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INTRODUCTION

Since the appearance of graffiti culture in Philadelphia and New York at the end of 1960s, this visual expression has attracted attention of researchers, both in positive and negative light. One branch (criminology, sociology, and psychology) was often discussing the root causes of the “delinquent” behaviour while other (art history, cultural studies, and subculture studies) was finding fascination in activities, strategies, and visual language that has not been seen before. In this edition of *Kultura* journal we will follow the second branch in present day research. It is important to note that dominant academic discourse related to this topic is no longer trying to situate graffiti culture within the wide field of traditional graffiti, rather trying to establish an independent approach which prioritizes and validates graffiti culture and other visual expressions that stem from it. For more than 50 years this field of artistic expression has been developing, so today we can talk about graffiti culture, street art, new muralism (neomuralism) and some less known, but still important branches such as calligraffiti.

The general confusion when we talk about graffiti culture comes from the term graffiti itself. The original meaning of the word was coined at the end of 19th century by the researchers who wanted to distinguish between the official and unofficial messages on the archeological site of Pompeii.¹ After that all unsanctioned messages in public spaces were grouped in the same category.² However, it is very hard to relate the early latrinalia research and contemporary graffiti culture research. That endeavour becomes even more problematic after the emergence of street art movement and new muralism that became the dominant field of research in 2000s.³ In order to demonstrate huge potential in the field of graffiti culture and related visual expressions in Serbian context, this edition of *Kultura* journal will outline the research conducted in our cultural setting so far.

It is interesting to note that Yugoslav and later Serbian academic audiences were interested in the graffiti culture phenomenon already in the 1980s. But as it was the case elsewhere in the world, there was a strong attempt to give legitimacy to graffiti culture, and interventions that we will recognize later as street art, through the connection with other types of graffiti and art in the streets. So it is not always clear when these early researchers write about graffiti and street art do they mean political or subcultural messages, street theater, or basking. But it is worth mentioning that the journal *Quorum*,

1 Kimvall, J. (2014) *The G Word: Virtuosity and Violation, Negotiating and Transforming Graffiti*, Stockholm: Dokument Press, p. 18.

2 Radošević, Lj. (2013) *Graffiti, Street Art, Urban Art: Terminological Problems and Generic Properties*, New Cultural Capitals: Urban Pop Cultures in Focus, editor L. Koos, Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, pp. 1–13.

3 Bengtson, P. (2014) *The Street Art World*, Lund: Almqvist & Wikander Press.

published in Zagreb in 1988 already had translations of the most important publications that were relevant for graffiti culture.⁴ Another extraordinary example is *Književna kritika*, published in Belgrade in 1990, where we can find articles by Ratko Božović and Čedomir Vasić, as well as translations from the “graffiti Bible” *Subway Art* and Norman Mailer’s cult introduction to the book *The Faith of Graffiti*.⁵

By sharing mostly unpublished research on graffiti and street art in Serbia in the past twenty years or so, our goal is twofold: to make these findings public and advocate for its relevance within academia. After defining the terminology, some key challenges, and historical development in the first part, in the second part of this issue we want to move the focus to producers themselves and their dynamic, self-organized and artist-run initiatives, such as festivals, projects, and graffiti jams. Analytical reflections are generally scarce, despite the continuous media attention in the past ten or so years and online presence in general. We mapped a number of relevant case studies, some historical and others contemporary, in an attempt to contribute to future research.

Before diving into case studies, another definition is necessary—that of new muralism (neomuralism). Generally speaking, a mural is any painting on architecture, positioned whether inside or outside the building (see Danilović’s article). Additionally, in graffiti culture, a mural is also a larger, complex piece (see dictionary in Appendix 1). The major political and formal change in the XX century was Mexican muralism (muralismo), introduced in the 1920s after the Mexican revolution. Unlike traditional murals, Mexican artists introduced socially and politically charged themes in public settings, often extending the murals’ reach beyond closed spaces. While government and community based muralismo has its own history and development in the Americas, its potentials have been recognized worldwide.

Several changes occurred with the arrival of graffiti in the 1970s and development of street art in the 1980s in the US and Europe, which distinguished this new muralism from its predecessors starting from the 1990s. The process occurred in Serbia with various city festivals including graffiti and street art from the early 2000s. Technically, traditional mural painting was fused with a variety of graffiti and street art techniques and materials, including spray cans, stencils, paste-ups, etc. Authors are now a mix of graffiti writers, street and fine art artists. Content-wise, new muralism relies on popular and accessible imagery, similar to street art, and aims at the widest possible audience. New muralism initiatives are by rule operating on an institutional level with permissions, which changed the nature of production of both graffiti and street art. First, the legal aspect has enabled artists to invest more time and even create much larger pieces than they could if working without permits. Second, these initiatives became closely interlinked with more or less official city policy, where they serve a variety of functions, including

4 Maković, Z. ed. (1988) *Quorum – časopis za književnost*, godina IV, br. 1 (18), Zagreb, pp. 194–274.

5 Hamović, Z. ed. (1990) *Književna kritika*, tematski broj – Grafiti – *Čitanje zida*, br. 2 (mart i april), Beograd.

urban regeneration, beautification, defense of public commons, tourism, cultural industries, gentrification, among others. This can potentially discourage more spontaneous, or sometimes explicitly political or agonistic themes, yet sometimes there are artworks that manage to tackle socially aware topics like the ecological mural *Tree eater* by Blu from 2008 or Jana's Converse City Forests mural on gender equality from 2021.

Having all the terminological and visual complexities of graffiti culture, street art and new muralism in mind, we bring you research that we hope will shed a new light on these visual expressions. Still, this research field is largely untapped and the potential is huge. Therefore, we encourage you to start from the basics, which will hopefully relieve some confusion and give you the opportunity to become familiar with the visual language and some historical facts which are included in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of this Introduction.

Ljiljana Radošević, Srđan Tunić and Andrijana Danilović

Appendix 1

GRAFFITI DICTIONARY⁶

The following is a selection of common terms and expressions from the New York slang which became a standard in graffiti culture worldwide.⁷

All city – this means the writers are “up” (active, see below), but the title is awarded only to the best writers whose graffiti have the widest reach.

Background – technical solution to make a piece more noticeable if the background is covered with tags.

Back to back – a whole wall covered with pieces, but could also refer to throw-ups covering each other.

Bite – copying another writer's style.

Blockbuster – large, rectangular letters, usually two-colored and tilted.

BMT – NYC subway line, operated by Ridgy and Ding Dong trains (see below).

Bomb – intensive tagging or painting, also meaning to cover a given territory with tags or throw-ups (in Serbian, “bomba”).

Bombing – going to paint (in Serbian, “bombardovanje”).

⁶ From: Radošević, Lj. (2005) *Istorijsko-teorijska rasprava o pojavi i razvoju grafita u Beogradu od 1996. do 2005. godine*, diplomski rad (MA thesis), Filozofski fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu, pp. 64-68.

⁷ See: Chad, S. (n.d.) *The Words: The Official Graffiti Glossary*, 03. July 2024, <https://www.graffiti.org/faq/graffiti.glossary.html>; Chalfant, H. and Cooper, M. (1984) *Subway Art*, London: Thames & Hudson.

Bubble letters – type of traditional letters used for throw-ups due to their rounded shape which enables easier and quicker work.

Buff – initially the chemical removal of graffiti from trains, now any removal of graffiti from any surfaces (in Serbian, “bafovanje”).

Burn – to beat the competition with one’s style, also a good piece which “burns” (prži).

Burner – originally a very good “wildstyle” piece (see below) usually underneath the train window and covering the whole car; today any piece with bold colors and fine style (in Serbian, “brner”).

Cap – spray nozzle, can be “fat” and “skinny”, i.e. releasing a wide or thin line (in Serbian, “kapica” for the cap, “fetčina” for the fat cap).

Character – a character appropriated from comic books, cartoons, video games, or popular culture in general (in Serbian, “karakter”).

Crew – organized group of writers; members usually mention their crew in three letters next to their own tags (in Serbian, “kru” or “ekipa”).

Cutting lines – writing technique used for the inside of letters and characters, allowing for thinner lines than the ones made with skinny caps.

Dis – short for “disrespect”, negative connotation.

Def – derivative from “death” and means something is really good.

Ding-dong – a type of subway cars, with flat surfaces made from stainless steel, named after the characteristic sound before the doors close; the trains were easy to get buffed so no one made any particularly good graffiti on them.

Dope – initially a hip-hop term, synonym for “cool”.

Down – to go in action with someone, or be a part of a crew.

Fame – recognition; a writer earns it only with continuous action and significant production (in Serbian, it corresponds to recognition).

Fanzine – a magazine usually run and dedicated to a particular group of enthusiasts; in graffiti culture, fanzines are usually dedicated to sharing photographs of graffiti, interviews with writers, etc.; the first graffiti fanzine was International Graffiti Times (1984-1994).

Flat – another type of a subway car, although today the expression can be applied to any flat surfaces.

Fly – cool.

Fresh – new, cool, great.

Getting up – expression used to mark the end of a successful and intensive writing or tagging of trains.

Going over – writing over or covering someone’s graffiti; other expressions are “X-ing out” or “crossing out”.

IRT – another NYC subway line which had flat cars.

Kill – intensive bombing.

Krylon – spray can brand.

Layup – open air train depot; alternatively a “yard”.

MTA – Metropolitan Transit Authority.

Mural – a large-scale and usually complex piece made across a whole wall.

Old school – term used to refer to the oldest graffiti period and production; in the US context, it usually covers the period from the mid-1970s to 1983 (in Serbian, “old skul” and “stara škola”).

Outline – first it referred to a sketch from writer’s “black book”, today a line around a piece (in Serbian, “autlajn”).

Panel piece – a piece underneath the train windows and between the doors; “window down” is used only for underneath the windows.

Piece – short from “masterpiece”; by rule of thumb any graffiti with minimum three colors (in Serbian, “pis”).

Piecebook – writer’s sketchbook, also known as “blackbook” or “writer’s bible”.

Ridgy – another subway car type, with wrinkled edges; this type was active in Brooklyn and usually covered with throw-ups.

Roll call – tagging one’s own crew members or everyone who helped paint a piece.

Rustoleum – spray can brand.

Scrub – another type of throw-up, filled quickly with zig-zag lines which remain visible.

Stickers – printed on adhesive paper, contains a writer’s tag, piece or character; a form of tagging.

Tag – the basic form of graffiti, writer’s stylized signature/logo done with a marker or spray; if someone’s tag is too long, it’s usually shortened.

Tagbanger – writers who only do tags.

Three D (3D) – three dimensional letters, first introduced by Phase 2; usually accompanying wildstyle pieces for more complex effects.

Throw-up – tag or part of a tag done in a simple and fast technique, usually bubble letters with an outline and swiftly filled interior; traditionally only with two colors, one for the outline and the other for filling (in Serbian, “troap”).

Top to bottom – a piece which covers the whole side of a subway car by height; “end to end” is used for covering the car by length; can also be used for a fully covered wall.

Toy – inexperienced or incompetent writer; usually used in a negative way.

Up – a writer who's very active and whose pieces can be spotted everywhere.

Wildstyle – a complex construction of letters with least amount of legibility; the hardest but also most desirable style for a piece in the early history of graffiti culture.

Whole car – combining “top to bottom” and “end to end”, covering a whole subway train car.

Whole train – used when the whole train composition is covered with graffiti.

Writer – a person who does graffiti.

Dictionary of Belgrade graffiti slang

Terms and expressions utilized by writers in general. Many have their own words referring to the NYC slang. All have been collected from interviews with Belgrade writers in the early 2000s.⁸

Baciti (to throw) – used in expressions such as “baciti pis” (throwing a piece) or “baciti bombu” (throwing a bomb), meaning to make graffiti.

Biti na... (to be at...) – used in expressions such as “biti na zidu” (to be at the wall) or “biti na troli” (to be at the trolley), meaning to be at the writing spot.

Crtati (drawing) – to paint graffiti; an important perceptual difference from the English “painting,” in line with “writing” and “writer”.

Ekipa – same as “crew”.

Otkinuti (to tear it up) – to make good graffiti.

Pregaziti (to step on) – to cross over another's graffiti, same as “going over”.

Produkcija (production) – same word is used in the NYC slang but in Serbia means a piece with significant financial investment; usually with a negative connotation.

Upeglati (to iron out) – to make a piece technically as perfect as possible.

Skinuti (take down/off) – to copy someone else's style, same as “bite”.

Skrnav (defiled) – bad graffiti.

Srebro (silver) – a synonym for “throw-up” done in silver paint; if done with precision and skill, but only in silver color, a whole piece could be called “srebro”; one of the characteristics of the early (old school) Belgrade style graffiti.

Zabosti (to score) – same as “baciti”.

⁸ See: Radošević, op. cit.

Appendix 2

HOPE

BELGRADE OLD SCHOOL⁹

In the mid 1980s Block 45 used to look like any other suburb of Belgrade. Besides being quite isolated from the city center, lacking infrastructure and at the proximity of the river Sava, this city block was unique in one other respect. Graffiti. This city block was and still is the Mecca of Belgrade's graffiti culture. Here, some of the first graffiti in Serbia were created.

- In the mid 1980s, the wave of hip-hop culture that swept Europe had strongly hit Block 45 as well.
- During that period the first crew that took on both graffiti and breakdancing was formed. The name of the crew was Fantastic Boys, but it was also known as the Rap City Crew, and its members were Babuš, Đela, Steva, Tića and others. Interesting fact is that in 1985, at the dance competition at the Sports center "11th April" in Belgrade, this crew lost in finals to the Đogani Fantastico crew, which became the leading group of dance-dizel¹⁰ scene in Serbia in the 1990s.
- One of the first graffiti this crew made was the character of an octopus on the bank of river Sava in Block 45 where they practiced breakdance, and where they slowly formed some type of a Hall of fame. Apart from this graffiti, in the neighborhood's kindergartens, they made RAP CITY and RCC, of which the former was untouched until 2007.



Figure 1: Fantastic Boys, *Rap City*, Block 62, Juri Gagarin boulevard, Belgrade, circa 1985 (photo: Ljiljana Radošević)

⁹ This short article is a recollection by writer HOPE on the pioneers of the Belgrade graffiti culture and the early scene from the mid-1980s to early 2000s. Originally published as: Hope (2009), *Stara škola Beograda / Old School of Belgrade*, Balkan Round, Issue #1, Belgrade, pp. 4-7. Edited and translated by Ljiljana Radošević.

¹⁰ Dizelaši was an urban, street, youth sub-culture popular in the 1990s, which enjoyed the mix of turbo-folk, hip-hop, and dance music.

- Inspired by Fantastic Boys, Jens made his first graffiti MIŠA in 1988 on the Sava bank, and as such became the graffiti writer with the longest history of writing¹¹ on the Serbian scene.
- Due to the country being in civil war and severe crisis, graffiti writing almost completely disappeared from Serbia. Just here and there one could spot some of Jens' graffiti (who was still tagging as Miša).
- After a short visit to Paris, Jens came back to Serbia and decided to create the first graffiti crew in 1995, BMB (Biša Miša Bosić), with Biša and Bosić.



