musicians*, and *mature musicians*, a preference for sophisticated music positively correlated with a higher level of appreciation for complexity, rhythm, and asymmetry in architectural forms.

To keep the report concise, the rest of the correlated attributes are reflected just by the outcome of the correlations, without discussing the correlations presented in Figure #4. The correlated attributes show that it is more likely to find a *middle-aged male architect* a fan of rhythmic building forms if he/she is interested in music with dance-ability.

The correlations between ~happy~ music and architectural attributes show that among *young males* and *male architect-musicians* it reflects higher satisfaction with symmetrical building forms, and the sense of symmetry respectively. In addition, *mature male musicians* interested in ~happy~ music would be more interested in flat, simple, moderately complicated, and rhythmic building forms. All in all, a preference for ~happy~ music echoes a preference for symmetry, simplicity, and rhythm in architectural forms, among *mature male musicians* and *male architect-musicians*.

Interestingly, the discovered correlations show that the more *female architects* like pop music, the more they would enjoy symmetrical architectural forms.

On the other hand, preference for sad music showed higher satisfaction with ~moderately complicated~ forms among *architects*, especially *female architects*, and with the sense of symmetry among *architects*, *female architects*, *middle-aged architects*, and *middle-aged female architects*. Having in mind the above mentioned, one can conclude that architects, especially female practitioners, with a preference for sad music are likely to appreciate architectural forms that are moderately complicated with a hint of symmetry.

The more people over 65 like mellow music, the more they are interested in symmetrical building forms. Similarly, a preference for ~soul~ music among female architects over 45 years is likely to accompany a preference for ~simple~ building forms.

The contrary correlation trends between ~rap~ music and architectural attributes show that, among architects who enjoy rap music, middle-aged males are less likely to be interested in complicated architectural forms, while mature females are more likely to appreciate such complexity.

Musicians who like rock music are less likely to be appreciative of complicated architecture.

Correlations between architectural patterns and musical attributes show that the more *mature male architects* like ~mellow~ music, and dislike jazz or ~intense~ music, the more likely they are to appreciate regular architectural patterns. Otherwise, a *young male* who likes ~soul~ music would be less interested in regular patterns in architectural forms. In contrast, *female architects* who rate ~soul~ music higher tend to have a higher level of satisfaction with buildings possessing a pattern in their formal structure, either regular or irregular. Lastly, among *mature female architects*, a

strong preference for ~sad~ music may coincide with a preference for irregular patterns in architectural forms.

Architectural stress reflected another set of correlations with musical attributes. *Male musicians* who like jazz would be more interested in horizontality in building features. Similarly, among *architects, females*, and especially *female architects*, higher preferences for ~sad~ music reflected higher satisfaction with building forms stressing horizontally. On the other hand, a preference for ~sophisticated~ and ~mellow~ music tends to come with a preference for verticality in building forms for young females under the age of 18. Finally, the results also show that the more *architect-musicians* are interested in ~sophisticated~ music, the more they would enjoy seeing stress, either vertical or horizontal, in building forms; men are more inclined towards a preference for verticality.

Consequently, Figure #5 summarizes the total number of correlations between the clusters of architectural and musical attributes. On the chart, grey indicates correlations that passed the first filter. Although these correlations may not be thoroughly valid statistically, they can reveal certain tendencies and, secondly, they may pass the second filter by increasing the number of participants or repeating the examinations. Thus, the greyish lines can give an insight into probable correlations. Otherwise, blue and yellow colours indicate positive and negative correlations respectively, having passed the second filter; darker colours reflect stronger correlations. For the sake of clarity, cluster names in the discussion that follows are written in capital letters (see Figure #5).

As the most significant outcome, there is a large number of positive correlations between a preference for COMPLICATED music and COMPLICATED architectural forms. In addition, preferences for COMPLICATED music coexist with a positive opinion on architectural stress, either vertical or horizontal, in building façades. Therefore, despite the existence of very few positive correlations with simple forms, those who prefer complicated music are more interested in complicated architectural forms possessing formal stress, in contrast to neutral forms with moderate complications.

An enjoyment of DANCE music can correlate with higher preferences for rhythmic and COMPLICATED architectural forms.

Those who like JOYFUL music seem to be more interested in architectural forms with a trace of symmetry or that are fully symmetrical, as well as simple and moderately complicated building forms. Thus, a strong preference for JOYFUL music is accompanied by a higher appreciation for SIMPLE and MODERATELY COMPLICATED building forms.

Those who enjoy SAD music are unlikely to appreciate symmetrical forms; rather it is more likely to find them interested in partially symmetrical buildings with a moderate level of complexity. Thus, a preference for SAD music leads to a preference for MODERATELY COMPLICATED building forms, as opposed to SIMPLE or COMPLICATED architectural forms. There is also a slight tendency towards regular patterns and horizontality.

There is a larger number of correlations between preference for MELLOW music and fully complicated architectural forms; on the other hand, there are fewer but stronger correlations between preferences for MELLOW music and both symmetrical and simple architectural forms. Also, MELLOW music fans are likely to enjoy building forms possessing vertical stress or patterns, especially regular ones. Altogether, MELLOW music followers expressed a tendency toward SIMPLE architectural forms, vertically stressed buildings, and the existence of patterns, especially with regular and simpler structures.

RAP fans show a high number of correlations after the first filter with almost all architectural attributes except symmetry; this trend shows that RAP followers rated the buildings higher in comparison with people who like other musical clusters. Otherwise, both the number of correlations passing the second filter, and the larger number of correlations after the first filter among the RAP followers confirms that it is more likely to find them interested in COMPLICATED building forms. They might be appreciative of irregular patterns and horizontal stress in architectural forms.

The negative correlation between ROCK music and Regular patterns shows that it is more likely to find ROCK followers to be less interested in the building forms having regular patterns in its formal structure.

The rest of the musical clusters do not present any strong correlations after passing the second filter; thus, the results can just provide hints towards probable preference tendencies. For example, COUNTRY and LIVELY music followers may prefer MODERATELY COMPLICATED building forms; the fans of INTENSE music may have a positive attitude towards COMPLICATED and vertically stressed building forms. However, more specific discussions require to consider the demographical classes.

## Conclusion

In summary, this study examines correlations between the preferences of 16 architectural attributes and 36 musical attributes, within 61 demographical classes. Despite the fact that every single examined correlation is presented in the dataset,<sup>34</sup>the summary of the results is presented in two different modes for discussion: the category-based mode which is focused on the number of correlations among different attribute categories and demographical classes that show which attributes are better reflectors of preferences in another field, and also which demographic attributes are critical to the correlation between architecture and music. The outcomes confirmed that, among the musical attribute categories *Genre*, *FFM*, and among the architectural attribute categories *Indentation*, *Complexity* and *Symmetry* reflect higher number of correlations, suggesting that these attribute categories are reliable reflectors of individual's taste in other fields. It also confirms that demographical classes play an important role in the discovered correlations. *Gender* and *Education* have a significant impact on the correlations found between musical and architectural preferences. In

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



particular, *Gender* and *Education* are the most influential demographic issues for the correlations related to *Genre* and *FFM*; similarly, *Education* and *Age* play the most significant role in the correlations with *PPA* and *3-Factor*. Thus, these attributes require close consideration either in further investigations or in the application of the discovered correlations.