Figure 2: Jens, quai of river Sava in Block 45, Dr Ivana Ribara Street, Belgrade, 1997
(photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

Figure 3: Jens, vicinity of Terazije Square, Belgrade, 1998 (photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

- The same year they made a piece called STUFF where Miša did letters and Bosić made the alien with the joint. It could be argued that this piece initiated the Serbian scene because nothing like it existed before. The piece created euphoria that spread vastly and quickly and became a backdrop for the show Rap & Soul on TV Pink, as well as in the music videos of the groups Sunshine (for the song *America Preview*) and Maddogz (song *Freedom*), but also appeared on the covers on some hip-hop albums. That was ironic since Miša and his crew used to listen to techno and trance music at the time. Even six months after its creation one could see the groups of people that were either taking photos of the piece or just looking at it in awe. In other parts of the city some other graffiti were made, such as FUNK at the Branko's bridge and another one at the Mostar intersection by unknown authors.

¹¹ In Serbian, instead of painting graffiti we say drawing graffiti (crtati grafite).

INTRODUCTION



Figure 4: Jens and BMB Crew, *Stuff*, Block 45, Dr Ivana Ribara Street, Belgrade, 1995
(photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

Figure 5: Dr Qee, *Anger is a Gift*, Block 45, Lazaro Kardenas promenade, Belgrade, 1995
(photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

- At the same time, in Block 45, Dr. Qee (Dr. Kiza) started doing graffiti. He was best known for his interpretation of the famous character Bob Rock from popular Alan Ford comics with the slogan *Anger is a Gift*. But Kiza abruptly left graffiti culture.
- Cobesta28, better known as Cobes, started doing graffiti in the mid 1990s all over the blocks in New Belgrade but the first graffiti piece he made was in Novi Sad. At the beginning of 1997, by pure chance, he met Jens and two of them started tagging all over the city.
- The same year Cobes and Jens created their graffiti crew AGC (Anonimus Graffitikus Crew or the AG City), and actively started doing graffiti around Block 45. Those first graffiti were mostly silver pieces. Besides the two of them, who were the core of the crew, Mise, Sane 751, Krca, Jamas and Jole joined the crew later on.



Figure 6: Cobe, quai of river Sava in Block 45, Dr Ivana Ribara Street, Belgrade, 1998
(photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

Figure 7: AGC Crew, Block 45, Dr Ivana Ribara Street, Belgrade, 1998
(photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

- During that period, and a bit later, we started seeing some new crews and new tags such as Bougie, Soter (90210 Crew); Sub Zero, Negre and Abs (Halley Zone Crew); Dr Leco, Vsa, Fuz (SCWAD Crew or SCD); Sholim, Sale, Da Gambia, Vuiche (Chemical Crew); Leo' (CO2 Crew); Face, Mask, Demon, Chef Sale AK and Shorty.



Figure 8: Bougie, Punk, underground passage in Bulevar oslobođenja, Belgrade, 1999 (photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

Figure 9: CO2 Crew, Pavilion Cvijeta Zuzorić, Mali Kalemegdan, Belgrade, 2000 (photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

- In 1997 Cobes, Bougie, Face and Soter made first pieces on the trains.
- At the beginning of 1998 AGC crew was disassembled because it became too large and it was impossible to keep track of its members. Despite that, the scene was still unified.
- The first graffiti jam in Belgrade was organized in 1999.¹² It was hosted by the primary school Kralj Petar in the city center.¹³ Local participants were Jens, Mise, Cobes, Sane 751, Face, Mask, Sub Zero, Abs, Negre, Shorty, Chef Sale AK and Dr Leco. There were also international participants Jen and Fuk from Croatia and Rok and Goražd from Slovenia.

12 The organizer was the civil association PostPesimisti, backed by the Open Society Fund, which through SANE 751 reached out to Belgrade writers and invited them to the festival. There were almost twenty writers in total coming from Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia.

13 Twenty years later, in 2019, as a part of the Rekonstrukcija festival, Paint Kartel collective organized a tribute jam. It was a way to remember one of the most important events in Belgrade's early graffiti history. They hosted some of the graffiti writers who participated in the first jam and some that are important for the local scene now. Graffiti writers and street artists who participated are the following: Negre, Sub Zero, Nikola Kori, Marz, Das Drogen Crew, Sensi, Audrey, Rule, Japon (Spain), Easy, Akira, Deroks, Weedzor, Piros, Rage, Skirl (Austria), Mosk (Croatia). Year earlier, in 2018 in Višnjiceva street, Paint Kartel together with Street Smart, organized the event *Warm up: United Colors of Belgrade*, as a form of preparation for the big tribute in 2019. See: Anonim. (29. August 2019) Festival umetnosti na ulici Rekonstrukcija 2019, *Dan u Beogradu*, 20. December 2024, <https://www.danubeogradu.rs/2019/08/festival-umetnosti-na-ulici-rekonstrukcija-2019/>

INTRODUCTION



Figure 10: Gips and ABS, Primary school Kralj Petar I, Kralja Petra Street, Belgrade, 1999
(photo: Ljiljana Radošević).



Figure 11: Mise, System Explosive, Primary school Kralj Petar I, Kralja Petra Street, Belgrade, 1999 (photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

- Until 1999, painters mostly used Kenda Kolor and Cosmos spray cans. The same year new spray cans entered the local market, namely, Kim-Tec, a Polish brand that had good pressure, had a rich color palette and it was quite affordable. At the time the price of these spray cans was 10RSD (today 0.30 Euro), while the other spray cans cost around 170RSD. At the same time caps¹⁴ became available on our market and combination of these factors significantly raised the quality of the local scene.
- After the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 many crews were disassembled and many writers, for their own reasons, became less active or stopped doing graffiti altogether.



Figure 12: Halley's Crew, Astronauts, Block 45, Dr Ivana Ribara Street, Belgrade, 1999
(photo: Ljiljana Radošević).



Figure 13: Halley's Crew, Halleyz, Block 45, Dr Ivana Ribara Street, Belgrade, 2002
(photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

¹⁴ Spray nozzles used to control the flow of paint.

- At the beginning of 2000 Asem (Koma), Serbian writer who resided in Cologne, Germany, wanted to help promote the local scene and offered Belgrade's writers to pay for the internet domain. Those graffiti writers that were still active formed the unified scene and together they created the crew BG Illegal (Sub Zero, Bougie, Cobes, Negre, Abs, Dr Leco, Necone, Angel, Dulait). The same year we see the rise in the number of new graffiti writers that consequently formed new crews.
- BG Illegal was disassembled after a year and a half but Cobes and Bougie, who left first, formed the new crew AFO (Antifašistička omladina), that is still active today. Other members of BG Illegal were active for a bit longer until they stopped doing graffiti all together. This marked the end of Belgrade's old school graffiti and its style took a completely new direction.



Figure 14: AFO Crew, Ceger, Dulait and Imun, Radnička Street, Belgrade, 2000
(photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

Figure 15: AFO Crew, railway at Bulevar Vojvode Mišića, Belgrade, 2000
(photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

Ljiljana Radošević

Street Art Belgrade

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PHENOMENON AND DEVELOPMENT OF GRAFFITI CULTURE IN BELGRADE BETWEEN 1996. AND 2005

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Abstract: *This paper is a condensed version of an art history MA thesis defended in 2005 at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, focusing on graffiti culture. Graffiti culture became prominent in Belgrade in the mid-1990s and has developed with some fluctuations ever since. This research covers the most formative period of its development, relying primarily on interviews with local graffiti writers and immersion in the local graffiti scene. Consequently, what began as a study of the visual aspects of graffiti writing from an art history perspective evolved into an ethnological study of contemporary urban culture and subcultural artistic movements. The research revealed significant differences in the reception of graffiti culture in Belgrade compared to other major cities, largely due to the unique social, political, and economic context in Serbia in the late 1990s and early 2000s.*

Key words: *graffiti writing, subculture, city, Belgrade*

Introduction¹

The graffiti found on the ancient walls of Pompeii are considered some of the most important sources for understanding everyday Roman life, and researchers regard them as invaluable discoveries. This raises the question: why are contemporary graffiti so unwelcome? Couldn't they also be a subject of serious research? Double standards are nothing new in the theory and history of art, making it essential to become familiar with contemporary graffiti in order to assess them properly.

¹ Radošević, Lj. (2005) *Istorijsko-teorijska rasprava o pojavi i razvoju grafita u Beogradu od 1996. do 2005. godine*, Master thesis, Department of Art History, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade.

The term »graffiti« is so broad that it requires clarification to focus on the aspects relevant to this research. The word graffiti has two roots: the Greek word *graphein*, meaning »to write,« and the Italian word *graffito*, meaning »to scratch« or »scratch in.« Today, »graffiti« is a common term used to describe various phenomena, including cave paintings, political slogans, random names, messages in public toilets, hearts scratched into tree bark, and acid etchings.

In this paper, we will discuss graffiti that appeared in New York at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. These emerged on the trains of the New York subway, created with spray paint, giving the word »graffiti« a completely new meaning. Members of the graffiti culture generally agree that »graffiti« was not the original term for the phenomenon. The pioneers of graffiti culture referred to their activity as »writing« and later accepted terms like »aerosol art« or »aerosol culture,« but neither fully captures the breadth of the production within this subculture. Over 50 years, graffiti have evolved beyond mere writing and the use of aerosol.

This widespread phenomenon arrived in Belgrade in the mid-1990s, catching the attention of many young people who began writing graffiti, as well as some enthusiasts who documented and researched them. Why is the Belgrade graffiti movement interesting? What makes these graffiti different from those in other parts of the world? Are graffiti art? These and other questions will be addressed and analyzed in this paper to determine the originality of Belgrade graffiti and their »old school« spirit, which is essential for becoming part of the global graffiti writing culture.

At the time of writing this thesis, no comprehensive research had been conducted, so most of the data was sourced from interviews the author conducted with graffiti writers over two and a half years, from 2000 until the end of 2002. Field research continued until the final version of the thesis, although some data remained inaccessible. The core of the thesis is divided into two segments: the first three chapters cover historical data and local history, while the second segment addresses theoretical issues and consists of four chapters. The aim of the thesis was to provide an overview of the historical and theoretical aspects of the Belgrade graffiti scene and its place in the global context. This paper, however, is an adapted version of the thesis and will focus solely on the historical aspects of the Belgrade graffiti scene.

Belgrade “wild” graffiti

Civil war that came as a consequence of Yugoslavia falling apart, made the everyday life of the regular citizens of Serbia almost unbearable. In addition we need to take in consideration the sanctions, economical crisis and the anesthetized feelings of the general population, in order to understand the full extent of the last decade of the 20th century in the Balkans. In one of the newly created countries, the Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (at the time when paper was written it was the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro), writing on the walls reached a completely new dimension. Media were controlled by the ruling party loyal to Milošević's regime and created, on a mass level, a state of mind that was enticed to their cause: they constructed their “truth” and control-

led every aspect of the nation's everyday life. This situation naturally led to the rebellion of the common sense and Belgrade's walls became a place for the heated discussion between the autocratic party in power and the opposition. Everyone wrote on the walls, but unlike the previous periods, no one was cleaning that up. Those that grew up during that period, the wall full of all sorts of graffiti was a completely normal occurrence. Therefore, it is not surprising that one group of young people chose graffiti writing as a form of their personal expression.

First graffiti that were inspired by New York wild style emerged in Belgrade, like in the rest of Europe, in the mid 1980s but they did not take root. They were made by some of the first members of Hip-Hop culture, by the local breakdance crew - Belgrade B-boys. Some of them still live in New Belgrade until this date. Those first graffiti could be seen in the New Belgrade blocks facing the Sava river, in the primary school "Užička republika", at the local kindergarten in Block 62 and so on. The famous graffiti *Rap City*, made in 1985, or the *Venus* at the Zeleni venac are the ones that members of the graffiti culture still remember. In Block 45, and some other surrounding blocks, tags started appearing during the year 1996.² There were surprisingly a lot of them since they appeared all at once. At the time it seemed that New Belgrade was full of graffiti writers. However, that was not the case. A year earlier, our officially first graffiti writer, came back from France (or Paris to be more precise). He went there to high school and when he came back he brought with him the spirit and lore of the graffiti culture. Miša Jens became a guru of Belgrade graffiti. At the beginning he did not have a crew to go bombing with him, so he tagged his numerous aliases as well as nicknames of his friends. He created one of the first crews BMB (Biša, Miša and Bosić), in which he was the only active member.

Around the same time in the New Belgrade blocks Cobe was also doing graffiti on his own. In the beginning he was mostly tagging and his first graffiti was made in Novi Sad: "Mika from New Belgrade, who's been doing graffiti for a long time, was at the time in Novi Sad, so we met, took two cans of paint from the garage and some old spraycans and we made our first graffiti sketch."³

Jens and Cobe met at the beginning of 1997 and immediately started working together. Their obsession was tagging around the city. At that time they still had no contact with graffiti writers from abroad and the existence of the spray nozzles was still a mystery, but that was the case with all other pioneers in Belgrade. Soon enough they understood that they wanted to do something more significant which led them to establish the AGC Crew (Anonimus Graffiticus Crew or Ag City Crew). From time to time other graffiti writers joined in but the core of the crew were the two of them. They used

2 At the time when this thesis was defended in 2005, the author did not manage to get an interview from Miša Jens so the precise year of his return from France and his first graffiti were obtained only through second hand information. Later on, in 2008, the author interviewed Miša Jens and he gave different years for the significant events. However, the year 1996 was already established in this research as the starting point so we will keep it as such. For further reference regarding the exact year of the beginning of the Belgrade scene, see Bojan Stevanović's and Hope's articles.
3 Radošević, Lj. (2001) *Interview with Cobesta*28, March 2001, Belgrade.

to do pieces around the neighborhood which drew attention of other young guys who tried to do the same. That winter, because of the unexpected situation, Cobe had to take some time off. But the crew gained some new members at that time, new members were Sane 751 (Juice), Mise, Jamas, Jole, Shorty (Evil), Krca, and Face. When Cobe came back the crew was large and quite active. That changed when new members started joining in and that led to the dissolution of the crew, in mid 1998, because it was too “massive”. However, that led to the forming of new crews such as Deep Cover (Krca and Jole) and Rough Squad (Helios and Leco) but most of them were not active enough in the streets. All of the aforementioned writers did graffiti in New Belgrade and on the vehicles of the public transportation. Face continued to work with Jens and Cobe and sometimes Leco joined in. Shorty and Juice created hip hop group Fool Moon but they continued doing graffiti as well.

Dedinje, another part of Belgrade, got its 90210 Crew relatively early. The name was a parody of the popular series *Beverly Hills 90210*. It was founded by Bougie (Gie) and Soter (Sot) in 1997. At that time Dedinje was a high end neighborhood, where most of the government officials and mafia bosses used to live, and it seemed impossible that a neighborhood like that could birth a graffiti crew. Yet they did exist and they were very active. They also did the public transportation vehicles so that was not a prerogative of the writers from New Belgrade. Bougie worked a lot with Cobe after the dismantling of the AGC Crew. Two of them thought that bombing is the most exciting and the most original form of writing, so it became their favorite pastime. No matter how many pieces all the aforementioned writers created, it still was not enough for the “whole city” concept, so they had to travel across neighborhoods in order to see new pieces.

The Republic Square (The Square further in the text) was and still is a favorite gathering spot in the city. It is a hot spot where the biggest part of the city population gathers and says goodbye, the place to meet to go to nightlife or a place to spend nightlife. Narrow strip of land between the monument of the Prince Mihajlo and the National Museum was a favorite spot for the gathering of skateboarding culture as well as of those who were into rollerblading. That was some form of the theater, a scene, where they had an option to demonstrate their skills while the rest of the people were passing by. Crew from the Square, next to the skateboarders and rollerbladers, was comprised of musicians, graffiti writers and fakers (*pozeri*)⁴.

C.S.A.K. or simply A.K. was a typical representative of the Square line-up. He was skateboarding, writing songs and he did graffiti. He became interested in graffiti roughly at the same time like the guys from the New Belgrade blocks but there was no one else in the city center who shared his interests. He tried on his own to figure out the technique and the complexities of the graffiti writing and therefore it took him a longer time to progress. A year later, in 1997, the situation in the city center started to change. Youth from

⁴ The local term *pozer* is used for the persons that join a certain group or a fan group just because their main interest seems to be in the trend at that given moment. In essence they are not really into the philosophy or way of living of the given group.

Vračar, who came to the city center to rollerblade, Mask (Msk), made his first graffiti that year. The same year, miscellaneous guys from the Square party, Master of Disaster, Leo, Shorty and Musli (Msl), did their first graffiti too. Master and Shorty went to the same high school, Architecture High, and together they made numerous sketches but because they were from the different neighborhoods (Master from Dorćol and Shorty from Zemun) they did not do graffiti together. So they scrambled the line-up a little bit, Shorty and Msk went into the action together while the other informal crew consisted of A.K., Leo, Master and Msl. Next year they formed a first crew which they called CO2 – the Circle Of 2.⁵ First, and at the time of writing of this paper, that was the only crew from the city center.

This crew was not homogenous, at the beginning members were not only graffiti writers but also musicians and numerous friends from the Square. Soon enough Master stopped doing graffiti but his tag was for a very long time considered to be the best one on this side of the river. Msl and Ism were not that active and by the 2000 they completely stopped doing graffiti. Relatively quickly the crew from the city center was synthesized. Crew's active members were A.K., Leo and Jew (he was there for all activities but he was not doing much graffiti). The latter's tag was intentionally created so that it could be signed in latin letters as Jew and in Cyrillic as JEY. No matter how much Leo and A.K. tried, the city center was never as colorful as New Belgrade. What made the vivid scene in the city center were tags. Graffiti writers were mostly tagging in their neighborhood but everyone tagged in the city center. Following parameters could be deduced from the tags:

- A graffiti writer was active,
- A writer changed their style,
- A writer took on a new alias,
- A new writer appeared,
- Someone changed crews,
- A crew gained a new member,
- Graffiti writers or crews were in conflict.

City center became a universal “info board”. However, one of the most impressive actions was Leo's bombing that took over every piece of free wall, trash bin, doors, metal surfaces... “When I started it began with tagging and I wrote Leo CO2 everywhere. My goal was a whole city. I wanted to interest people in all of this. What we talked about earlier, about messages, my message at this moment is the popularization of graffiti. Not in a wrong way, but promoting what they truly are.”⁶

Characteristic of this early period was that our graffiti writers drew parallel between them and the New York graffiti movement. During the mid 1990s Belgrade was in a

⁵ Tram no. 2 in Belgrade has a circular route and it is widely considered, even though incorrectly, that the very center of the city is within this circle. And those that live in the city center have somewhat a higher social status.

⁶ Radošević, Lj. (2000) Interview with Leo, November 2000, Belgrade.

similar state of disarray like New York in the 1980s, so the story of how and why it all started made sense on Belgrade's streets. Except the need to paint, there was an element of rebellion against the state, against the system by means of doing things that are prohibited. Tagging and bombing were main activities, while pieces were mostly simple with very few colors. At the beginning no one had caps, and the spraycans they used were "beggarly". They mostly used Kenda Kolor or Cosmos spraycans, and the biggest issue with them was that the cans were under a strong pressure so the paint had tendency to be runny. "If you ask me, the characteristics of our writers is that we are jazz types, we always improvise. You shouldn't whine, if you don't get that, you shouldn't paint."⁷

More writers, more pieces, more style

Halley's Crew was created already in 1997, but it still belongs to the second period of Belgrade graffiti history. Even though the difference in the year of birth between the first generation graffiti writers and the second wave is really small, they are still part of the second generation of graffiti writers in New Belgrade. At the time they started doing graffiti there were already enough good pieces in the neighborhood that served as an inspiration for their personal style. But they wanted to do something completely different. Subzero (Sub), Absolute (Abs) and Gips (Negre) made their first graffiti on the walls of the 10th Belgrade Gymnasium (*Haine*⁸) and at the bus terminus at Block 23 (*Liquid*). They practiced diligently and they tried new things, so when Leco brought from France the first caps they were ready. In 1998 they did the first photorealistic image on our streets and they tried 3D style as well. When they started they agreed to divide the tasks. Abs was doing only characters and Sub did letters. This division of labor did not last long because Sub and Negre wanted to perfect every aspect, while Abs kept doing only characters. His choice could not be explained by the lack of talent, moreover, we could say that it was a consequence of his love of comics. He transferred some of the characters from the comics and animation onto the walls because he believed that comics possess the quality of line that could be used in graffiti as well.

That same year Msk started painting with Halley's but he kept to his simplicity without compromise. Msk and Shorty opened up one of the halls of fame, the staircases by the Branko's bridge in Branko's street. They did a piece together, where Shorty did letters *Seča* and Msk did the character of the cat. This gives us indication that characters started to appear more frequently on the scene. In CO2 Crew characters were made by Msl and A.K. Msl's favorite character was the stoned devil while A.K. started doing characters late so he did not have time to elaborate before he quit graffiti. That is certainly a pity, keeping in mind that his first characters were stylistically diverse, they were done with mastery and were quite interesting.

We can see that there are quite a lot of activities in every city neighborhood, styles become more complex and there is a lot of experimentation. It was still hard to obtain

⁷ Radošević, Lj. (2001) *Interview with Cobesta28*, op. cit.

⁸ Inspired by the cult French movie *La Haine* directed by Mathieu Kassovitz in 1995.

caps and those that own at least one were considered lucky. Colors are still, up to that point, of relatively poor quality, but sometimes, at the New Belgrade flea market, it is possible to find some professional brands. Here and there, some cans of Belton and just one shade of Montana Aerosol Art in Poison Green.

Three significant things for our scene happened in 1999. First of which was the presence of Kim-Tec spraycans. Their price was 10 RSD while others cost approximately 170 RSD (at the time that was the equivalent of the 5 Deutsche Mark). So the unprecedented amount of spraycans was purchased both for direct use and for keeping the stash. Maybe this occurrence would not have had such a huge impact on our scene if it was not for the second significant event of 1999. In March of the same year NATO bombing of Serbia and, hence, of Belgrade started. This traumatic event that lasted almost three months, youth of that time remember as a period of the most intense socialization and creative idleness. Air-raid sirens, instead of danger, meant the time to go painting. All of the graffiti writers were painting as mad, as if they wanted to chase away bad thoughts from their heads and heads of other people with colors. According to one of the writers, Dubi: "When I started doing graffiti regularly, Kim-Tech sprays came in. We all went overboard, and if it wasn't of that period I would probably be less good. When you do something intensely, with people that are better than you, you learn quickly."⁹

The third significant thing that happened that year was the organization of the first graffiti Jam in Belgrade.¹⁰ It was organized by the Postpesimist association in the courtyard of the primary school Kralj Petar I at the Old City municipality. This event was informally a public recognition that there is a graffiti culture on the streets of Belgrade. Among the local graffiti writers (Jens, Mise, Cobes, Sane 751, Face, Mask, Sub Zero, Abs, Negre, Shorty, Chef Sale AK and Dr Leco) there were two writers from Croatia (Jen and Fuk) and three street artists from Slovenia (Goražd Prinčič and Rok Ogorevc; we do not have the information about the third one). For the first time caps were offered for sales and for the first time they could paint with, at the time, important graffiti writers from Croatia (their scene is much more advanced than ours). Even though local graffiti writers were not happy with the organization of the event, this Jam was a spark of inspiration to all graffiti writers in Serbia. According to one of the participants: "We were quite unhappy, and we know that they were burned by Studio B and B29, actually, wherever someone organized something like that we were treated like clowns, or nobody took care of us. They pick us up from the streets, show us, and then push us back to the streets. We learned a lot from that, so we became deft, we've decided that if they want to show us like in a circus we're going to ask for money."¹¹

9 Radošević, Lj. (2001) Interview with Dubi, March 2001, Belgrade.

10 Jam is an organized gathering where members of the subculture can showcase their skills. There are usually competitions in rollerblading, skateboarding, breakdancing, DJing, MCing and graffiti writing. Sometimes, only in graffiti writing context, it can mean painting of a big wall by a large number of graffiti writers usually with some music in the background.

11 Radošević Lj. (2001) *Interview with Cobesta28*, op. cit.

During that period the graffiti scene in Zemun started to stir. Shorty did his first graffiti on the health care center in Zemun in 1997, but because there were not other graffiti writers at the time in Zemun, he usually worked with crews from New Belgrade and the city center. Until then, only a few precious pieces were created in Zemun. Most famous one was done in the Boulevard of Nikola Tesla by the B.F.H. Crew in 1998. That summer Demon and Dubi met while riding skateboards, then Zoro (Rozer) joined them and they created ZAS (Zemun Art Scene Crew). The first graffiti they did together was *Shao Lin* and it took a while until they discovered their style and to upgrade it. At the beginning Dubi was not very active, he became more engaged when Kim-Tec spraycans came out. Demon was not wasting his time, though, he was painting a lot in order to figure out new techniques and what kind of style is the most alluring to him, because there was no one in Zemun that could show him.

They mostly painted in their own neighborhood, and their favorite spots were the white-tiled high rises at the beginning of Glavna Street. They seldomly did throw ups, and even less frequently they tagged, but they created the biggest number of 3D pieces and thus marked Zemun as the center of 3D graffiti. Soon they changed the name of the crew into NPC (New Paint Crew). Then they ventured out into the city center and New Belgrade even though they did not have the best working relationship with the crews from New Belgrade. Relatively frequently they painted with Shorty who introduced them to the guys from the city center. Leo and Shorty ordered caps for them because the NPC was not connected to the graffiti writers from abroad.

When Rozer stopped doing graffiti at the end of 2000, Demon, Shorty, Leo and A.K. started painting together more frequently. For Demon, that was a time of great productivity and innovations. Unexpected change happened when he started painting with Sane 751. Together with Dubi, two of them created the SDB Crew and started bombing the city. It seems quite unlikely that an artist who independently mastered the technique and created a unique style in Serbia, dropped everything and went back to the graffiti culture roots. Sane 751 was always into simple pieces and when he found the formula he liked he never changed it. Demon, on the other hand, always wanted more. Yet, in 2002, he started doing silver pieces that were completely opposite to his style up to that date. His style and attitude towards graffiti culture have surprised the local graffiti scene yet again.

Fresh talents of the Belgrade scene

The year that spread the optimism and had big promises, regarding the local graffiti scene, was the year 2000. Political situation was strenuous, but that much energy on the streets was not seen since the political protest of 1996/97. State of euphoria after the 5th of October overthrow of Milošević and the faith that after that everything will become better, was held dear by most of the citizens of Belgrade well into the next period. The third generation of graffiti writers began their graffiti exploration in that atmosphere. Besides, the older writers were solid support and were willing to share their knowledge and experience.

First graffiti in Miljakovac saw the light of the day the same year. Vle (Crnac) was rarely confined to one area, he wanted to do more walls. At the beginning we did letters but quickly realized that he was more comfortable with creating the characters. He was tagging as Crnac, meaning Black, in order to point out how different he is from other graffiti writers in Serbia. Unusual feature of his characters is that they “speak French”. His pieces attracted a few other guys from the same neighborhood and the next year they created MSC (Miljakovac Style Crew). Members of the crew were Mišel and Packe. Knowing Cobe resulted in intense exchange of pieces between Miljakovac and New Belgrade.

The 90210 Crew had new arrivals that year, namely, Dulait and Homine. They could see some pieces in the neighborhood and during NATO bombing met Bougie and Soter, that motivated them to continue. Just as he mastered the technique, and just as he was capable to start producing more and better, Homine had to quit graffiti. A severe allergy to the spraycan fumes made him renounce the activity he loved. But, the newcomer Dulait really surprised everyone with his talent. He was a valuable asset not only to this but to many other crews he was part of over the years. Graffiti writers usually start with writing the letters but very quickly Dulait understood that his characters have an aura that makes them different from any other character seen on our streets.

In New Belgrade there had to be some shuffling among the crews and crew members. Many writers that were not active stopped doing graffiti all together. Some crews lost their goals, while others merged and created a union in the form of BG Illegal Crew. This crew was composed of the active “leftovers” from other New Belgrade crews, 90210 Crew and several new writers (NecOne, Angel, Dulait). Before they formed the union, Halley’s Crew got new members, namely, NecOne and Angel. Two of them joined the crew from completely different starting points. NecOne was spending a lot of time with Halley’s since their establishment, practically he was their member even before he started doing graffiti. And since he was several years younger he had time to watch and learn. On the other hand, Angel was an author of alternative comics and he was not even thinking about taking on spraycan, but when his artwork was not officially acknowledged he decided to try another art avenue. He started doing graffiti with Sane 751 and Face in 2000 and he progressed very quickly.

The same year company Saatchi & Saatchi made a marketing campaign for the music event *Urban Experience*. They employed graffiti writers for the campaign and for the first time in Belgrade we could see hand made billboards. Alongside Angel, other writers that made billboards were Sane 751, Face, Gips, Sub and Abs. Angel and Negre together painted one of the billboards and that is how he learned the basic rules and small secrets of the writing technique. According to his age he could have been a member of the first generation of writers, but his particular style, fresh approach and his personal traits really put him in the right place and in the right generation. He made a significant difference on our scene when it comes to diversity of styles. One of the first pieces Halley’s crew made with Angel at Jugopetrol hall of fame was under the slogan “Why did you leave me?” (Kaži zašto me ostavi?) and it was chosen as the best graffiti of the new millennium by the B92 radio.

Finally, the number of the BG Illegal Crew settled on nine members – Sub, Bougie, Negre, Dulait, Necone, Leco, Abs, Cobes and Angel. They really understood the value of community and they were among the first ones that accepted the benefits of the World Wide Web. They created the first Serbian graffiti site www.bgillegal.com and, naturally, they were the ones who maintained it. Next to the standard markings of their primary crews, such as Block Art and H-Zone (Halley Zone), they started adding the internet site in their new pieces as well.

Although Sector was not a member of the crew he painted a lot with the “illegals”. He knew NecOne from before but they did not do graffiti together earlier. In high school Sector met Jesma (Жесма) and Snipe, the future members of the new crew. LMC (The Line Machine Crew or MAC from Machina) was active only one year from the end of the 2000 until the end of 2001 but it officially dismantled three years later. Jesma was one of the rare graffiti writers that tried to do pieces in cyrillic letters and he was quite good at it. Crew was primarily based in Čukarica where they did their first pieces, but soon enough they were working in other city areas as well. From time to time Dulait was joining them for action. According to Sector: “The sensation you have when you do trains is really good ‘cause you’re sneaking like a partisan (*partizan*).”¹² It was then that Sektor and Dulait discovered their affinities towards the unusual characters that look as if they stepped out of a weird animation or a child’s drawing: “I find those characters genius, even though the old schoolers with an attitude think that’s total shit.”¹³

Beginning and end

When foreign graffiti writers start visiting it is a sign that you have been officially accepted into the global graffiti family. We know that German writer Kobolt came to Belgrade in 1997 but not that many foreign writers came to Belgrade before 2000. Personal contact is crucial for the adequate distribution of knowledge. The crucial point was exchange with the graffiti writers from the surrounding countries. When a writer sets off on a journey he does not want to visit only one country, he wants to visit all other countries around it and to do graffiti in all of them. But he needs a place to stay. So, the foreign writers come to your city, and your place, with recommendation, and you host them and feed them properly, and sleeping is not a big deal at all since you go bombing in the night. You get to meet the foreign writer while you are writing, that is the most important part. They are, anyway, more interested in a good bombing than in a good hosting. That, on the other hand, opens up a possibility for your travel since every writer is happy to return the favor.