The cluster-based outcomes primarily reveal trends in the correlations that would otherwise remain hidden through the creation of these clusters. In contrast to *Pattern* and *Stress* which tend to be more independent, other architectural attributes formed three clusters reflecting the complexity levels: *SIMPLE*, *MODERATELY COMPLEX*, and *COMPLICATED*. This replicated the significance of complexity with regard to musical attribute satisfaction, as its importance in building appreciation has been discussed.<sup>35</sup> More trends were revealed with musical attributes and thus higher numbers of clusters were identified, named *COMPLICATED*, *DANCE*, *JOYFUL*, *SAD*, *RAP*, *ROCK*, *INTENSE*, and *MELLOW*. Interestingly, the identified clusters somehow reflect the trace arousal, valence, and depth, the significance of which has already been stressed by Greenberg.<sup>36</sup>

The accumulated results show different but interesting correlations among demographic classes. *Male musicians, mature musicians, and even architect-musicians who are interested in sophisticated music* tend to prefer complexity, rhythm, and asymmetry in architecture. *A middle-aged male architect* who is a fan of rhythmic building forms would be more interested in music with danceability. *Female architects who are interested in pop music* and *males who are interested in happy and joyful music* are more likely to be attracted to fully symmetrical architectural forms. On the other hand, the more architects, especially females, enjoy sad music, the more likely they are to be interested in moderately complicated buildings with a tinge of symmetry in their formal structure, in contrast to fully symmetrical forms. *Rock-follower musicians* are less satisfied with complicated architectural forms. *People over 65* show a higher preference for symmetry if they are interested in mellow music; similarly, *female architects over 45 years* prefer simple building forms when they are interested in soul music. In addition, the more *architect-musicians* are interested in sophisticated music, the more they will like the existence of architectural stress, either vertical or horizontal. Among the soul music followers, *young males* would be less interested in regular pattern, but *female architects* tend to like patterns, both regular and irregular, in architectural forms.

Finally, the summary of the clusters-based outcomes confirms that, those who prefer *COMPLICATED* music seem to be more interested in *COMPLICATED* forms, as well as existence of *irregular patterns* in arranging architectural elements. *SAD* music followers don't tend to like symmetry in architecture, but do prefer partial symmetry, asymmetry, and *irregular patterns*. *JOYFUL* music followers seem to have a tendency towards *symmetrical, partially symmetrical, regular patterns*, and thus

<sup>35</sup> Akalin et al., "Architecture and Engineering Students' Evaluations of House Façades."

<sup>36</sup> Greenberg et al., "The Song Is You."

MODERATELY COMPLICATED architectural forms. There is a tendency in *RAP* followers towards COMPLICATED and MODERATELY COMPLICATED building forms; they also reflect a preference for either *regular* or *irregular patterns* that arise in a sense of repetition in the formal structure. Among the *MELLOW* music followers, in general, it is more likely to find those interested in *SIMPLE* architectural forms, as well as the existence of patterns in architectural forms, especially *regular patterns*.

Overall, the very summary of these correlations reflects certain identical qualities in audible musical taste and visual architectural appraisals; for instance, the preference correlations between complicated music and complicated architecture, rap and the existence of pattern in architecture, and mellow music and simple architectural forms. In addition, the tendency of *SAD* music followers toward asymmetry and *JOYFUL* music followers towards *symmetry* suggests that there might be more in-depth interrelations between the feeling arousal of symmetrical buildings and happiness. These hints/ notion remain to be dealt with in future studies.

Every single discovered correlation has the potential to somehow reflect preferences toward particular architectural attributes by an individual with a certain musical taste. Thus, by considering musical preferences of a client or a building user, architects can provide insight into the preferred architectural attributes or architectural tastes in general. There may still be a long way to go before such insights are widely utilized in the building design process; however, this paper confirms the existence of numerous correlations between architectural and musical attributes, and thereby provides significant potential for applying the resulting insights into future building designs.

## Acknowledgments

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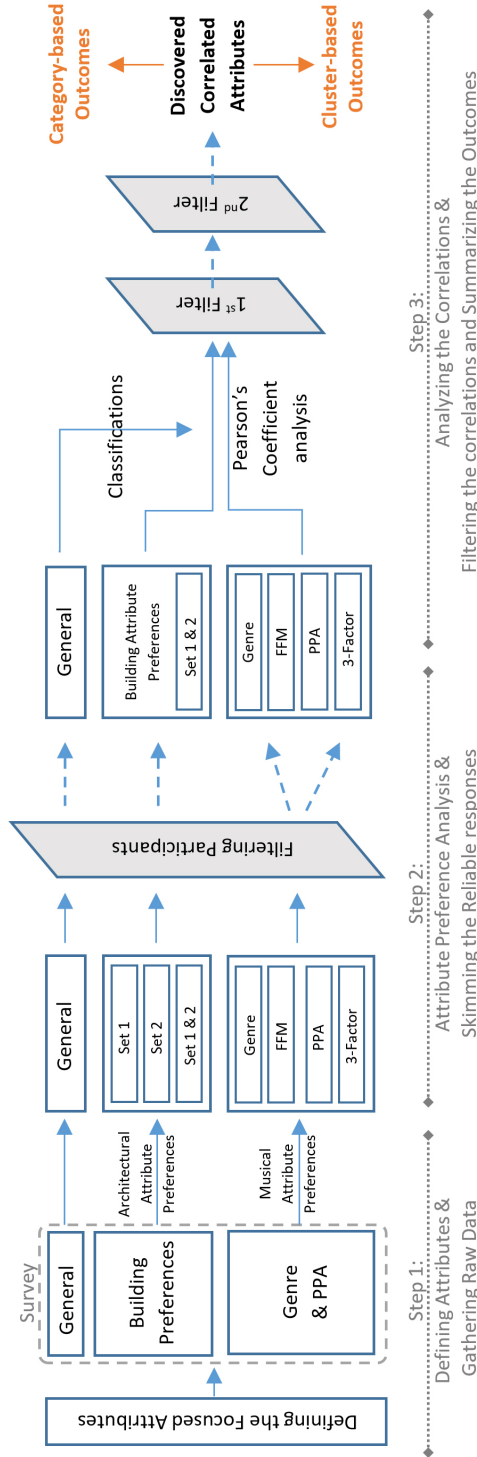


Figure 1: Diagram of the methodology

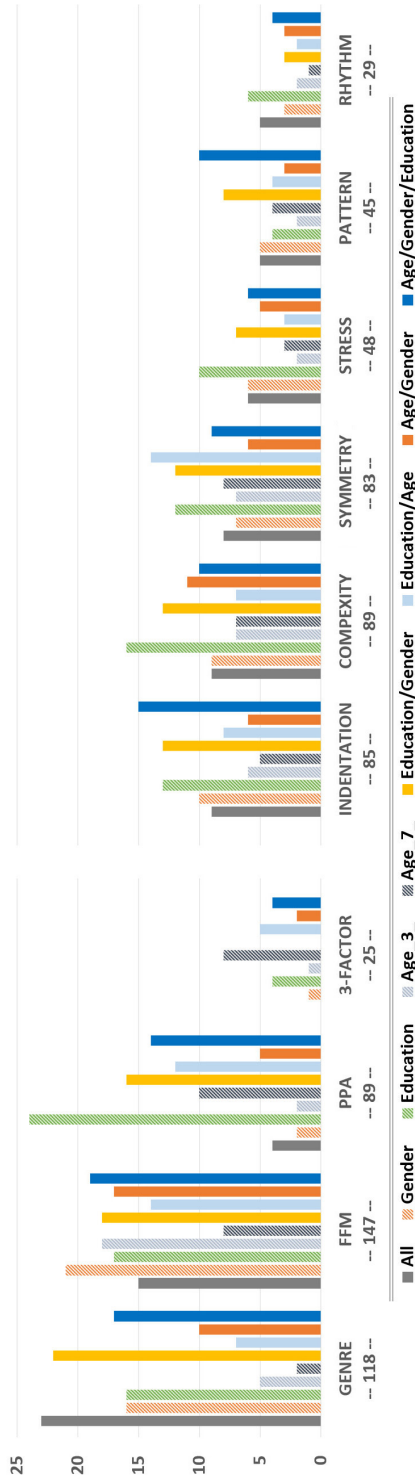


Figure 2: Number of Correlations in each Architectural and Musical Attribute Category