This is how the new world without borders and national differences is created. It is a world full of new adventures and information of what is going on in the other scenes. All of that had to be on standby on our scene, we needed to establish relationships with the writers from the region and from the former Yugoslav republics. We had to take it one

¹² Radošević, Lj. (2002) *Interview with Sector*, April 2002, Belgrade.

¹³ Ibid.

step at the time. Some of the first guests in Belgrade were ones from the North of Serbia. Those were mostly writers from the Novi Sad crews such as DNK (Batos, Epok, Boem, Scare) and GSF, Lemon from Senta and Skec from Subotica(RS)/Szeged (HU) from the VBS Crew (Vojvodina Bombers Crew). In Belgrade Skec did pieces with very complex wild style and B-boy characters, while Lemon liked to illustrate the atmosphere of the regular Vojvodina small town, by doing, as Cobe says, village twats and wells.

In 2001 the first Senta Jam was organized by Lemon. It was successful because it was organized by a graffiti writer, the only person who knows what participants really needed. A large wall, a lot of spraycans, a large number of writers, a chill atmosphere and a huge pot of goulash. There were graffiti writers from Novi Sad, from Hungary and, of course, from Belgrade (Angel, Dulait, Sektor, Necone, Negre, Sub, Bougie, Cobe). Events like this entice the overall progress (in style, productivity, networking) and creation of a more cohesive and productive scene. AFO (Anti Fascist Youth Crew or Atifašistička omladina in Serbian) is a crew that was established the same year. They are special because they have created a local version of anti-style and because of the composition of their members. Next to the Belgrade graffiti writers (Mišel, Ceger, Bougie, Dulait) they had two foreign writers as well. Imun is a writer from Banja Luka (BiH) and Bask (Peqmez) who is also from BiH but lives in Germany. They all do simple graffiti, letters are easily readable and they look as if they were scribbled, and characters look as if they were made by children with lines all over the place and very few colors. Messages they leave are easily understandable, funny, cheeky, and sometimes they show a high level of social awareness.

Cultural exchange with writers from BiH was established and writers from Croatia started visiting on a more regular basis. A period of high productivity and intense creativity started. For this period it is characteristic that we have a higher presence of the characters and letters inspired by the fonts inspired by the commercial design and logos. This is a consequence of “the maturing” scene. Many graffiti writers were around that time doing their graphic design studies, and they were able to try out their design in real life, in the streets. Interesting fact is that many of them went to the Design High School some attended Graphic High School (Face, Cobe, Msk, Sektor, Jesma) and even more of them did university studies related to many branches of art, such as the College of Graphic Design, now Belgrade Business and Arts Academy of Applied Studies (Negre, Sub, Sektor), Faculty of Contemporary Arts (Dmon, Spin), College of Fine and Applied Arts (Angel), and Faculty of Architecture (Dulait).

While “AFO heroes” were working on deconstructing the graffiti guidelines, Negre and Sub were trying to reach technical perfection when it comes to style. At the same time there was a retro movement. Wildstyle evolved in many different directions and we can still find those iterations today, but the old school version is still widely popular. Spin was working on his version of wildstyle because he believed that on the local scene there is still reminiscence of the old school graffiti. His aim was to have his graffiti look like large stickers on the wall. Totally different approach can be found in bombers Kang, Worm, Snupi and the RTS Crew (Rakovica Terrorists Crew). At the time the only active

graffiti writer from the city center was Folk who took a new tag Sekta (the Sect) which was so provocative that it triggered some quite negative public reactions.

At that moment in time professional quality spraycans were available for a few years in several shops, but with the creation of an online shop www.deadlemonade.com they could, for the first time, find everything they needed in one place. For a short while they even had a branch in one of the Zemun's basements. Since graffiti culture became present in Serbia this year saw the biggest amount of jams. It started in Subotica, continued in Belgrade and Niš, and ended simultaneously with two events in Belgrade in the middle of July. In each of these events Montana was the main or partial sponsor. That was a good and productive year that, unfortunately, did not have the desired effect. As with many things that happen in Serbia that make no sense, the almost complete and abrupt end of graffiti activities was in 2004. Potential explanation could be found in the new crisis that took over Serbia and Montenegro after the assassination of prime minister Đinđića in 2003. The sudden plummeting of the financial means of the regular citizens as a response to the political crisis could be just some of them. We also need to mention that the most active writers went into another phase of life where they had to enter the job market and sustain themselves were just some pieces of puzzle called life. In 2004 DeadLemonade was closed down because there was no market logic in selling spraycans in a country where nobody does graffiti.

Here we go again

Towards the end of 2004 we started seeing some throw ups again around the city center and on the vehicles of public transportation. Crews like PHL and CKR and some freelance graffiti writers that do only bombs give us an impression that everything has started from scratch. The only significant event is the emergence of the stencils. Technique that has been used in Europe for more than thirty years has emerged shyly through the artworks of only one artist. We find the artworks of TKV – The Kraljica Vila (The Fairy Queen) from Branko's bridge to the city center in relatively small numbers keeping in mind the fact that the use of stencils can allow you quite large production. It is interesting that TKV mostly presents motifs from modern art such as Frida Khalo's self portrait, Klimt's *Kiss*, Munch's *Scream*, or popular culture characters such as Amélie Poulain.

The following spring brought just enough activities that we could not say that graffiti culture in Belgrade is dead. Most significant and, at the same time, most interesting occurrence is the JDW crew (Jedi Wall Crew) which has a Serbian version of the name as well – Javni WC (The Public WC). Members of this crew are well known writers such as Angel, Sektor and Dulait who, while working together, developed some form of street art which is quite new in our city. While previously graffiti culture has influenced some of the important art movements, now graffiti culture receives the influences from contemporary art. In order to understand something as graffiti it does not need to have a recognisable form of graffiti from New York. Deconstruction of the style through anti-style was a significant moment for the emergence of street art.

At the moment when this thesis was written we can find JWC on the Hippodrome fence. With those artworks Belgrade has finally become part of the world scene. One of the reasons behind that is that during the 2003 jam our writers formed good connections with the writers from Croatia and BIH, and consequently they worked throughout the 2004 more frequently in Zagreb and Tuzla than in Belgrade. At the biggest world graffiti manifestation Meeting of Styles in Zagreb some local writers participated such as Lemon, Sot, Sektor, Dulait and Angel. Most significant Croatian crew YCP (Yo Clan Pose), established in 1992, admitted new members that year - Angel, Dulait, Sektor, Rea (Mostar, BIH) and Aorta (Tuzla, BIH).

Girls with attitude or bros from the hood

In Cobe's words at the time: "Girls are mostly just tagging. Graffiti became a real man's sport over here. That's really ludicrous because some of the pioneers were women. It started more or less on equal terms, but even now women have no good rating to speak of. They are more like bros from the hood and they should call guys out on it."¹⁴

If in the previous sections about Belgrade graffiti you did not find much details about the girls who do graffiti, the reason is quite simple. All along there were only two of them. Keeping in mind that in graffiti culture, just like in most other subcultures that are dominated by men, men were the ones that established their own rules and there was not much place for women. In her study of graffiti culture in New York, Pamela Dennant says: "Female writers then were always slaves of the male dominance of the subculture, always having to be one step ahead in order to be taken seriously as graffiti writers. They were always on the outside, sometimes breaking through into the inside. Females had a lot more to prove than their male counterparts, while aiming for the same goals of style and fame."¹⁵

It really was not easy for women to take on this activity but some of them had an important contribution in the development of graffiti culture. At the same time when Taki 183 was leaving his tags in New York in the late 60s, two girls who were tagging together were also active - Barbara 62 and Eva 62. Girls were mostly doing the walls and handball courts, they were also tagging on the inside of the subway trains, but Kathy 161 was one of the first who did depots. One of the most common excuses for guys to refuse to take girls out with them to paint was that they were afraid girls might get hurt. But if a girl had a good style she could have been admitted as a member of a crew. In UGA (United Graffiti Artists) Hugo Martinez invited two pioneers such as Charmin and Stoney. Charmin became notorious as the first person who tagged the Statue of Liberty in New York, while Stoney was a member of Ex-Vandals Crew. The best known and most appreciated female graffiti writer was Lady Pink who was working shoulder to shoulder with the most important writers on the early New York scene. She is to some extent still active today but she mostly does legal pieces.

¹⁴ Radošević, Interview with Cobesta28, op. cit.

¹⁵ Dennant, Pamela, *Urban Expression... Urban Assault... Urban Wildstyle... New York City Graffiti*, <https://www.graffiti.org/faq/pamdennant.html>, 18. October 2004.

In 2000 and 2001, Deb 3 and Shady were the only two girls who did graffiti in Belgrade. While she was hanging around with the crew from the Square, Deb 3 was just tagging. For a while she was interested in animation and while socializing with Leo she started doing pieces. The ghosts, characters from her animations, became her favorite topic. But her productive period did not last long. After she stopped doing graffiti she moved out of the country and to my knowledge she never continued doing graffiti.

It seemed at the time that Shady will have a longer career in writing. With lots of energy and motivation she started painting and sometimes she would surprise people with her tenacity. According to Shorty: “Unfortunately, I still haven’t done any [rooftops] but lately I’m looking at potential roofs and tall buildings, but I still haven’t found the good ones. While my friend Senka [Shady] already did it, she just climbed on someone’s house and did it.”¹⁶ Even though she went out to do graffiti on her own, she was sincerely supported by all the graffiti writers she socialized with (such as Shorty, Sane 751, and Dubi): “I haven’t painted with the guys so far, we tried to organize it but we didn’t do anything together. I’m not into having a crew. I don’t think it’s necessary to have a crew, what I care about is to have someone next to me while we paint, so I wouldn’t be alone.”¹⁷ She received a lot of support, magazines and instructions, but it seems, that was not enough. She started painting with a lot of enthusiasm but she stopped abruptly and Belgrade lost an opportunity to get pieces done by female hand.

We can say with confidence that Belgrade graffiti writers are quite emancipated (at least when it comes to male/female graffiti writing topics), because in none of the interviews done with them for the purpose of this research had any of them had negative comments regarding the girls who are trying to do graffiti. They all thought that girls should do graffiti as well. There is still a relatively low percentage of women who do graffiti but it is no longer a taboo. It is possible that one of the reasons for their disinterest lies in their affinities. If we take a look at the currently active women that do art in the streets (Egr, Nina, Joan, Fafi, Lus, Miss Van, Faith 47), we can notice that their art has a different sensitivity and gravitas. They radiate with warmth, a quality that is profoundly rare in pieces done by male graffiti writers.¹⁸

Writing spots

There are many walls in Belgrade that can host graffiti but many of them will never get one. In order to “activate” a particular spot it needs to be compliant with certain standards:

- Spot needs to be visible or to have high frequency of passers by or vehicles of public transportation,
- The wall needs to be flat, or at least, painted so it would not suck in too much color,
- Neighbors and passers by need to be ok with this kind of activity,

16 Radošević, Lj. (2001) *Interview with Shorty (Evil)*, February 2001, Belgrade.

17 Radošević, Lj. (2001) *Interview with Shady*, February 2001, Belgrade.

18 See: Ganz, N. (2004) *Graffiti World*, Thames & Hudson, London.

- Wall needs to be large-scale so that multiple people can do graffiti at the same time.

Here stated rules are always applicable, except in the case of bombing. Then, the only thing that matters is that whatever you put on the wall is visible. Besides walls, favorite spots are metal surfaces (rollo shutters, garage doors, basement doors and so on), poles, all spaces next to the highways, and especially highly rated are trains and vehicles of public transportation.

The oldest, and still the most important, spot for doing graffiti is Block 45. The walls on the buildings in this neighborhood are perfect for doing graffiti, locals are so used to this activity that they use graffiti as a form of orienteering marks. Sometimes neighbors bring out *rakija* to offer to graffiti writers, and some moms send their kids to bring them sweets. It is not a wonder that here we see the best graffiti in the city. Quai on the bank of river Sava, where Block 45 is situated, used to be a favorite spot as well but now it fell into disrepair and does not have that many graffiti anymore. It seems that the role Sava quai used to have was handed over to the concrete fence of the IMT factory across the street from the Block 70. Here we can find a multitude of quality graffiti but mostly the writers from New Belgrade. Intentionally or not, it appears that this wall is reserved for the local writers.

Concrete fence of Jugopetrol in Radnička street is a place well known to all writers and Belgraders alike. Previously one would paint on this wall only when they were sure of their mastery. After one mastered their technique and style they would dare to paint on Jugopetrol. Having in mind that this is a prestigious gallery space, if you want your piece to stay in the wall for a while it has to be good. And if someone dares to paint a piece of a lesser quality they would know from the start that it was not going to last. Later on, things changed. Some young writers realized that that is an “easy” spot for doing graffiti and we started seeing some that were not so good. It seems that youngsters consider this spot for practicing so the experienced writers lost their motivation to paint on this wall. But, apart from the trains, this is still a place where locals bring the foreign guests to do their pieces.

In close proximity to the Jugopetrol we can find a concrete fence of the Hippodrome, which offers ideal conditions for the graffiti. This spot was activated a bit later than Jugopetrol, and it became popular only in 2000. During NATO bombing this fence was severely damaged and after it was renovated its gray color was very inviting for the graffiti writers. At the moment this thesis was being written, it is THE place for doing graffiti. Its height and length are ideal for the activities of the JWC.

A lot of concrete and a lot of graffiti can be seen at the Mostar interchange, an inaccessible and dirty place, which makes a great canvas for the graffiti writers of Belgrade. We can not say that underground passages in Bulevar Oslobođenja and Autokomanda interchanges are any better. Thousands of people pass through daily, and they all try to stay there the least possible amount of time. However, an unintentional glance at one of the pieces with bright colors can direct their attention towards the artwork instead of the smell of urine and garbage.

In the city center there are not that many places where one can do graffiti. Old buildings with dilapidated walls, a lot of passers by, and police patrols are not good conditions for graffiti writing. However, there are still several graffiti oases where it is possible to engage in this activity. Between Kralja Petra and Rajičeva streets there was a park between two buildings whose gable ends made perfect spots for graffiti. This is a spot where only guys from the city center, and sometimes guys from Zemun, used to paint. This was for a very long time terminus for the trolleybuses which in 2004 became a building site, which turned into an archeological site, which turned into the largest shopping mall in the city center that was opened in 2017. Graffiti spot with the best view in the city is a plateau between Pop Lukina street, Male stepenice street and Branko's bridge. During the day it is a tiny capsule of calmness in the busy city, in the night it is a stage with incredible light effects. A spot in front of the "obelisk" is an inspiration to all. "Obelisk" is a colloquial expression that refers to the monument dedicated to the Non-Aligned countries movement whose first summit was held in Belgrade in 1961. Steps that lead under the Branko's bridge would look absolutely horrifying if it was not for graffiti that gave it a bit of color. Even the city center can do with some color. Highrises with white tiles, in Glavna street, at the beginning of Zemun were the favorite spot of graffiti writers from that neighborhood. There we can see really good pieces, the atmosphere is homie and friendly like in the Block 45. There are some other good spots like Zemun quai, but the aforementioned is still the favorite one.