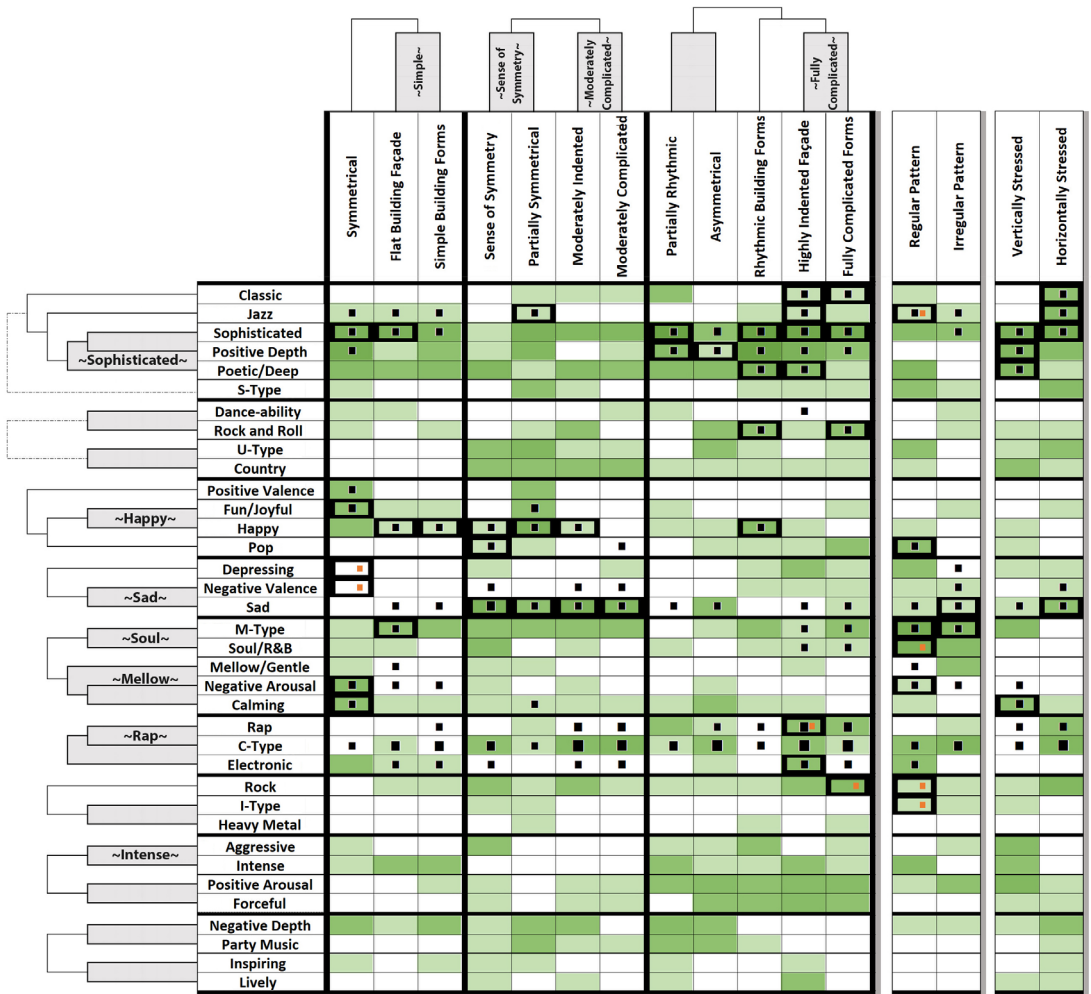


Figure 3: Clustering of attributes base

(Borderline of the cells:  $r$ -value  $> 0.5$  passed the second filter; midpoint dots:  $r$ -value  $> 0.5$  passed the second filter, black dot for the positive correlations, and red dot for the negative correlations; background colour:  $r$ -value  $> 0.25$  passed the first filter, higher the number of correlations reflected by the darker colours)

	Symmetrical	Flat Building Façade Simple Building Forms	Sense of Symmetry Partially Symmetrical	Moderately Indented Moderately Complicated	Partially Rhythmic Asymmetrical	Rhythmic	Highly Indented Façade Fully Complicated Forms	Regular Pattern	Irregular Pattern	Vertically Stressed	Horizontally Stressed
Classic			1	2	2		2 2 2 24*	1			2 1 1 53
Jazz	1 1	2 2	1 1 1 21			1	2 1 1 21	1 2 1 47	1 1		3 1 1 21
Sophisticated_Positive Depth Poetic/Deep	14 3 1 6	17 4 1 57	16	14	20 6 3 6, 32, 57	23 6 3 6, 23, 50	24 9 6 6*, 23, 24, 32*	7	2 1	13 5 3 6, 23, 57	10 2 1 6
Dancability_Rock and Roll	2	2	1	3	3	2 1 1 45	3 2 1 45		2	1	1
Positive Valence	2 1		2								
Fun/Joyful_Happy	4 3 2 39, 56	4 2 2 50*	8 5 2 33, 50	1 1 1 50	3	3 1 1 50	2	1	1	1	1
POP			2 1 1 20	1	1	1	3	2 1 1 20			
Depressing	3		1	1		1	3	2		1	1
Negative Valence_SAD	1	3	7 9 5 4, 20*, 29, 46	9 6 4 4*, 20*	2 3	1	3 2	2 1	2 2 1 48	1 1	3 3 2 4, 20
M-Type_Soul/R&B	2	5 1 1 48	7	5	2	3	5 9	11 4 4 20, 30, 48	7 2 2 20, 48	3	
Mellow/Gentle Negative Arousal_Calming	6 5 2 18*	2 3	5 1	3	4	1	2	2 2 1 47	2 1	2 5 1 57	1
Rap_C-Type_Electronic	2 2	3 17	4 9	7 35	7 18	5	3 43 3 30, 48	4 4	5 6	6	6 12
Rock		2	3	3	2	1	1 1 1 15	1 1 1 47	1	1	4
I-Type_Heavy Metal			3			1	1	1 1 1 47	1	1	
U-Type_Country			10	6	4	2	3	3		3	3
Agresive_Intense	2	4	2		5	3	4	3	1	5	
Positive Arousal_Forceful		1	2	4	7	4	11	1	2	5	2
Negative Depth_Party Music	2	3	6	4	9	1		1	1	1	3
Inspiring_Lively	1	1	3	1	2		3			1	2
S-Type	1		2	1		1	2	2	1		3

Figure 4: Correlation Details between Clustered Attributes

(Demographic class number: 4: Architects, 5: Musicians, 6: Architect-Musician, 18: People over 65yrs, 20: Female Architects, 21: Male Musicians, 23: Male Architect-Musician, 24: Female Architect-Musician, 29: Middle Aged Architects, 30: Mature Architect, 32: Mature Musicians, 33: Male Architect-Musician, 39: Young Male, 45: Middle Aged Male Architects, 46: Middle Aged Female Architects, 47: Mature Male Architects, 48: Mature Female Architects, 50: Mature Male Musicians, 53: Middle Aged Female Architect-Musician, 56: Non-Educated Young Male, 57: Non-Educated Young Female)