All previously mentioned spots are good ones but nothing can substitute the excitement and adrenaline they have when they paint the trains. This is considered to be "the original graffiti canvas" and has unprecedented allure for the graffiti writers all over the world. Sometimes this can be achieved by painting the public transportation vehicles, but it is not the same thing. However, every spot where they do graffiti has a particular quality and atmosphere which make writers go back there again. Each of the aforementioned places, more or less, hold the status of the Hall of Fame.

"A wall is a wall, even if in a gallery"¹⁹

Even in New York, among the pioneers of graffiti writing, debate about the graffiti in galleries became omnipresent. And still, up to this date, debating if graffiti lose their essence if they enter the art world and mainstream art or that is just one way for transformation and progress, is present. This dilemma, most likely, will never be solved because each new generation of graffiti writers is reopening it over and over again. On the other hand, the art world has accepted graffiti writing as an artistic expression and is dedicated to following their development. In Serbia that is not the case. Maybe it is because graffiti writing as a movement appeared comparatively late in our environment or because of the political situation of the country and consequently in our official art scene. This situation, however, turned out to be quite beneficial for the graffiti writers. They were kept out of the official events and movements and as such they could work without disturbance.

¹⁹ Radošević, Lj. (2002) *Interview with Negre*, Februar 2002, Belgrade.

In 1997 Belgrade got its first graffiti wall in the form of a mural. In Tadeuša Koščuška street, just behind the city library, French writer Mr. Andre filled in the gable end with his recognizable stick man. He is one of the best known graffiti writers, or street artists, who has been painting in many European cities. This mural was part of the production of BELEF festival, funded by the city council, and it was protected until the building was torn down between 2004 and 2007.

It took four years for the next project to happen and this time the initiators were the local graffiti writers. Members of the BG Illegal Crew had an idea to paint the walls of the home for the children without parental care "Drinka Pavlović" they received help from the art history professor Irina Subotić and architecture student Jelisaveta Mihajlović. Before this event Jelisaveta got to know the BG Illegal Crew, she got interested in graffiti and was very happy to help with the organization. She graduated at the Faculty of architecture with an MA thesis about graffiti.

In spring of 2001 Student Cultural Center hosted an event where foreign artists used spraycans to paint the base of the building. This intervention was painted over very quickly and to my knowledge there is no photo material related to it. A few months later, across the street from the Student Cultural Center several Slovenian artists organized the communal mural inspired with graffiti writing. Ilija Terrah, Boris Bačić and Matej Kocjan have opened Flower square for the direct communication with the passers by where they had an opportunity to try the spraycans, use the stencils and try doing art in the public space. As a local support there were graffiti writers Folk (Lortek) and Demon who shared their experience with graffiti writing. This event was part of the Belgrade Summer Festival under the title "Constellation BELEF 2001" and that year the city was in focus: "As we deal with the reality of the city from a research and critical standpoint, with traditional and potential functions of its space, its possibilities for artistic expression, BELEF 2001 is pointedly marking several artistic interventions in the city space."²⁰

At the same time TV director Tanja Fero, from the culture department of the national TV station RTS, does a show about the streets. Originally her idea was to talk about broad topics such as billboards, murals, graffiti and so on. After she met Folk (Lortek), and later on me, her concept was drastically changed. It was supposed to be one 20 minute show and it ended up being a two part show in which the part about graffiti culture was the longest. This TV crew managed to document the making of the community mural at Flower square. The huge success of this show led to a new one, also made in two episodes, which were broadcasted in 2003.

Regardless of that, one thing shot out graffiti into the art world's starry sky and that is due to the October Salon. In 2001, the 42nd October Salon changed the curatorial practice. It gave the role of curators to the artists among others, Era Milivojević. His concept was "anonymous art" which he explains as following: "Anonymous Art is an attempt of liberation from the 'artistic ego', its suppression, not in an ascetic way, but in a way of dedication. To be dedicated, means to put above you, that what you do, and not your

20 Katalog *Sazvežđe BELEF 2001*, Kulturni centar Beograd, Beograd, 2001.

own ego. It is a way of being apersonal, which does not mean the loss of identity, but a balance between ego and your artwork. To reach that kind of balance, even if for a little while, means to be free.”²¹

A large piece done by Demon and Dubi on the construction site metal panels at the YUBC center in New Belgrade, Era found by chance and made it part of his selection. He was impressed by Demon’s artwork and he interpreted it as a form of a “lyrical painting”. Regarding dimensions of the artwork, Era even compared it to Jackson Pollock. The metal panels were deconstructed and moved into the gallery Cvijeta Zuzorić, and after the exhibition they were returned to their original site. Media hype was quite present, and TV Studio B announced the public call for the artists to appear so that they can interview them. At the end Era and Demon were guests at the art show where they talked about their personal understanding of this intervention.

Another artist has selected graffiti in his exhibition. In March of 2002, at the gallery House of Đura Jakšić, the exhibition “Self Portrait” was opened. Original idea was made by Đorđe Arnaut who invited different artists to present their interpretation of this traditional topic with contemporary spin, and with a wide array of techniques that are available to us today. Canvas made by Folk (Leo, Lortek) was purposefully made for this exhibition, and at that moment, it was the first graffiti made on canvas. Next to the painting the legend said “FOLK - born 1980, Belgrade, youth from the streets.”

Photo exhibition, under the title “My wall, my rules”, was on show from 21st of May until the 10th of June 2002 at the gallery 29 Steps in Dom Omladine Beograda. Borivoje Bjelić Lun, an enthusiast, a man whose love for graffiti is the only thing in common he has with graffiti writers, has been photographing graffiti since 1996 with his 35mm camera (nowadays we think of that model as a one-use camera).

“2002% OF EVERYTHING” was a slogan of BELEF in 2002, when Mr. Andre visited Belgrade again. This was a shared project with the local artists who live in France – Vuk Vidor and Marko Velk. Concept was created by Vuk Vidor and Mr. Andre did graffiti on a series of locations around the city. It was almost like a “search for a gold” game with the local inhabitants. This project, under the title “Urban Stories” was imagined in the form of a comic, in order to read it you needed to walk the city. Positive adjectives, such as words BEAUTIFUL, FANTASTIC, GORGEOUS, NICE, POETIC, PRETTY, ROMANTIC, and WONDERFUL, were created in the dilapidated places in the city and they were reminding us about the important feelings we tend to lose sight of in the busy pace of everyday life.

Another big, urban event, which among others hosted the graffiti writers, happened on 29th of June at the Tašmajdan sports center. “Belgrade Fireballs”, a streetball tournament, had an interesting programme. There were 16 streetball teams, some of the best known Belgrade DJs and bands and top 10 graffiti competition. Segment with graffiti writing was organized by Folk and graffiti writers who participated were Skec, NecOne, Negre, Lemon, Dmon, Shorty, and others. Even though the selection was great the audi-

21 42. Oktob(Art)ski salon, Kulturni centar Beograd, Beograd, 2001.

ence was not very interested. That is the reason why the segment with graffiti was not really a competition, it turned into a performance. Writers came, did their thing, and left. This was discouraging for any future organizers that had similar ideas.

That year was concluded with the filming of the new show by Tanja Fero. This time, besides me, there were two colleagues from art history that follow this phenomenon – Ivana Marjanović and Marija Kovač. Segment of the show related to photography was narrated by Marko Miletić (Foto Ćomi), who studied photography in high school and discovered the beauty of actions graffiti writers took him to. Again there were two shows, and while the first one was talking about the history of graffiti movement and different activities, the second one was about graffiti entering the art world. We had an opportunity to talk to Era Milivojević about his selection for October Salon the previous year. A photography exhibition of Marko Miletić “New Way, New Life” was also documented. Part of the exhibition was also a painting of the junk appliances in front of the Student Cultural Center. There was also a video art under the title “Bombing” by Tanja Fero. This exhibition was part of the “April Encounters” manifestation which was organized by the Student Cultural Center. This concluded the year with the most graffiti activities in the official institutions in Belgrade.

Year 2003 started with the exhibition by Miletić and continued with graffiti writers participating in an charitable event where they painted, together with other artists, a mural on the fence of the school for the deaf children Stefan Dečanski in Belgrade. By working shoulder to shoulder with other artists, it became obvious that graffiti writers have a much better understanding of open space. They conceptualized the space in a different, more coherent way, they worked much faster and used spraycans, which allowed them to finish earlier than others. Traditionally trained artis had much more issues in finishing the art pieces on a smaller scale.

In May, at the gallery Zvono, Vesna Golubović had her exhibition. Since 1981 she has lived in New York where she had an opportunity to meet graffiti writers. She exhibited in Fashion Moda gallery and her artwork bears the influence of graffiti. Her inspiration is an unusual blend of the Serbian medieval frescoes and graffiti writing that meet in the linear domain. An interesting artwork, inspired by graffiti, appeared at the annual student show of the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade which was held at the Museum of Yugoslav History. Aleksandra Stokić’s diploma work was called Silver Graffiti where she presented seven silver rings inspired by graffiti – Dance of Circles, Street Wibe, Neon Temple, are just some of the titles of very warebel rings.

It was not surprising that a graffiti jam was part of the official BELEF program in 2003 that was titled “Logical”. We could logically expect graffiti to be part of this manifestation since they were part of it in the past two years. Up till then graffiti were done by foreign artists and this year the initiative and a project came from Marko Miletić and me. Coordinators of the visual aspect of the project (sketch for the graffiti mural, selection of the artists, color pallet, calculator for the number of spraycans and so on) were Aleksandar Milivojević – Angel and Jovan Mikonjić – Sektor. The project called *Nov način novi život*

(*New way new life*) lasted for three days and during that period there was a graffiti mural in Pop Lukina street and a graffiti jam on the fence of the IMT in New Belgrade. There were over twenty graffiti writers from Serbia and from abroad (Hungary, BIH and Croatia) and it was the largest graffiti jam that was organized in Belgrade up to that date. Media coverage was unexpectedly very good and the municipality of New Belgrade turned out to be very good for collaboration. Municipality covered part of the costs for the graffiti jam that took place in New Belgrade, they provided the sound system for the DJ set and food and drinks for the participants of the Jam. Even if there was one rainy day this project was considered as an absolute success.

By coincidence a project organized by Marija Kovač and Ivana Marjanović under the title “Follow the Sign” was happening at the same time. This was also part of a larger project Public Art & Public Space (PAPS) that is organized by the Faculty for the Architecture in Belgrade. The idea was for the project to have two parts: production of the graffiti as the street signs in the city center and graffiti jam on the wall close to the old Sava bridge, because the topic of that year was the regeneration of the river banks. Because of the lack of funding and uncertainty of the organizers of PAPS, regarding the legal and technical organization, there was only one tram that was painted by the graffiti writers. This tram was running on line no. 2. This turned out to be an unexpected success. Unplanned collaboration between the graffiti writers that participated in this project with the writers from abroad that came for the graffiti jam that was part of BELEF, produced a redesigned tram that was visually very impressive. Organizers of PAPS were so impressed that this project won the best project prize that year and they already planned to support the painting of several new trams next year.

Exhibition “Paintings” was an appropriate end to this very productive year. In the main gallery of Student Cultural Center from 24th to 30th November we could visit the exhibition by Emir Šehanović (Esh), Dušan Rajić (Dulait) and Jovan Mikonjić (Sektor). While working with these artists in previous years I have applied for the call with this exhibition as a curator. This turned out to be one of the most visited exhibitions in SKC in that season, and not without reason. Pieces exhibited by these artists had almost magnetic properties in attracting the visitors and coaxing the smiles on their faces. All visitors left the gallery with a smile on their faces. Paintings were made on canvas, gypsum boards, wood boards, plywood boards and other movable flat surfaces on which one could do the painting. With the enthusiasm of children they imagined these artworks in a simple and effective way, in the form of children's drawings. They used spraycans, acrylic paints and brushes, that were also used for production of their personalized billboard they made for the exhibition. Stop motion movie of this activity was made by Marko Miletić.

After the end of the exhibition this billboard was exhibited in front of SKC for months. During this exhibition, as a part of V. I. P. gallery, but presented in the main hall of SKC, we could see a multimedial project of Marko Miletić. Name of the project was “You Won't Be Able to Breathe” which was also the sentence painted by graffiti writers on the large canvases on which there was a projection of the trains. In a large hall of SKC one

really could not breathe. Visitors could experience to certain extent the elements which are well known to every graffiti writer – dark, scent of the color, sound of the shaking spraycan and good atmosphere that triggers the adrenalin.

As it was mentioned, during 2004 there was only one event related to graffiti. That was the “Follow the Sign” project that turned into “Colordrive” and three new trams were painted that year. A whole project and painting process was filmed and made into a short documentary under the same title “Colordrive”. Since then there were no important events or exhibitions in our capital city. Is this positive trend going to continue it remains to be seen. But one thing is certain, in all previous projects there was so much effort, enthusiasm and time invested, that without that input nothing of significance can really happen in future.

Conclusion

Since their appearance at the end of the 1960s graffiti writing has received animated reactions from the general public. The understanding was fluctuating from absolute delight and euphoria to judgment and anathema. At the beginning they attracted only the interest of the researchers who were interested in deviant behavior and street gangs. But graffiti culture despite the bad odds managed to thrive. Hip-Hop culture spread them all over the world like a dandelion fluff. In the early 1980s graffiti entered European galleries and then the streets, while changing in the process and gaining new forms and concepts. The European audience understood them as an art form even before graffiti reached its streets. But that did not stop policy makers and law to understand them as vandalism.

All former Yugoslav republics, and especially Serbia and Croatia, have the established graffiti culture movements. Belgrade, officially, saw the first “wild” graffiti in 1996/97. A group of youngsters that refused to become a part of the existing system, created their artworks on the city walls and vehicles of public transportation. Period of almost complete cultural and economical isolation from the rest of the world brought many new movements. One of those was graffiti culture. In form of tags, pieces and characters they were not interesting to the current political system since they were not explicitly writing against the regime. Legal system was not interested in them, the public did not judge them, and so the Belgrade graffiti had a good environment for the development. Many graffiti writers left their pieces on the walls as individuals, as members of crews, but their presence never reached disturbing numbers. Almost as if it was under some invisible control, the number of Belgrade graffiti writers was always on the same level. This group, with all of its subcultural signifiers, functions as a world of its own. And it is quite interesting that the emergence of graffiti writing in Belgrade coincided with the similar conditions as the emergence of graffiti culture in New York in the 1970s. This can serve as one of the most important lines of inquiry in future research.

Being legal or not, does not impede researchers in understanding graffiti writing as an art form, even as an independent visual expression, an aesthetic phenomenon that does not need to be part of an art world. They appeared in the time of the postmo-

dern era but with the distinctive elements of the avant-garde movements, graffiti culture can be fully understood as an art form. Graffiti are part of the contemporary folklore, ethnological phenomenon of the urban setting. They appear and disappear in an instant, but to those that see them (whether they like them or not) they bring color to the day and potential of enjoyment in art, stimuli to think about the messages and to find the moment of respite and contemplation in monotonous and stressful life in the city. In a hectic city environment there is a fast, explosive, adrenaline charged art, the only one that gives the color to the gray of concrete and the filth of the streets.

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Љиљана Радошевић

Стрит арт Београд

ИСТОРИЈСКА РАСПРАВА О ПОЈАВИ И РАЗВОЈУ ГРАФИТА У БЕОГРАДУ ОД 1996. ДО 2005. ГОДИНЕ

Сажетак: У овом тексту, који је скраћена верзија мастер рада одбрањеног на Катедри за историју уметности Филозофског факултета у Београду 2005, фокусирали смо се на културу графита. Ова култура појавила се у Београду средином деведесетих година прошлог века и отада се развијала кроз успоне и падове. У раду је представљен најзначајнији формативни период локалног графити покрета. Подаци су прикупљани из интервјуа са локалним цртачима и кроз укључивање у београдску графити сцену. Тако је истраживање, започето из позиције историје уметности и анализе визуелних одлика графити културе, постало етнолошко истраживање савременог града и супкултурног уметничког покрета. Резултати су показали да на београдској графити сцени постоје значајне разлике у односу на сцене других великих градова. Ове разлике последица су социјалног, политичког и економског контекста у Србији крајем деведесетих и почетком двехиљадитих година.

Кључне речи: *графити култура, супкултура, град, Београд*

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Belgrade

WRITING MY NAME: GRAFFITI MOVEMENT IN BELGRADE 1984 – 2003 AND THE STORY OF GRAFFITI JAMS 2006 – 2013

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Abstract: *The article focuses on the early history of the graffiti movement in Belgrade. Due to the lack of literature on the subject, it was necessary to conduct interviews with several active graffiti writers at the period to construct this history, trace the major participants, understand the techniques, styles, meaning, locations, and development of the scene. New Belgrade's Block 45 is widely recognized as the origin point of the movement, yet other parts of the city have been taken into account, as the scene was spreading and many local crews were forming. By 2003, the scene matured, producing several generations of writers and gained significant media attention, especially after several organized graffiti jams and slow inclusion into the art establishment. From that period on, the author participated in organizing several graffiti jam festivals, and this article is providing both organizational background and a discussion of their relevance and importance for the Belgrade (and Serbian) graffiti culture.*

Key words: *Graffiti history, Graffiti jams, Belgrade, Meeting of Styles*

Introduction: Sources and early history of the graffiti movement¹

Until the beginning of the 1980s, the graffiti movement was exclusively linked to the USA. However, soon this movement took on a global character and spread all over the world. The first stop was Europe, primarily Paris, Berlin, and London. Why did this movement go beyond the borders of the USA? The culture of writing one's name is closely related, first of all, to the social situation and to the need of a generation to imprint its name, and its mark in history, and graffiti was recognized by a small number of young people as precisely one of the ways to achieve this.

¹ Stevanović, B. (2013) *Spoljni uticaji na grafiti pokret u Beogradu od 1995. do 2003. godine*, BA thesis, Department of History, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade.

Due to the liberal policy towards the lifestyle and culture of the West, the graffiti movement gained its followers in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, primarily in Zagreb and Belgrade in the mid-1980s. In Belgrade, a crew of breakdance dancers called FANTASTIC BOYS wrote the first graffiti RAP CITY CREW. Their work was followed by a very young graffiti writer at the time, who still presents himself as JENS, who managed, after the shutdown of the graffiti movement in Belgrade in the period from 1990 to 1995, to restore it and start the Belgrade graffiti scene that continues to this day.

We associate the beginning of the Belgrade graffiti scene primarily with the crew FANTASTIC BOYS / RAP CITY CREW since they used both names. However, we have little data for the period of the graffiti movement in Belgrade from 1984 to 1990. They are mostly oral interviews collected by a graffiti writer named HOPE and based on them, he compiled an article “Stara škola Beograda” (Old School of Belgrade), which was published in the first Serbian graffiti magazine, *Balkan Round*, in 2009.²

For the period from 1995 to 2003, an analysis of the interviews of graffiti writers who marked that period of the Belgrade graffiti scene was used. Interviews were given by DUBI, LEO, MSK, NEGRE, SUBZERO, ABS, COBES, SPIN, DULAIT, VLE and SECTOR in the period from February 2001 to April 2002. The interviews were conducted by Ljiljana Radošević, a graduate art historian. The analysis was additionally completed with data from interviews with graffiti writers PANK, DEMON, HOPE, MIŠEL and JUNK, which were conducted by the author of this paper in the period November to December 2012. While PUNK and DEMON belong to writers who marked the period covered by this work, HOPE, MIŠEL and JUNK represent a generation of graffiti writers who, observing the aforementioned older writers, entered the world of graffiti at the end of this period. Their recollection of the period is also very important because it gives us an insight into the legacy of the graffiti movement in Belgrade. This insight allows us to see if the new generations of graffiti writers in Belgrade had the same motives for writing their alter ego all over the city or if they were some new reasons and motives under the influence of new circumstances and events that surrounded them.

Graffiti movement in Yugoslavia 1984 – 1990

At the beginning of the 1980s, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) was a country that, apart from its socialist system, did not belong to the countries of the Eastern Bloc.³ The wave of hip-hop culture that swept Europe in the 80s also swept SFRY, and two cities very quickly accepted everything that this culture brought with it, and that included graffiti. Those two cities were Belgrade and Zagreb.

At the beginning of the 80s, the first crew was formed in Belgrade, which primarily dealt with breakdancing, and then graffiti. The crew was called FANTASTIC BOYS

² Hope (2009) Stara škola Beograda / Old School of Belgrade, *Balkan Round*, Issue #1, Belgrade, pp. 4-7.

³ See: Vučetić, R. (2012) *Koka-kola socijalizam: Amerikanizacija jugoslovenske popularne kulture šezdesetih godina XX veka*, Beograd, Službeni glasnik, pp. 397-399.

and was also known as RAP CITY CREW. This crew was created in Block 45 in the municipality of New Belgrade. Block 45, in addition to its isolation from the city center, working-class character, and proximity to the Sava river, in the following years became known as the place where the first graffiti in Belgrade appeared.⁴ Even today, this block is an open air graffiti gallery and for every Belgrade graffiti writer, it is the place where it all began. FANTASTIC BOYS crew consisted of Babuš, Đela, Steva, Tića and others. It is an interesting fact that in 1985, at the breakdancing competition at the swimming pool *11. April*, they lost the finals to the group ĐOGANI FANTASTICO. One of the first graffiti of FANTASTIC BOYS crew was an octopus on the pavement of the Sava river bank, followed by the graffiti RAP CITY and RCC on the nearby kindergarten in Block 45. Their inspiration were music videos and the film *Beat Street* (1984) where they saw graffiti for the first time. However, at the time, they did not understand that graffiti represents individuals, nor did they understand the concept of tagging and spreading their alter ego all over the city. That will happen in Belgrade only later. Inspired by this graffiti, a kid who introduced himself as MIŠA, later JENS, drew⁵ his first graffiti on the river bank of the Sava River in 1988, thus becoming the graffiti writer with the longest tenure in Belgrade.⁶

At the beginning of the 90s, there were big changes that would affect the development of graffiti in SFRY. The process of splitting the country began, which will be followed by a bloody civil war. Graffiti in Belgrade has completely died out. Mass hysteria and catastrophic political and social changes delayed the beginning of the development of the graffiti scene in Belgrade for a later time.



Figure 1: SANE 751, 1999 (photo: Ljiljana Radošević)

4 Hope, *ibid*, p. 6. Also see: Radošević, Lj. (2009) *New York Graffiti in a Socialist Ghetto, Differentiated neighbourhoods of New Belgrade*, edited by Zoran Erić, Belgrade, Museum of Contemporary Art, pp. 160–171.

5 In Serbian, instead of *writing* graffiti (pisanje) we usually say *drawing* (crtanje).

6 Hope, *ibid*.



Figure 2: PUNK, 1999 (photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

Figure 3: SOTER, 2000 (photo: Ljiljana Radošević).

Renewal of Belgrade graffiti scene, first writers and first crews 1995 – 1999

Martial law, sanctions, and the isolation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (now consisting only of Serbia and Montenegro) overnight fundamentally changed the lives of all its citizens. The period from 1991 to 1996 is the darkest period both for the citizens of this country and for its culture. In terms of culture, there has been a complete degradation of the value system. However, in this entire cultural chaos, there was still a part of young people who rejected the imposed value system and everything that the official system propagated.⁷ Some of them listened to rap, punk, rock, hardcore, and techno, but regardless of the musical diversity, they were unique in that they were rejecting the system created by the state at that time. They were the vanguard of society and from that vanguard came the first graffiti writers in Belgrade.

Due to the very difficult economic situation, a large number of people left Belgrade and went to the West in search of a better life. In that wave of migration, JENS stayed in Paris in the period from 1992 to 1993, just in the period when the Paris graffiti scene reached its maturity which rekindled his interest in graffiti. It was probably in Paris that he understood what it means to be a graffiti writer and what the graffiti movement is in general. He returned to Belgrade in 1994 and decided to actively start writing graffiti. JENS never jealously kept this knowledge to himself but tried to get others interested in the graffiti movement. With BIŠA and BOSIĆ he formed the first crew BMB (Biša Miša Bosić) and they wrote their first graffiti *Stuff* in Block 45 where JENS lived. That graffiti became very popular because it appeared in the videos of local rap bands, such as Sunshine's *America Preview* and Maddogz's *Freedom*, as well as the background of the show *Rap & Soul* at TV Pink. Some other graffiti appeared, such as *Funk* near the Branko Bridge and another at Mostarska Petlja (Mostar interchange), the authors of which are unknown. In Block 45, the character Bob Rock from the cult comic book

⁷ See: Gordi, E. (2001) *Kultura vlasti u Srbiji: Nacionalizam i razaranje alternativa*, Beograd, Samizdat B92.

Alan Ford was also drawn in 1995 by the graffiti writer Dr. QEE who quickly stopped doing graffiti.⁸

In the mid-90s, a graffiti writer who introduced himself as COBESTA28, better known as COBES and VIET, moved into Blok 45. He wrote his first graffiti in Novi Sad. And he, just like JENS, was inspired by RAP CITY CREW graffiti. When he moved to the neighborhood, he met JENS and the two of them formed the AGC (Anonimus Graffiticus Crew). This crew is considered to be the first real graffiti crew modeled after those from Paris and Berlin. Other writers MISE, KRCA, JOLE, JAMAS, and SANE 751 (later known also as JUICE, ĐUS) also joined the crew. Interestingly, some members were not from the blocks, as was the case with SANE 751 who lived on Leka's Hill, and the question arises how did they come into contact with AGC? We will remind you that at this time there was no widespread Internet access and use in Serbia, and very few people even had a computer. One of the possibilities was that if someone was interested in graffiti, he could eventually hear by word of mouth that graffiti was being written in Block 45 and that if he didn't have an intermediary to meet their authors, he had to go to Block 45 and look for them by himself. This just proves how much commitment and interest some graffiti writers had in the graffiti movement.

SANE 751 met JENS when the latter was drawing an advertisement near the Technical School of Architecture at Vračar municipality. SANE 751 saw graffiti as part of hip-hop culture, unlike most other pioneers of the graffiti movement in Belgrade. Since he was a strong admirer of that culture, graffiti and rap music immediately interested him and he decided to present hip-hop in Belgrade through these two subcultural trends.⁹ Already in 1997, together with another writer called EVIL from Zemun, he was a member and one of the founders of the hip-hop band FULL MOON. Their debut album *Na Nivou* which came out in 1998 had a lot of influence on younger writers who listened to hip-hop.

At the other end of New Belgrade, the HALLEY ZONE crew is being formed. It was made up of NEGRE, SUB (also known as SUBZERO), and ABS (ABSOLUTE). Their inspiration was the graffiti of COBES and JENS. The first graffiti they drew was KC representing the initials of their first crew, KILLA CREW. NEGRE drew his first graffiti in 1997 in Block 23 inspired by the French film *La Haine*. He was also impressed by the graffiti he saw in the German graffiti magazine *Brain Damage*.¹⁰ Later, his younger brother NECONE joined him in writing graffiti. At the same time, another writer DR LECO appeared in New Belgrade. He was initially a part of the SCD crew (SCWAD Crew or SCD), but since he was the only active member, he would later collaborate with artists from HALLEY ZONE and other crews. HALLEY ZONE is very important for the development of graffiti in Belgrade because they were the first to try to write more complicated graffiti, primarily characters.

⁸ Hope, op. cit.

⁹ Zupanc, G. (2000) *Pečina* (documentary film), Dunav film and Art TV.

¹⁰ Radošević, Lj. (2002) *Interview Negre*, conducted: February 2002.

The graffiti scene was slowly starting to move across the Sava river to the old part of the city. The 90210 Crew was formed in Dedinje neighborhood, and its members were SOTER and PUNK. They saw graffiti around the city and interestingly the foreign graffiti scene had almost no influence on their early start. PUNK heard about JENS and COBES and met the latter during a series of parties at the Belgrade nightclub Akademija (Academy).¹¹ They became friends very quickly because they were united by similar musical styles, the group of people they hung out with, and above all their attitude towards the graffiti movement. SOTER and PUNK collected money for sprays during the week, then on the weekend they would go to Blok 45, where they were met with COBES and write graffiti.¹² The place where they met was the first skate shop in Belgrade, *Star Child*. COBES worked in this shop and in general most of the graffiti writers came to Blok 45 at that time because there was also a paint shop nearby, and graffiti was mostly drawn in that place. So we can conclude that Blok 45, and even more precisely the *Star Child* skate shop, is perhaps the first writers' bench¹³ in Belgrade. The graffiti movement in Belgrade began unconsciously to establish some foundations that were characteristic of the graffiti movements in New York, Paris, and Berlin.

Star Child was primarily visited by admirers of the skating subculture. One of those skaters later became a graffiti writer from Zemun who introduced himself as DEMON. Unlike others who in that period preferred writing in a simpler style and doing silver pieces, he immediately wanted to do complicated graffiti with many colors.¹⁴ His interest in graffiti awakened the need to become very well informed about the graffiti scenes abroad, and the graffiti writers from Germany (such as DELTA, DAIM and LOOMIT) left a great impression on him solely because of the 3D form of graffiti, which none of the graffiti writers in Belgrade used at the time. Under this influence, DEMON created his unique and recognizable style on the Belgrade graffiti scene. Soon, together with DUBI and MASK, he formed the first graffiti crew from Zemun called ZAS (Zemun Art Scene).

By 1999, more graffiti writers appeared from various parts of Belgrade who were influential in the further expansion of the scene. First of all, it was LEO from the CO2 (Circle of 2) crew, CSAK and MSK who came from the city center, SPIN from Vidikovac, FACE from Zvezdara, and many others. The emergence of new graffiti writers will contribute to the fact that the graffiti movement spread all over Belgrade.

It is important to note under what conditions the scene continued its development. Despite the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, there were positive changes in the local graffiti scene. First, the branded spray cans as well as special caps could not be bought anywhere in Belgrade until 2002, when the Montana brand appeared. The graffiti

11 In that period, the cult Belgrade club was a gathering place for young people who listened to alternative music, such as punk, hardcore, and rock.