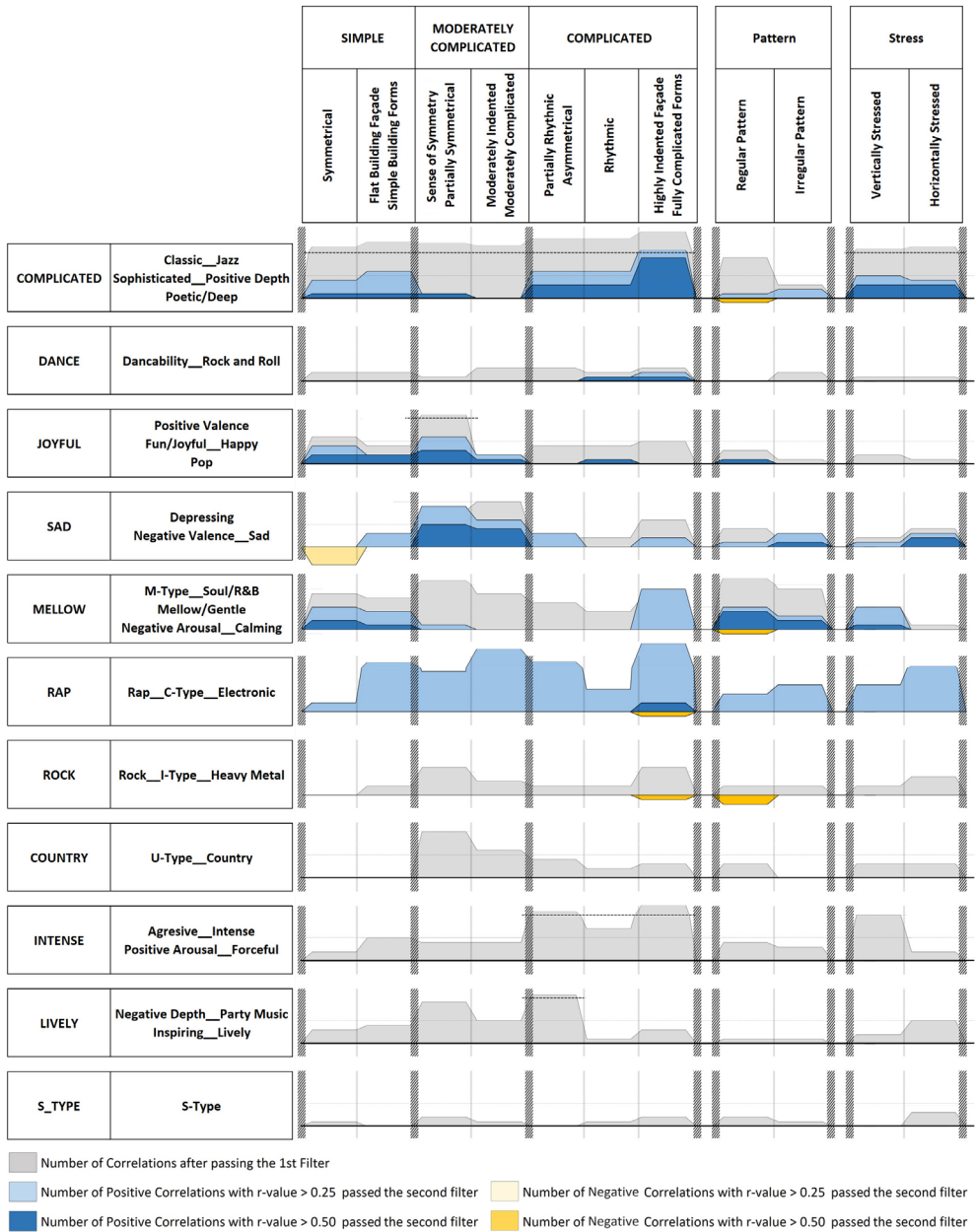


Figure 5: Attribute Cluster Correlations between Architecture and Music

	Number of Categories Possible:		1 <sup>st</sup> Filter: p-value < 0.05					2 <sup>nd</sup> Filter: p-value * Sample Quantity < 0.05					Ratio of the Correlations passed the second filter
	Valid		Number of Correlations	Mean	SD	Max r-value	Min r-value	Number of Correlations	Mean	SD	Max r-value	Min r-value	
All	1	1	201	0.141	0.053	0.335	-0.154	42	0.231	0.040	0.335	0.175	21%
Gender	2	2	307	0.167	0.044	0.370	-0.198	40	0.253	0.023	0.370	0.207	13%
Education	5	5	400	0.291	0.059	0.803	-0.628	61	0.383	0.039	0.803	-0.628	15%
Age_3_	3	3	304	0.216	0.043	0.404	-0.347	26	0.283	0.016	0.404	0.237	9%
Age_7_	7	7	416	0.309	0.051	0.709	-0.678	28	0.433	0.026	0.579	0.310	7%
Education/Gender	10	10	525	0.367	0.047	0.971	-0.847	56	0.443	0.022	0.971	0.240	11%
Education/Age	15	10	556	0.371	0.047	0.917	-0.769	38	0.451	0.019	0.917	-0.451	7%
Gender/Age	6	6	428	0.256	0.050	0.464	-0.446	34	0.344	0.022	0.464	-0.446	8%
Gender/Age/Education	30	17	722	0.471	0.047	0.978	-0.258	54	0.582	0.019	0.978	-0.898	7%

Table 1: Discovered Correlation across Demographic Categories



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**ARTIST PORTFOLIO**

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## Exhibition review

### **The Invisible Burden. An Artistic Dialogue on Transgenerational Trauma**

(The Contemporary Art Gallery Subotica, June 8 – July 20, 2024)

Transgenerational trauma is not a new phenomenon. The recognition, perception, and understanding of this phenomenon, however, date back to the relatively recent past: the late 1960s in Canada. During that period of time, there was a noticeable increase in requests for psychological assistance from relatively young individuals whose parents had survived the Holocaust. Although these individuals did not directly experience the trauma themselves, its effects were evident in their lives, becoming internalized and passed on to the next generation. Since then, psychology and related fields have been exploring patterns in the transmission of transgenerational trauma, viewing it as the formation of inner reality and its expression across multiple generations, stemming from the original trauma experienced by an ancestor or close relative. Trapped in the cycle of transgenerational trauma, entire social groups continuously reenact the past, which hinders the present from being a secure space. Burdened by inherited trauma, individuals are deprived of the opportunity to develop their authentic voices and provide their perspectives on various aspects of the world and the society they are part of.

The exhibition *The Invisible Burden. An Artistic Dialogue on Transgenerational Trauma* is a project by three artists: Goran Dragaš, Zorica Milisavljević, and Selman Trtovac. Their shared interest and multimedia approaches have enabled them to explore this significant topic from two key perspectives: social and personal. Trauma can often be a burden for a broader social group, yet families and individuals within them are not immune to its effects. However, the recognition of the transgenerational nature of trauma unites these artistic expressions, positioning them as unique voices on the contemporary art scene in Serbia. They view their art as a platform for dialogue on a topic that has long weighed on society as a whole and numerous individuals within it.

Although composed of works by three artists, the exhibition is perceived as a unified whole. Behind its creation were several months of intensive reflection and communication among the artists. The rhythm of presenting works and themes in the challenging space of the art nouveau Reichl Palace, home to the Contemporary Art Gallery Subotica, was managed by identifying key connections in the fundamental concepts of the artists' works. At the outset, in the central hall, the audience is

introduced to various media treatments of the topic: from Goran Dragaš's paintings, and Zorica Milisavljević's sound installation, to Selman Trtovac's spatial installations. Progressing through the exhibition, each artist is highlighted individually, exploring the specifics of their responses to profound questions about transgenerational trauma.

The work *Spiral of Fear* by Selman Trtovac, isolated in a circular space and realized as a floor installation, explores ways to break free from the cycle of personal and social multigenerational traumas. The artist utilizes lead in this piece, referencing the traditional magical-ritual practice of *salivanje strave*<sup>1</sup> that was common in the Balkans centuries ago. Numerous lead shapes come together to form a spiral representing shared fears and traumas, creating a powerful vortex with an almost infinite pull. This artwork establishes the foundational theme of the exhibition as it prompts viewers to reflect on their perspectives regarding the potential consequences of transgenerational trauma.

Two other works in the same room – a sound installation titled *One Day You Will Remember My Words. The Field of Trauma* by Zorica Milisavljević and Goran Dragaš's painting installation *The Destruction of Time* – concretize the theme through evoking feelings of empathy. Zorica Milisavljević's work consists of a series of spoken sentences that have left a trace of trauma in those they are directed towards. These personal, painful, and numerous sentences sound so familiar that they trigger memories of encounters where words were casually spoken, leaving a deep imprint on the subconscious. The flurry of sentences can be heard in two other locations within the exhibition, serving as a constant reminder to the audience to be attentive and encouraging them to empathize – both with others and with themselves. An installation comprising small-format paintings by Goran Dragaš, like much of the artist's work, focuses on the media's representation of reality. Dragaš selects images of trauma, such as the destruction of home, war, and refugee experiences. Particularly in an environment where such images have resurfaced and been lived through multiple times over the past few decades, the decision to present and group the theme around the transgenerational trauma of home loss elicits the same effect of seeking empathy.

These few examples, we believe, illustrate quite well the approach to the theme that extends throughout the entire exhibition. The goal of the exhibition was not only to showcase the transgenerational transmission of trauma through visual art but also to encourage audiences to actively participate in revealing the layers of social trauma and engage in self-reflection to raise personal awareness. Whether the viewer focuses on the electrifying drawings by Selman Trtovac, attempting to unravel the knot of transmitting trauma within the intimate world, or shifts attention to Zorica Milisavljević's installation composed of photographs and overheard sentences in the streets, which delves into deep realms of sensitivity within each of us, or pauses before the paintings of Goran Dragaš that require a second, longer look, they will perceive our world as a place intertwined with multi-generational traumatic experiences. The collection of works that delve into trauma so profoundly in one place creates an

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<sup>1</sup> Ritual practiced to remove fear, insomnia, depression, and anxiety.

environment that encourages immersion in its most prominent characteristic – preventing the lives of those who carry trauma to be fully immersed in the present. In this regard, the exhibition *Invisible Burden. An Artistic Dialogue on Transgenerational Trauma* achieves its goal of sensitizing individuals and society to issues that could render both the individual and society in a state of lifelessness if left unresolved. The awareness advocated by Goran Dragaš, Zorica Milisavljević, and Selman Trtovac is an important initial step towards the goal of resolving and reclaiming life for every new generation.



*The Invisible Burden. An Artistic Dialogue on Transgenerational Trauma*, installation view (pieces by Goran Dragaš); photo: Edvard Molnar; photo copyright: The Contemporary Art Gallery Subotica



Selman Trtovac, *Drawings*; photo: Edvard Molnar;  
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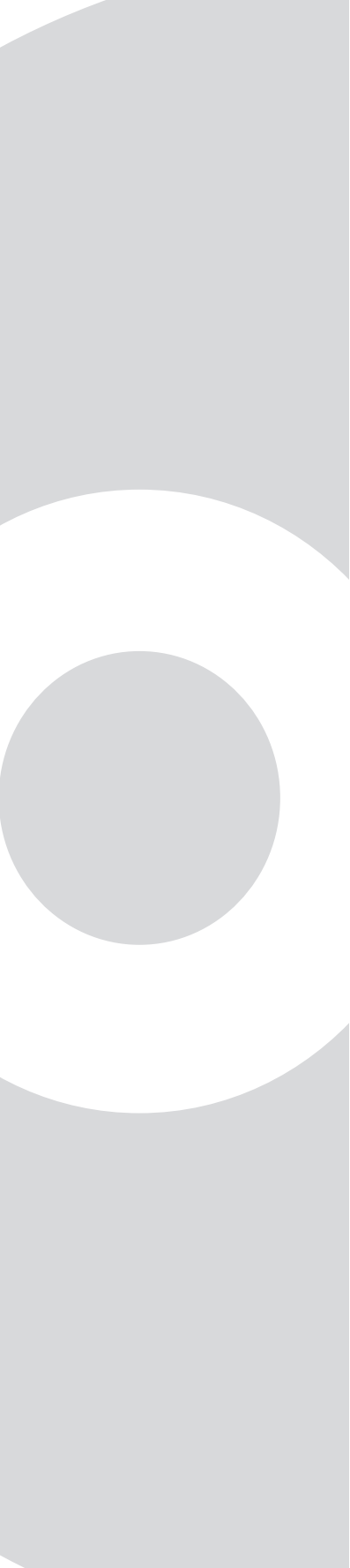
Zorica Milisavljević, *Seen*, 2015–2024, photos, drawings, writings;  
photo: Edvard Molnar; photo copyright: The Contemporary Art Gallery Subotica







**BOOK REVIEW**



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**Aleš Erjavec, *Art, Philosophy, and Ideology. Writings on Aesthetics and Visual Culture from the Avant-garde to Postsocialism*, edited by Tyrus Miller. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2024. ISBN 978-90-04-69750-8 (hardback), ISBN 978-90-04-69751-5 (e-book)**

Respectable American aesthetician and avant-garde theorist Tyrus Miller has edited a critical edition of theoretical studies by the Ljubljana-based aesthetician Dr. Aleš Erjavec. These studies were written between 1989 and 2018. The selection of studies has been published under the title *Art, Philosophy, and Ideology: Writings on Aesthetics and Visual Culture from the Avantgarde to Postsocialism* in the series *Trans-cultural Aesthetics* by Brill and IAA (International Association for Aesthetics).

Aleš Erjavec's philosophical and aesthetic work began in Slovenia in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In his doctoral dissertation on ideologies of modernism, he presented research on the relationship between national and international modernism with artistic avant-gardes and the theoretical platforms of Marxism. In a broader sense, he understood the concept of ideology as the determining effect of institutions, the imaginary, representations, and relationships among people in society. Therefore, his fundamental thesis was that the condition of ideology is society. For Erjavec, modernism was a particular form of sociality with a complex web of singular cases linked to the relationship between the materiality of human social life and the autonomous idealizations of art. He presented modernism as a political, cultural, artistic, and aesthetic field defined by antagonisms and contradictions of individual and collective life.

From a critical materialist perspective, Erjavec has positioned the relationship between modernism and the avant-garde as a dialectical turn concerning the autonomy of art, the functional use of art and culture, and social struggles. He emphasized the character of a modernist artistic creation, the character of avant-garde destruction of artistic creation, and finally, the character of social production, which directly introduces modernism and the avant-garde into the field of tension between social production, exchange, artistic or cultural consumption, i.e., between politics and economics versus aesthetics and art. Erjavec sees the essence of aesthetic, artistic, and political projects in modernism and the avant-garde. Therefore, important projects for him include Italian Futurism and Soviet Constructivism.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Aleš Erjavec's research into aesthetics gained prominence on the international stage. He was very active on a global scale during the first and early second decades of the 21st century. Erjavec was one of the founders and the president of the Slovenian Society for Aesthetics (1984-1999 and from 2005 to 2010). Shortly before the International Congress of Aesthetics in 1998 held in Ljubljana, he was elected president of the International Association for Aesthetics (IAA). He worked as a scientific advisor at the Philosophical Institute within the Scientific Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences (FI ZRC SAZU). He was appointed a full professor of aesthetics at the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana. He taught philosophy and theory of visual culture at the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Primorska in Koper.

Erjavec's philosophical and aesthetic work shows a consistent and gradual development from Marxism characteristic of the late self-managing reformist Slovenia, through neo-Marxism as the left-wing of late-socialist postmodernism, to critical studies of postsocialism and studies of contemporary global visual culture.

In his early writings, Erjavec recognized the importance of *aesthetics* as a critical philosophy and theory in contemporary humanistic studies. This marked a distinctive departure from aesthetics as the philosophy of normative or autonomous beauty and autonomous art towards aesthetics as a critical, culturally oriented, and politically developed theory of art, human sensibility, and the social structuring of the sensory, emotional, visible, and ultimately, knowable realms. Following a post-Adornian critical thought direction, Erjavec opted for the concept of *aesthetic theory* over *aesthetics as a philosophical speculation*, thereby defining his scholarly research work. His aesthetic theory has been shaped and developed as a critical theory of the politics of aesthetics and the aesthetics of politics in the modern, postmodern, and contemporary global world. Regarding the aesthetic-philosophical and political tradition that Erjavec's work belongs to, notable authors include Schiller, Hegel, Marx, Adorno, Benjamin, Lukács, Morawski, Welsch, Paetzold, Kreft, Althusser, Lyotard, and currently, Rancière.

The early stages of Erjavec's research in aesthetics and philosophy led him from studying French Marxism, for example, in the context of Lucien Goldmann, Roger Garaudy, Louis Althusser, Henri Lefebvre, Claude Lefort, to the engaged phenomenology of Michel Dufrenne. In the realm of *postmodern Marxism*, he was close to the philosophy of Jean-François Lyotard, Fredric Jameson, Martin Jay, and he also maintained friendly relations with Heinz Paetzold, Lev Kreft, and Anthony J. Cascardi. Transitioning from postmodern Marxism or post-Marxism, he moved into the realm of critical discourse on the *postsocialist condition*, aligning himself with postsocialist theories of Eastern European philosophers, aestheticians, and art theorists such as Slavoj Žižek, Marina Gržinić, Mihail Epštajn, Boris Groys, Peter Gyorgy, and also drawing closer to the Third World theorists such as Gerardo Mosquera, Gao Minglu, Gao Jianping, Patrick Flores, or Jale Erzen.