12 Stevanović, B. (2012) Interview with Punk, November 2012, Belgrade.

13 Writers' bench is the term used by graffiti writers to describe the place where the graffiti community meets.

14 Stevanović, B. (2012) Interview with Demon, November 2012, Belgrade.

writers did not have a large selection of sprays and opted for Kenda Colors. In the spring of 1999, Kim-Tec Colors sprays were introduced in the local market, which were much better than Kenda Colors and were more affordable at the flea market in New Belgrade.¹⁵ Sprays were obtained in several ways. The best option would be if someone ordered commercial graffiti for an advertisement and would buy sprays, and the graffiti writers would always order a little more than they needed and take the excess for themselves. The only possibility to get professional graffiti writing equipment was to buy it abroad.¹⁶

An additional external influence that shaped the Belgrade graffiti scene was through magazines and films about graffiti that began to appear at that time. *Brain Damage*, *Graphotism*, *Stylefile*, and *Concrete* are just some of the numerous magazines that were published all over Europe and found their way to Belgrade. The first two documentary films about graffiti that appeared in Belgrade around 1997/1998 are *Style wars* (1983) and *FX* (1998). Each one is important in shaping not only the Belgrade graffiti scene but also other graffiti scenes all over the world.

Watching documentaries and technically perfect graffiti in magazines, writers realized that to write perfect graffiti, they had to have and use different caps. They were usually brought from abroad and the writers shared them among their crew or sold them so that only every other writer actually owned a pair of caps. The caps would be regularly cleaned after painting by various methods and were so valuable because of the various paint dispersal systems they possessed.¹⁷ With some of them, the paint could be applied in broad strokes, which was ideal for painting large areas, and again they saved paint (golden cap), while with others, thin lines could be drawn, which was ideal for framing letters in graphite (skinny cap).

This first period after the renewal of the graffiti movement, which was marked by the appearance of a large number of writers and the formation of numerous crews, was concluded with the first organized graffiti festival called *Graffiti Jam*.¹⁸ Creating a festival like this was just a natural course of events in the development of the graffiti scene and it was held in the courtyard of the King Peter I Elementary School in the very center of Belgrade, not far from the Academy club. The organizer was the civil association Post-Pesimisti, backed by the Open Society Fund, which through SANE 751 reached out to the best Belgrade writers and invited them to the festival.¹⁹ JENS, MISE, ABS, SANE

15 Kim-Tec cost 10 dinars (then 0.30 Euros) per can, and Kenda sprays cost 170 dinars.

16 Today in Belgrade there are several specialized stores where you can buy branded sprays and caps for graffiti and magazines, such as Beowallz and Kobazz (Кобазз) Skate Shop.

17 For example, today's writers in Belgrade have bags full of caps, and after the writing is finished, the caps are discarded if they become clogged.

18 Graffiti Jam is usually a festival where the best writers gather and draw on one wall with a couple of guests from abroad. This festival is accompanied by a music program and advertising, i.e. an invitation to visit the festival for all those who are interested in drawing graffiti in any way. Such festivals and similar ones have a long history and have become an annual practice in all countries that have a developed graffiti scene.

19 Stevanović, Interview Punk, op.cit.

751, COBES, MSK, FACE, EVIL, CSAK, NECONE, NEGRE, SUB, LECO, PUNK, and JAMAS, all drew at the festival. Guests from Croatia, FUK and JEN, and three artists from Slovenia (including Goražd Prinčič and Rok Ogorevc) also drew at the festival. The response of the public was more than positive because a large number of people gathered in the schoolyard.²⁰



Figure 4: Graffiti jam 1999 – JENS (photo: Nikola Radojčić).

Figure 5: Graffiti jam 1999 – Nebo (Nebojša Saveljić), SANE 751 (photo: Nikola Radojčić).



Figure 6: Graffiti jam 1999 – NEGRE, ABS, SUB (photo: Nikola Radojčić).

Figure 7: Graffiti jam 1999 – COBE, Smor (photo: Nikola Radojčić).

Belgrade Graffiti Movement 1999 – 2003

At the beginning of this period, graffiti was spread all over Belgrade, and a new popular place for writing graffiti was the fence of the Jugopetrol refinery across from Ada Ciganlija on Vojvoda Mišić Boulevard. This wall became the first Belgrade Hall of Fame.²¹ In 1999, COBES came into contact with ASEM (aka KOBOLT, KOMA), a graffiti writer from Germany of Serbian origin who was delighted to meet Belgrade writers and offered a domain for a website on the Internet to promote the Serbian graffiti scene.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The Hall of Fame is a certain wall-place in the city that is legalized for drawing graffiti and the best graffiti artists draw on it and the graffiti on that wall changes non-stop.

Editing of this website is entrusted to NEGRE and NECONE (NEC).²² The website was called BGILLEGAL, and this was the name of the new graffiti crew, which consisted of COBES, PUNK, SOTER, NEGRE, NECONE, SUB, ABS, LECO, DULAIT and ANGEL. When BGILLEGAL was formed, it was not planned for the homogenization of the scene.

The website was a big step forward for the graffiti movement in Serbia because for the first time, graffiti writers from all over the world could see graffiti from Serbia. The Internet was slowly making its way into the homes of graffiti writers from Belgrade, or they were visiting newly opened Internet cafes.²³ The most visited website among Belgrade writers was artcrimes.com, where they could see graffiti from all over the world in one place.²⁴ New graffiti scenes were discovered, and among the most respectable writers for Belgrade writers were the ones from Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Sweden, in addition to France and Germany. However, some graffiti writers were against foreign influences in the style of domestic graffiti writers. They believed that the Serbian graffiti scene needed to create its recognizable style.²⁵ Furthermore, the possibility for others to become familiar with our scene was also a possibility for graffiti writers who draw on trains to come to the city and create a problem for Belgrade writers with the public and the authorities.²⁶ In Belgrade during that period, it was incomparably easier to write on trains than it was, for example in Germany. There was not even a fence at the Belgrade yard (temporary train depot near Gazela bridge, one of the favorite bombing sites for Belgrade writers), let alone a video surveillance system and a special police unit that dealt with graffiti on public transport.

BGILLEGAL crew existed in its full capacity until 2002 when COBES and PUNK were the first to exit it. They decided to make a smaller but more coherent crew. They gathered members who, in addition to writing together, shared the same ideals. That's how the AFO (Antifašistička omladina, Anti-Fascist Youth) crew was born, and its members at the beginning were COBES, PUNK, SOTER, DULAIT, MIŠEL, PEKMEZ (B&H/Munich), and IMUN from Banja Luka.²⁷ In 2001, the crew SDB (Seks Droga Bodiropa)²⁸ was formed in Zemun, whose members were DEMON, SANE 751, DUBI, and RENZ.²⁹

In the period from 1999 to 2003, more respectable crews and writers appeared who marked this period or will influence the future. Apart from BGILLEGAL and AFO, another crew whose quality was recognized was the LMC or MAC (Line Machine Crew).

22 Stevanović, *ibid*.

23 Radošević, Lj. (2001) Interview with Dubi, October 2001, Belgrade.

24 Radošević, Lj. (2001) Interview with Spin, October 2001, Belgrade.

25 Radošević, Lj. (2001) Interview with Cobesta28, March 2001, Belgrade.

26 Radošević, Lj. (2001) Interview with Dulait, October 2001, Belgrade.

27 Stevanović, Interview Punk, *op.cit*.

28 Alternatively, “Služba državne bezbednosti”. At the time Služba državne bezbednosti (Yugoslav Secret Service) was a concept that, despite being long lost in history, appeared in public discourse quite often. As a counterbalance, crew members decided to reference the despised abbreviation with a popular song at the time by Inspektor Blaža and Kljunovi “Seks, droga, Bodiropa”.

29 Stevanović, Interview Demon, *op.cit*.

Its members were SECTOR, JESMA, and SNIPE.³⁰ Then appeared the crew from Miljakovac called MSC (Miljakovac Style Crew), consisting of VLE, PACKE, and MIŠEL.³¹ The graffiti writers of both of these crews were inspired by the graffiti of BGILLEGAL and later AFO, and they also collaborated with them.³² In Zemun, writers WISE, KANG, GEKO, and EGON appeared, forming the EZB crew (Ekipa Zemunskih Bombera, Zemun bomber team), as well as PINKI who, writing together with another writer EAZY, will become one of the most active graffiti writers on the Belgrade scene. Artist JUNK appeared in the Pavillions of New Belgrade, and was initially inspired by the BGILLEGAL crew and DEMON graffiti he saw in his neighborhood.³³ Block 45 was not far behind; the Mecca of Belgrade graffiti got new graffiti writers such as DEXTER, DROPE, NOIZE, NES, and HOPE. HOPE started writing back in 1998, but at that time he was very young and just getting to know the scene; later on he became the principal archivist of the local scene and its history.³⁴

In this period, the Belgrade graffiti movement slowly began to take the shape of a serious graffiti scene, as was the case earlier with cities such as Paris and Berlin. The scene consisted of graffiti writers who had reached their zenith and were very active, followed by new talented and interested generations of graffiti writers. All this made the Belgrade scene very active in this period, and with that came public interest.



Figures 8-10: DUBI & D(E)MON, 42nd October Salon, 2001 (photo: Ljiljana Radošević)
The attitude of the public towards the graffiti movement in Belgrade 2000 – 2003

The graffiti movement in Belgrade spread very quickly at the beginning of the 21st century. As the scene experienced some of its maturity, it led to the regular writing of illegal graffiti on public transport vehicles in Belgrade and walls in the city center. The trains were painted regularly from 1997 and 1998; Beovoz intercity train system began to be drawn in 2000 and the first graffiti was done by PUNK, COBES, and SOTER.³⁵ They

30 Radošević, Lj. (2002) Interview with Sector, April 2002, Belgrade.

31 Radošević, Lj. (2002) Interview with Vle, April 2002, Belgrade.

32 Stevanović, B. (2012) Interview with Michel, December 2012, Belgrade.

33 Stevanović, B. (2012) Interview with Junky, November 2012, Belgrade.

34 Stevanović, B. (2012) Interview with Hope, November 2012, Belgrade.

35 Stevanović, Interview Punk, op.cit.

were immediately followed by SANE 751 and DEMON. Graffiti on trolleybuses was written even before 2000, but writing on trolleybuses experienced its expansion when the trolleybuses garage of the city transport company burned down in a fire in the winter of 2000/2001.³⁶ Graffiti on trams started to be written at the same time and according to the stories of older artists, writing graffiti on a tram was the most difficult thing at that time because trams, unlike other public transport systems, were much better protected.³⁷

The city and the whole country in general were in transition and there were more important problems than graffiti on trains. For example, writers from that period testified that in the yard in the early hours of the morning, they found smugglers tearing up the upholstery in the train compartments and placing the goods smuggled in that way. Next to them in the compartments of the parked trains were homeless people, as well as Roma people who lived in a nearby shanty town. Writing graffiti on trains was not a game and it was rare that a graffiti writer decided to go to the yard alone. If the police caught them writing illegal graffiti, they would know to physically harass them, arrest them and leave them to spend the night in detention.³⁸

As for legal graffiti, they were immediately accepted by the public. They soon gained attention by various newspapers and television. This is how the documentary *Zid za mene* (Wall for Me) was made, which was broadcasted on Radio Television of Serbia in 2001/2003.³⁹ The show deals with graffiti history and terminology, and one of the narrators are graffiti writers DEMON and FOLK (aka LEO) and Ljiljana Radošević, a graduate art historian. Radošević was the first to deal with the graffiti movement in Belgrade from the perspective of art history and academia.

The artistic elite also noticed the graffiti movement in Belgrade. Thus, at the 42nd October Salon in 2001, graffiti painted by DEMON and DUBI was exhibited. It is interesting that no one contacted the aforementioned graffiti writers and asked them to paint graffiti for the Salon, since they were not familiar with their identities. Before the Salon, graffiti was painted on a metal fence panel at a construction site near Ušće, and the selectors of the October Salon, headed by well known artist Era Milivojević, simply decided to take that panel and transfer it to the second floor of pavilion Cvijeta Zuzorić, where part of the program was held. On the eve of the opening event, DEMON was informed that his graffiti was on display, and the selectors of the Salon through other graffiti writers managed to reach him as one of the authors. He was invited to be a guest on the show on Radio Television Studio B, together with Era Milivojević.⁴⁰

36 Stevanović, *ibid.*

37 Stevanović, Interview Demon, *op.cit.*

38 Radošević, Lj. (2001) Interview with Leo, March 2001, Belgrade.

39 Fero, T. (2001) *Zid za mene* documentary show, RTS; EASY. (April 19, 2019) ZID ZA MENE 1 / 3 x GRAFFITI x BEOGRAD, *Youtube*, accessed June 6, 2024, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KLIT_ZDKVk.

40 Stevanović, Interview Demon, *op.cit.*; Radošević, New York Style Graffiti in a Socialist Ghetto, *op.cit.*

The end of this era was marked by the biggest graffiti jam called *Nov Način - Nov Život* (New way - New life) supported by the Belgrade Summer Festival (Belef) in the summer of 2003. Under the organization of Ljiljana Radošević and Marko Miletić (Foto Ćomi), and with the help of the graffiti writers SECTOR and ANGEL who were art selectors, more than 20 graffiti writers were chosen to paint a large mural on the so-called Signal building in Pop Lukina Street, as well as a large number of pieces on the fence of the IMT factory in Block 60.⁴¹ The writers were JUNKIE, PINKI, NES, HOPE, DEXTER, NECONE, ABS, SUB, NEGRE, VIET, LEVIS, BENA, JUST, TIFUS, DOUBLE, PAFES, PUNK, SOTER, PEKMEZ, THC, SEKTOR, NOIZE, SEC, DULAIT, MANO, and ANGEL (all from Serbia), LUNAR (Zagreb, Croatia), REA and ESH (Mostar and Tuzla respectively, Bosnia and Herzegovina), TISH and SKEC (Budapest, Hungary). Not long after this festival, a certain number of graffiti writers stopped writing, creating a noticeable gap, and soon new artists appeared on the scene who would carry the graffiti movement in Belgrade forward in the years to come.

About graffiti jams

Graffiti jams are festivals which, as an unwritten rule, gather the best graffiti writers at the moment to paint together, even if this is just the sole opinion of the author of this article, who participated in organizing the majority of jams during this period of almost 10 years. The main motivation behind the organization of these events was for the graffiti culture in Belgrade to get that last part of the puzzle which was previously missing so this subcultural movement would get its final shape and meaning. Again, this is the author's personal impression.

The events in question are: Sabotaz jams in 2006 and 2007, Belef festival graffiti jam in 2008, and Meeting of Styles jams from 2010 to 2013. The aim of the article is to try to enlist most if not all of the participants, discuss the jams relationship with the scene, and provide the organizational background. As in the case with any other event with more than twenty people, the organizers were faced with numerous challenges and obstacles. Some of them include: the selection of writers (the numbers are always limited by the available funds), finding the desired locations, getting the necessary permits, marketing and event promotion, fundraising and sponsorships (definitely the hardest part). This part does not rely on many external references since the author was directly involved in all of the events. The effort was made to be consistent and describe the events in an objective manner; everything that was deemed more subjective was omitted.

Sabotaz graffiti jams 2006 & 2007

After the well-known *New Way-New Life (Nov način-Nov život)* jam organized for and supported by the Belef festival in 2003, the Belgrade scene went a bit silent. Some of the scene pioneers from the period of 1995-2003 have become less active (example of HALLEY ZONE crew), while some almost stopped painting for good (such as Block

⁴¹ Stevanović, Interview Punk, op.cit.