For Erjavec, the concept of Marxist aesthetics in the postmodern era is based on definitions and representations of subject, society, and art that construct existential, representative, or formal-media homologies (or resistances to homologies) within social and narrower cultural practices. These homologies or resistances to homologies can be interpreted as contextual functions – the artwork as a function of context. The idea of function for him cannot be reduced to the logic of reflection (Lukács) or the utility of representation (poetics of socialist realism), but to the concept of ideology in a post-Althusserian sense, which means material practices in society and culture that not only enable but also constitute a certain type of artistic expression (representation, expression, and behavior). The path to this position was paved by the identification of specific epistemological marginal (late, but not marginal) formations of Marxist aesthetics (situationism, Lefebvre, Goldman, and Althusser) towards that critical juncture after which nothing remained the same: that moment of the Slovenian alternative – the *Neue Slowenische Kunst* movement in the 1980s.

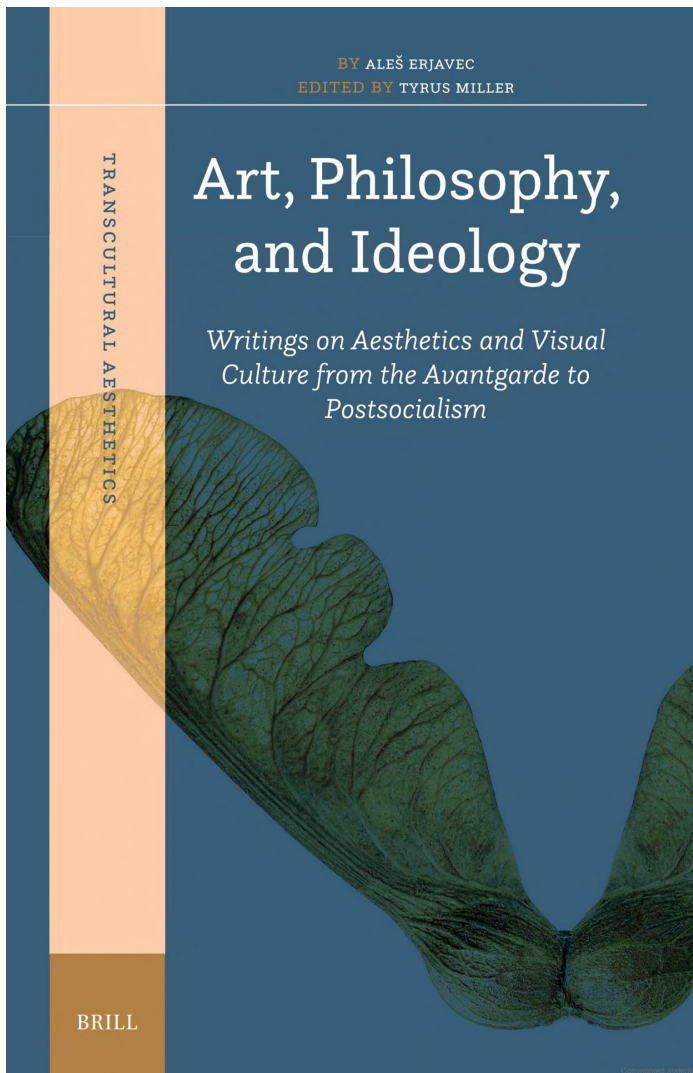
Erjavec's elaboration of Jameson's critical theory, philosophy, and aesthetics enabled the understanding of aesthetic debate as a critical and non-systematic theory of culture and its functional mechanisms in constituting plural fields of social functions and politicizing aesthetic autonomies. Erjavec's interest in postmodernity as a new paradigm of the era in the 1980s led to a reevaluation of the concept of aesthetics as a systemic philosophical discipline. He opened a hybrid field of theoretical confrontations of philosophical aesthetics with cultural studies, especially visual culture, media, and various arts (painting, photography, theater, architecture).

A significant role was played by the revision of ideas from Lyotard and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In terms of philosophy as a critical theory of culture, Erjavec introduced an interpretation model for perception, i.e., the philosophy of perception of Merleau-Ponty, which had not been sufficiently explored in postmodern theory. By referencing Merleau-Ponty's work and Lyotard's writings, he engaged in one of the characteristic knots of confrontation between phenomenological philosophy, structuralism, postmodern theories, and theories of visual culture. This reframed the formerly post-structuralist and postmodern discourse significantly tied to the *linguistic turn* towards a *visual, optical, or pictorial turn*.

Erjavec's key innovation in the field of aesthetics is the hybridization of philosophical discourse that shifts from the context of 'pure' or 'autonomous' philosophical aesthetics to the areas of philosophical theory. He naturalized the aesthetic discourse through cultural studies, media philosophy, art history, and theory. With regards to methodology, his approach to aesthetics is predominantly philosophical-theoretical, with his objects of study being brought into various philosophical-theoretical debates. Moreover, he transitioned from a Marxist approach of reading *social necessity* to discussions of hybrid and heterogeneous differences, arbitrariness, and plurality within cultural and artistic production fields in contemporary society. The contemporary world is not a world of obvious *social necessities* but of complex and indirect interconnected practices of production, exchange, and consumption of visual appearances and

meanings in specific political conditions of individual and collective subjectivization. He demonstrates how subjectivization unfolds in the realm of changing ideologies, meaning social realities.

The indicated theoretical shift is complex, as it does not dismiss the interpretive potential of society-oriented theory. Instead, it shifts theoretical attention from the concept of social necessity to ideas of differences, arbitrariness, and motivation of material practices within a plural and hybrid culture. This shift is also highlighted by Erjavec's interest in left-wing American aesthetic theory (Jameson, Jay, Cascardi) and his detailed readings on otherness in Merleau-Ponty's promises of understanding the perceptual body and problematizing the boundaries of Marxism with Lyotard's discussions of discourse and figure.



Erjavec's approach is transitional in the intentional problematization of the stages of postsocialism as a specific postmodern formulation of context in relation to the contexts of late capitalism postmodernity and the Third World. Therefore, it can be said that Erjavec has executed three significant steps in the transfiguration of aesthetics:

1. Transition from philosophical aesthetics to contemporary critical philosophy of culture,
2. Development of critical philosophy of culture as a theory of postsocialism and postsocialist artistic practices, and
3. Evolution of critical theory of visual culture as a philosophy of culture and art.

In other words, the valuable contribution of Erjavec's studies lies in confronting the fetishism of cultural memory with the projective and emancipatory potentiality of methodology derived and reflected from the analysis of cultural and political traces of avant-gardes, neo-avant-gardes, postmodernism, and postsocialist art.

Professor Tyrus Miller has composed a collection of twenty-five studies by Aleš Erjavec and divided it into three parts: Part 1: Visual Aesthetics in Postsocialism, Postmodernism, and Contemporary Art, Part 2: Aesthetic Revolution and Avant-Gardes in East, Central, and Western Europe, and Part 3: Spatial Turns: Central/East European Aesthetics in National, International, and Global Contexts. This marks the most crucial areas and methods of his theoretical and research work in the field of contemporary aesthetics. Some of his most significant texts are presented there, such as "Art, Cognition, Knowledge, and Diagnostics" (1993), "Aesthetics: Philosophy of Art or Philosophy of Culture?" (2001), "Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition" (2003), "Art and: A Toothless Tiger, a Cuddly Panda, or a Snow Leopard?" (2009), "Aesthetics and the Aesthetic Today: After Adorno" (2010), "Eastern Europe, Art, and the Politics of Representation" (2014), "Revolutions and the Avant-Gardes" (2016), "The Avant-Gardes, Utopias, and Clothes" (2017).







# **BIOGRAPHIES**



## ART+MEDIA

**Yuksel Demir**

**Boško Drobňjak**

**Laura Emmery**

**Pablo Gobira**

**Daniel Grůň**

**Andeja Kulunčić**

**Ivana Miladinović Prica**

**Luiz Oliveira**

**Vladimir Popov**

**Emanuelle Silva**

**Maja Stanković**

**Miško Šuvaković**

**Seyed Farhad Tayyebi**

**Nela Tonković**

**Jovana Tošić**

**Yuksel Demir** studied architecture at Istanbul Technical University, Faculty of Architecture (1983-1987), obtained his MA (1990) and PhD (2000) degrees from the ITU Institute of Science & Technology Architectural Design Program. Yuksel practiced architecture (1987–1989), worked as a teaching assistant (1989–2002), Assistant Prof (2002–2012), Associate Prof, and Professor in ITU Department of Architecture; he also served as the head of the department of Fine Arts in ITU (2007–2016), and currently is the head of the Department of Architecture at ITU. He took part in the development process of the interdisciplinary first year basic design studio at the ITU >Department of Architecture (2000–2004). Yuksel worked in Politecnico Di Milano DIAP (now DASTU) as a guest professor (2010–2015) and was a visiting professor at Anadolu University, Department of Architecture (2009–2013), and Auburn University CADC (2016 Fall and 2017 Fall).

**Boško Drobnjak** (b. 1988, Belgrade) is a teaching assistant at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Architecture. He holds a PhD degree in Architecture. Drobnjak's research focuses on the interdisciplinary relations of art theory, aesthetics, politics, experimental, and avant-garde architectural practices. He published several articles in both Serbian and English. Drobnjak was a guest co-editor on one issue of the Finnish journal (Aalto University) for aesthetics and popular culture *Popular Inquiry* (2020), co-editor of the publication *Proceedings of the 21<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Aesthetics, Possible Worlds of Contemporary Aesthetics, Aesthetics Between History, Geography and Media* (2019), and co-editor of the publication *100 Years of the Bauhaus – Contextualizations and Re-Contextualizations of the Bauhaus in the Yugoslav Art Space* (2019). Drobnjak is a member of the International Association for Aesthetics (IAA), European Architectural History Network (EAHN), The European Society for Aesthetics (ESA), International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and he is secretary of the Serbian Society for Aesthetics of Architecture and Visual Arts (DEAVUS).

**Laura Emmery** is Associate Professor of Music Theory at the Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia (USA). She is the author of *Elliott Carter's String Quartet No. 1: Myths, Narratives, and Cold War Cultural Diplomacy* (Cambridge University Press, 2024), *The Origins of Yugoslav Musical Minimalism* (UK Parobrod, 2024), *Elliott Carter Speaks: Unpublished Lectures* (University of Illinois Press, 2022) and *Compositional Process in Elliott Carter's String Quartets: A Study in Sketches* (Routledge, 2020). Her current research examines political, social, and cultural events that led to the momentous avant-garde and experimental music scene in Yugoslavia, from 1945 until 1991 – ending with the year when all artistic activities came to a sudden halt with the start of the Yugoslav civil wars. Her research follows the emergence of a Yugoslav post Second World War cultural program that turned the country into a magnet for experimental musicians and artists from the Western and Eastern Blocs, which was then followed by a sudden and violent dissolution of that program with the collapse of the political state.

Prof. Dr. **Pablo Gobira** is a professor at Guignard School of Fine Arts at the University of the State of Minas Gerais (UEMG), at the Postgraduate Program in Arts at UEMG (PPGArtes/UEMG), the Postgraduate Program in Built Environment and Sustainable Heritage at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (PPG-ACPS/UFGM) and the Postgraduate Program of Knowledge Management & Organization (PPG-GOC/UFGM).

**Daniel Grúň** (1977) is an art historian and curator with a specialization in the theory and history of modern and contemporary art. He is senior research fellow at the Institute of Art History, Art Research Centre of Slovak Academy of Sciences and lectures at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. He completed his studies in the history of art and culture at the University of Trnava in Trnava (2003), defended his doctorate at the Department of Theory and History of Art at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava (2008) and in 2017 was habilitated as an associate professor at the University of Applied Arts in Prague (UMPRUM). He has received several international scholarships, including a Fulbright Scholarship at the City University of New York (2012–2013) and International Visegrad Scholarships (2006 and 2007) at Adam Mickiewicz University and Charles University. In addition, he is in charge of the Július Koller Society and co-curated the artist's first international retrospective, *Július Koller One Man Anti Show*, MUMOK, Vienna (2015–2016). He is the recipient of several awards: the White Cube, the Slovak Council of Galleries Award for Contribution to Gallery Activities (2018), the Art Magazine Kuratorenpreis "Ausstellung des Jahres 2016" (2017) and the Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory (2010). He is the editor and co-editor of several bilingual books, published in Slovakia as well as internationally: *Healing Through Sculpture Juraj Gavula and His Work for Architecture* (Bratislava: Čierne diery, The Július Koller Society, 2022); *White Space in White Space, 1973–1982. Stano Filko, Miloš Laky, Ján Zavarský* (Vienna: Schlebrügge.Editor, 2021); *Subjective Histories. Self-historicisation as Artistic Practice in Central-East Europe* (Bratislava: Veda, 2020); *Tomáš Štrauss. Beyond the Great Divide: Essays on European Avant-gardes from East to West* (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2020), *AMA. Lubomír Ďurček, Květoslava Fulierová, Július Koller and Amateur Artists* (Vienna: Schlebrügge. Editor, 2020); *Július Koller One Man Anti Show* (Vienna/Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König – Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, 2016); *Július Koller Galéria Ganku* (Vienna, Schlebrügge.Editor, 2014) and is author of the book *Archeology of Art Criticism. Slovak Art of the 1960s and its Interpretations* (Bratislava: Slovart – Vysoká škola výtvarných umení v Bratislave, 2009).

Visual artist Prof. Dr. Art. **Andreja Kulunčić** (b. 1968) graduated in sculpture at the Faculty of Applied Arts and Design in Belgrade and continued her studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest at the Department of Sculpture. She has been teaching at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, Department of New Media since 2009. She has held 36 solo exhibitions, participated in over 130 group exhibitions and

festivals, is a participant in 11 artist residency programs and is the winner of five art awards. Her work has been presented at significant international exhibitions, including: Documenta11 (Kassel), Manifesta4 (Frankfurt), 8th Istanbul Biennial (Istanbul), Liverpool Biennial04 (Liverpool), 10th Indian Triennial (New Delhi). At group exhibitions in museums: Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), PS1 (New York), Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), MUAC (Mexico City), Palais de Tokyo (Paris). At solo exhibitions: MUAC (Mexico City), MMSU (Rijeka), Salon of the MSU (Belgrade), Museo MADRE (Naples) and others.

**Ivana Miladinović Prica** is Assistant Professor of Musicology at the School of Music of the University of Arts in Belgrade (Serbia). Her research in contemporary music focuses on neo-avant-garde and experimental practices in American, European, and Serbian music. She is the author of *The Origins of Yugoslav Musical Minimalism* (UK Parobrod, 2024), *Od buke do tišine: poetika ranog stvaralaštva Džona Kejdža* [From Noise to Silence: The Poetics of John Cage's Early Work] (Faculty of Music in Belgrade, 2011). She has also published numerous articles in journals such as *Contemporary Music Review*, *New Sound*, *Tacet*, and *Glissando*. Her current research explores the institutionalization and dissemination of musical experimentalism in Yugoslavia, specifically within the context of the Cold War cultural diplomacy, drawing parallels between Yugoslav, European, and American experimental and minimalist music.

**Luiz Oliveira** is master in arts by PPGArtes/UEMG, currently doing her PhD studies at PPG-ACPS/UFMG.

**Vladimir Popov** (b.1982) was born in Zrenjanin, Serbia. He graduated from the Technical Faculty Mihajlo Pupin in Zrenjanin with an MSc in Information Technologies. He continued his education at the Faculty of Media and Communications in Belgrade, where he is currently a PhD student at the program of Transdisciplinary Studies of Contemporary Art and Media. During his professional artist career, he worked in the field of commercial illustration and comic book sequential storytelling for various US and European publishers such as Dark Horse, Vault Comics, Top Cow, Image Comics, IDW Publishing, Boom Studios, Dynamite Entertainment, Stela, DoubleTake, Z2 Comics, Scout Comics, Wired Magazine, Soleil, Glenat, La Feltrinelli, and others on high-profile licensed titles such as Clive Barker's Hellraiser & Next Testament, Robocop, Steed and Mrs. Peel, Noir, Pathfinder, Cartoon Network's Adventure Time & Amazing World of Gumball, Maze Runner and other creator-owned titles, multimedia projects, crypto art, etc. He published "Contemporary Aesthetics of NFTs: How and Why Are They Art?" paper in *AM Journal of Art and Media Studie* No. 29 in 2022. His second paper "The Joker: Transmedial Literacy of the Comic Book Character" for *Transmedia Applications in Literacy Fields* anthology will be published in 2024 by IGI Global publishing house.

**Emanuelle Silva** is master in arts by PPGArtes/UEMG, currently doing her PhD studies at PPG-ACPS/UFMG.

**Maja Stanković** is a Professor at the Faculty of Media and Communications, Singidunum University, at the Department of Digital Arts; decade of teaching experience and two decades of curatorial experience; PhD in Contemporary Art History; experienced lecturer and quality assurance expert in art/media (higher) education; active in cultural and higher education policymaking, assessment and quality assurance, member of relevant expert boards, researcher and pedagogical mentor; the author of numerous texts published in scientific journals, as well as solo and group exhibition catalogues and co-authored the collection of papers on contemporary art *Images/Singular/Global* (2013) and the collection on video art *Image/Movement/Transformation* (2013). Field of interest: contemporary art, theory and digital humanities. Published books: *Liquid Context: Contextual Practices in Contemporary Art* (2015) and *Networked Image* (2022).

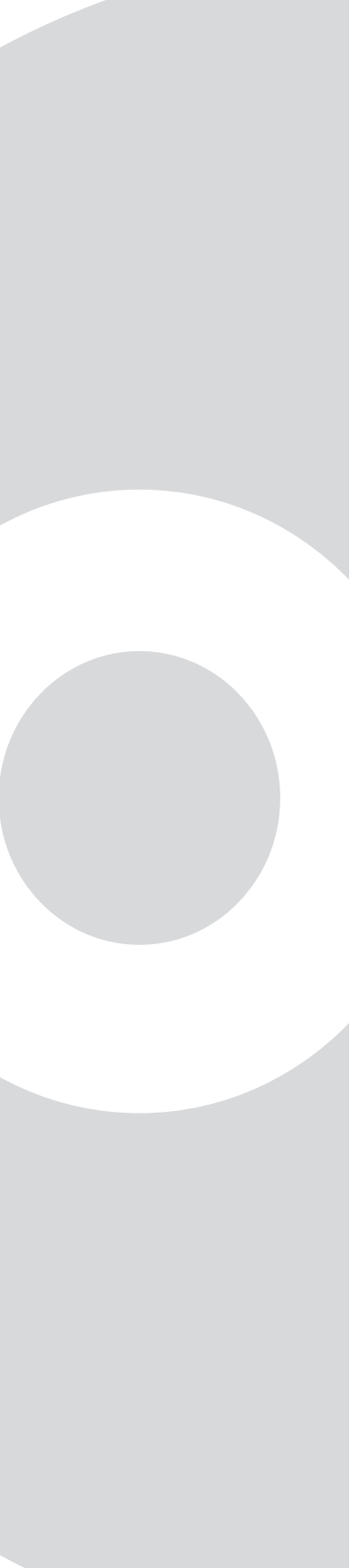
**Miško Šuvaković** (b. 1954, Belgrade) is a Professor of Applied Aesthetics and Theory of Art and Media, Faculty of Media and Communications, Belgrade (since 2015) and a former Professor of Applied Aesthetics: School of Music, Belgrade (1996–2015). He was a member of the conceptual art Group 143 (1975–80). Miško is a member of the Slovenian Society of Aesthetics, a member of the Society for Aesthetics of Architecture and Visual Arts, and a former president of the International Association for Aesthetics (IAA) 2019–22. He is the co-editor of *Impossible Histories – Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia 1918–1991* (The MIT Press, 2003), and the author of *Epistemology of Art* (TkH Belgrade, Tanzquartier Vienna, 2008), *The Clandestine Histories of the OHO Group* (Zavod P.A.R.A.S.I.T.E., 2009) and *The Neo-Aesthetics Theory* (Hollitzer Verlag, 2017). His books in Serbian are *Konceptualna umetnost* (MSUV, Novi Sad, 2008) and *3E: estetika, epistemologija i etika Spekulativnih i De Re media* (FMK, Beograd, 2020).

**Seyed Farhad Tayyebi** completed his PhD in Architectural Design Program, at Istanbul Technical University in 2021. During the years of his dissertation, he investigated the architectural composition features and extensively explored the correlations between the preferences of architectural and musical attributes. He also created a systematic and fully-objective method to transform a music sheet, as a representation of a musical piece, into an architectural form sculpture; thereby made an artistic bridge between the composition of architecture of music. Farhad got his architecture license in 2013, and has been working for years as an architect; his design won awards at several provincial and national architecture competitions.

**Nela Tonković** (1984), art historian with a Master's degree in Cultural Policy and Management. From 2013 to 2018, she was the director of the Subotica Contemporary Gallery, and from 2019 to 2020, she served as the director of the National Museum in Šabac. She is currently working as a curator at the Subotica Contemporary Gallery, where she is in charge of planning and implementing the gallery's annual work plan. In her curatorial work, she collaborated with numerous visual artists from Serbia and the region, as well as with several gallery institutions. She directed a significant portion of her interests towards researching the logic and politics of acquisition of public collections of contemporary art, as well as exhibitions as a communication tool. She actively researches the policies of collecting and exhibiting contemporary art in public institutions in Serbia. Her professional practice is focused on strategic management in institutions for the protection and sustainable use of cultural heritage, management in the field of visual art production, and mediation of contemporary art. She is a member of ICOM.

**Jovana Tošić** is an architect and a PhD, born in Belgrade, Serbia, in 1988. She received a Master of Architecture in 2012 at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Architecture and defended her doctoral thesis at the same faculty in 2022. Her academic career began as a teaching assistant (PhD student) in architectural history and theory subjects at the University of Belgrade, Faculty of Architecture. She has worked as a Professor of Vocational Studies at Information Technology School – ITS Belgrade since 2016. As an author, she participated in many international scientific academic conferences: at TU Delft, Nieuwe Instituut (Rotterdam), UPM – Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, and Anglia Ruskin University (Cambridge). Her research interests include architectural design, conservation and restoration of architectural heritage, theory of architecture, architectural history, and contemporary architectural aesthetics. As co-author, she has done several interior, reconstruction, and revitalization projects in Belgrade.





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Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*, 23.

Book – two or more authors (for four or more authors, list only the first author, followed by et al.):

Max Horkheimer and Teodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment. Philosophical Fragments* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 15.

Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, 18.

Editor, translator, or compiler instead of the author:

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Alperson, *What is Music?*, 83.

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Martin Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 18.

Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 25.

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Leppert, "Seeing Music," 9.

Article in a print journal (after page numbers include a DOI if the article lists one):

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Article in an online journal (after page numbers include a DOI if the article lists one):

Gueorgi Kossinets and Duncan J. Watts, "Origins of Homophily in an Evolving Social Network," *American Journal of Sociology* 115 (2009): 411, accessed February 28, 2010, doi: 10.1086/599247

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Mihwa Choi, "Contesting *Imaginaires* in Death Rituals during the Northern Song Dynasty" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2008).

Choi, "Contesting *Imaginaires*."

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Thesis and dissertation:

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