Figures 11 & 12: BELEF 2003, Pop Lukina street (photo: Marko Miletić)



Figures 13-15: IMT Graffiti jam 2003. (photo: Marko Miletić)

45 writers and members of the SDB crew: JENS, MISE, MASKA, DUBI, among others). Additionally, LINE MACHINE crew went almost silent, as well as the activity of some writers who were not part of any crews, such as SPIN. In a way, there was a generational shift. Side by side some of the other 1995-2003 bearers (such as VIET, SOTER, PUNK, DULAIT, MIŠEL, DEMON, EASY, among others) there were new writers who were very active in this period, such as HOPE and NES from New Belgrade's Block 45, then JUNK, PRIME, SLOW and DEPSA from Zemun, TIMOR, EKO and CESTA from Banovo brdo, DEROK, MASTER and WUNSTE from Lekino brdo, KLON and BAK from Konjarnik, CRUEL from Miljakovac, DABL and OLI from Kanarevo brdo, LEON, SARIN and GHOST from Vidikovac and many more, more or less active writers.⁴² This whole new generation was profoundly influenced by the older writers and so the scene continued with its uninterrupted development in the years to come.

42 For the early history of Belgrade graffiti, see: Stevanović, B. (2013) *Spoljni uticaji na grafiti pokret u Beogradu od 1995. do 2003. godine*, BA thesis, Department of History, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade; Radošević, Lj. (2009) *New York Graffiti in a Socialist Ghetto, Differentiated neighbourhoods of New Belgrade*, edited by Zoran Erić, Belgrade, Museum of Contemporary Art, pp. 160–171; Hope (2009), *Stara škola Beograda / Old School of Belgrade, Balkan Round*, Issue #1, Belgrade, pp. 4-7.

The new writers faced the same old recurring problem that gave headaches to the older generation – the lack of quality painting equipment. During this period the brand Montana started appearing in three paint shops in Belgrade, but the cost of one spray can was so high that the cheaper Kenda Colors was still widely used, however just partially satisfying the technical requirements, especially for the silver pieces. Still, writers who preferred to do legal graffiti really felt the lack of a better and more economically accessible spray. At that moment the social network Myspace was active, so the writers used it as a platform to share their work and network with other writers worldwide. That is how graffiti artist from Greece JOAN wrote to LEON as a representative of Greek graffiti spray paint brand Sabotaz. LEON immediately connected her with Paja the skater, the owner of skate shop Kobazz (Кобазз). JOAN came to Belgrade in 2006, introduced Paja with the distributor, and finally an accessible spray with decent performance found its way in the local Kobazz shop.

SARIN convinced JOAN and the distributor that it would be a good marketing move if they would allocate an amount of paint for a graffiti jam, to be organized by MDC crew from Vidikovac (SARIN, LEON, PLASTIC, HONIC and SPAWN). And so they provided 150 spray cans and the organizers were set to find the locations and advertise the event. SARIN's and PLASTIC's girlfriends at the moment suggested their high school, "Sveti Sava" gymnasium. The location was ideal because it was centrally positioned, had its own yard and adequate walls. SARIN contacted the school's headmaster and she was thrilled to have the writers paint their outer walls and inner yard fence. The organizers wanted to boost the event by including an evening musical event during the jam. SKC–Student cultural center's small club was chosen as the venue and the program featured rap performers Juice (SANE 751), Bad Copy, Škabo, Marčelo, Misterija Mikroфона, Biro and drum and bass groups Codex and Elementz.

Everything was set in place and the promotion commenced. The first communication channel was to create flyers which the members of MDC crew distributed for two weeks before the jam in Belgrade clubs with hip hop and drum and bass parties, because the graffiti jam target group attended these spaces and events. The second communication channel was the press–radio, newspapers and televisions. The organizers sent emails to relevant media which resulted in their appearance on TV B92.

The Sabotaz graffiti jam featured the following writers: BAK, CRUEL, DEMON, EAZY, EKO, EKOS, GAUTAMA, HONIC, HOPE, JUNK, KLON, LEON, MIŠEL, PLASTIC, PRIME, PUNK, RONES, SARIN, SOTER, and SPAWN. The attendance was great in general, especially for the musical events. In the aftermath of the jam, one of the outcomes was that a number of new and younger writers started making their first pieces, while Sabotaz spray cans became the main tool for Belgrade writers.

The collaboration with Sabotaz brand continued in 2007, when another jam was organized in Banjica municipality's elementary school "Filip Filipović." The main organizers were LEON and Paja the skater from Kobazz, while the location was selected thanks to LORTEK's suggestion. Unlike the previous jam, there was no musical program and almost no investment in marketing and advertising. Despite it all, this jam was also well

attended. The participating writers were: BAK, CRUEL, DEMON, EAZY, EKOS, FIRMA, HONIC, HOPE, JUNK, KANG, KLON, LEON, LORTEK, MIŠEL, OLY, PLASTIC, PRIME, PUNK, RONES, SICK, SOBEK, SOTER, and SPAWN.

Belef graffiti jam 2008

In late 2007, SARIN found an open call by Belef (Belgrade summer festival) on the Internet, asking for proposals to organize artistic programs for the forthcoming festival. SARIN conceptualized a desired graffiti manifestation, sent the application, and after a few months was contacted by the artistic director Dorijan Kolundžija who accepted his proposal.⁴³ Since this time the graffiti jam was backed by the city as the main funder, it was much easier to organize it. Finances were secured which enabled buying spray cans and additional painting equipment, paying for plane tickets and accommodation for international writers and musical performers. As there were enough funds, SARIN decided to invite two times more writers than in the last two jams, but that required painting on two locations in the period of two days.

The first location was suggested by Belef – the fence surrounding the construction yard in Kralja Petra street (now shopping mol Rajićeva), while the second one was provided by SARIN. He contacted once more the headmaster of “Sveti Sava” high school because their space satisfied all the necessary requirements. From the marketing standpoint, Belef took over the promotion of the whole festival, including the graffiti jam, under the direction of the PR Barbara Garčević. LEON and Paja helped SARIN with the organization. Unlike the previous years, Sabotaz spray cans in Kobazz shop were replaced with brands such as Beat and Clash, which proved much better, but they were still no match to premium quality Montana, MTN94 and Belton.

International writers who participated were: RUSL (Germany), EAZE, LOOFYA, BACK, KONGO, JUAN (France), SMACK, KAZER, MOSK (Croatia) and NEMO (Bosnia and Herzegovina). Local writers were: PUNK, SOTER, MIŠEL, LORTEK, SICK, SOBEK, SANE 751, SLOW, DEPSA, KLON, BAK, CRUEL, PRIME, ITU, PROE, DESK, MAMBO, PIROS, BRADA, HONIC, OPTIMUS, POLX, LUCK, EAZY, RONES, ANGEL, JUNK, RISK, EKOS, DEMON, SARIN, PLASTIC, SPAWN, AIR, SPECTRE, MIST, MUPOK, TIGAR, EKO, HOPE, and CASH. This might have been one of the most attended festival manifestations since during the jam there were so many people visiting the high school yard there was little space to move at all.⁴⁴ Several factors influenced this opinion: the graffiti scene at the period was at its peak, the festival had great media coverage, the funding made the organization smooth, and there were no restraints in providing the amount of sprays nor the number of writers to paint.

43 See: Kolundžija, D. (editor, 2008), *Belef08*, Beograd: Belef centar.

44 Part of the atmosphere can be seen here: urbanrootsmag (2013) BELEF 2008. Graffiti part, 2. January 2013, 1. July 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dD99aD93Tl0>. Also see: Jovanović, T. (2008) Umetnost grafiti: Organizovano crtanje, *Vreme*, 14. August 2008, 1. July 2024, <https://old.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=693048>.

Meeting of Styles Belgrade 2010

One year after the organization of the largest graffiti jam so far under Belef's support, when the city turned to large-scale mural project led by Kiosk collective and graffiti was not in focus in 2009. The same year the first Serbian graffiti magazine *Balkan Round* was published. At the promotional party of the first – and as it turned out the last – issue, SOTER and SARIN came up with a plan. SOTER suggested organizing the first Meeting of Styles in Belgrade. International Meeting of Styles (short MOS) is an international network of graffiti writers and artists launched in 1997 in Wiesbaden, Germany.⁴⁵ The festival's concept is the following: anyone who wants to organize a MOS in their city can apply and get a permit from the organizers. In the earlier days the organization would send spray cans, which used to be a great support for any local organizers of graffiti jams. However, in the late 2000s, the organization slowed down, and they could not provide neither the amount nor the quality of spray cans as before.

Nevertheless, SOTER and SARIN, together with Nebojša Petrović from IDE Group, decided to organize the first MOS in Belgrade. This was very important for the affirmation of the Serbian scene abroad since this graffiti jam concept is among the most recognized worldwide. MOS organizers gave the permit and so Belgrade found its way into MOS official calendar. Additionally, they promised and delivered 150 sprays of American brand Blueberry paints, which was just coming up in the global market. The amount was not enough to cover all the participant's needs, and there was a lack of funds to pay for transportation and accommodation for writers from abroad, as well as other expenses. Local organizers turned to the city's open call for artistic projects for additional funding which they received and all means for realization were secured.

For the location of Meeting of Styles two locations were selected: the wall of the Institute of chemistry, technology and metallurgy facing the park at Slavija square (popularly called *Mitićeva rupa*), and the famous concrete fence of the Industry of Machinery and Tractors (IMT) in New Belgrade. The institute's wall was a long-held dream of many writers because of its premium location and the mural would be seen both from Slavija and Beogradska street. However, no one ever asked for painting permits. SARIN did not even know his father, a PhD in technical science, was the institute's associate. Upon realizing it, SARIN asked him to contact the institute's management and have a meeting with them. After presenting the mural draft and overall plan at the meeting, the permit was secured. The IMT wall is significant because it became the second Hall of fame in Belgrade which features the best writers in the city. When the first Hall of fame, the Jugopetrol fence at Ada Ciganlija was torn down, the IMT wall was the only official one remaining at the time. To receive permits, the organizers contacted the city municipality of New Belgrade which gave their support.

Aside from the aforementioned Blueberry spray cans, the organizers also obtained brands Ironlak from graffiti shop TOK and Beat and Clash from skate shop Kobazz. Part

⁴⁵ See: <https://meetingofstyles.com/about-us/> (accessed 1. July 2024).

of the sprays was the shops' sponsorship while the other part was secured through the city's open call. Lime, scaffolding, poster print, travel and accommodation of international writers were also covered by the modest budget the organizers provided. Speaking of marketing, a number of posters were printed to be posted throughout the city. At the time Facebook became popular, so the organization relied on the social network to advertise. Unfortunately, the attendance was much lower when compared to the Belef graffiti jam from 2008.

The writers who painted the institute wall were: ARSEK, ERASE, and FOUR PLUS (Bulgaria), STAN and MAX13 (Russia), RUSL (Germany) and local writers CASH, DEMON, EKOS, HOPE, JUNK, LEON, MARG (Marggg), MLK, PIROS, PUNK (Pank), RONES, SARIN, SOTER, FON DACH and WUNSTE. IMT fence was painted by LUNAR, SMACK, KAZER and AGIOS (Croatia), POK and NOTME (Finland) and locals ANGEL, BAK, BEST, BOLERO, BRADA, DEPSA, DEROK, JENS, JUST, LEMON, LOCK, LORTEK, MUPOK, OPTIMUS, QUIZ, PRIME, RAGE, RIKS, SANE (SANE 751), SICK, SLOW, SOBEK, TAZ, TKV, VIET, and ZULUM (Zooloom).⁴⁶

Meeting of Styles Belgrade 2011

After the first successful MOS in Belgrade, the same organizers decided to realize another festival the very next year. They submitted a project for the regular, annual open call of the Secretariat for Culture of the city of Belgrade. However, the city provided them with 50% less funds than the year before. As MOS 2010 was held together with a very tight budget, the organizers thought they were in trouble. However, IDE Group managed to get Naftna Industrija Srbije's sponsorship and so cover part of the expenses (spray cans and scaffolding). The desired wall was at the elementary school "Stari Grad" in Dorćol. The school's head master was thrilled with the idea to have the whole yard filled with murals.

And so the base was set for the upcoming MOS, but the organizers already felt it will be difficult to obtain minimum funding for this kind of manifestation in the future if they rely on the same funding scheme and the national and city open calls. Because of a difference of opinions in creating the selection of writers, SARIN decided to leave the team three weeks before the event. WUNSTE and MARG (also MARGGG and MARGE) joined the organization bringing some new, fresh energy to the team. By their merit, aside from the jam, a competition in breakdancing was also organized. When it comes to participating writers, the following took part: locals ANGEL, ARTEZ, BAK, BRADA, CASH, CRUEL, DEMON, DEROK, DOCTOR, FOCUS, HOPE, JUNK, EKOS, LEON, LOCK, LORTEK, MARG (Marggg), MLK, PIROS, PRIME, PUNK, RAGE, RIKS, RISKY, SARIN, SICK, SOBEK, SOOMER (Sumer), SOTER, SPLIF, TAZ, TOYOTA, WUNSTE, and YAKUZA, then MAX13 and STAN (from Russia), NOIR (Austria), SCHIL and BACON (Italy), and ARSEK, ERASE, NASIMO and MR. NAO (Bulgaria).⁴⁷

46 MoS (2010) 27-29 August 2010, Belgrade (Serbia), 27. August 2010, 1. July 2024, <https://meetingofstyles.com/27-29-august-2010-belgrade-serbia/>

47 See: Stan One (2011) Meeting of Styles. Belgrade, 2011., 5. September 2011, 1. July 2024, <https://meetingofstyles.com/27-29-august-2010-belgrade-serbia/>

Meeting of Styles Belgrade 2012 and 2013

The newly formed MOS organizational team (SOTER, WUNSTE, MARG, ARTEZ, and FON DACH from IDE Group) moved forward to organize another jam in 2012. However, and somewhat expectedly, the funding was even lower than the year before, but they managed to gather enough funds to set the scaffolding and buy the spray cans. The location of the jam was the First Belgrade High School in the Dorćol area again. The permit was secured from the school's headmaster thanks to WUNSTE and MARG.⁴⁸ Just like the previous year, Beogradizacija Beograda initiative also supported the jam. The jam also featured a competition in breakdancing. The participating writers were: ARTEZ, BRADA, HOPE, JUNK, MARG, MLK, PIROS, RAGE, SOTER, WUNSTE, and STAN (Russia).

Despite the difficulties, the organizers decided to have another MOS in 2013. This time, any financial support by the city was omitted, and the organizers were negotiating commercial sponsorships. However, due to the poor feedback, ARTEZ decided to hand over his previously arranged mural spot at a residential building in Dorćol's Visokog Stevana street for the forthcoming MOS, in agreement with the building's tenants. ARTEZ's scaffolding and spray cans were allocated to the Meeting of Styles' murals.⁴⁹ At the same time, the organizers secured the IMT wall again, so this MOS was again taking place in two locations. The participants were: AITH, ARTEZ, BEST, BRADA, CHENIPE, EKOS, JUNK, KALM8, LOCK, LORTEK, MARG, MASTER, MONS-TA, NARIS, NSI, PIROS, RAGE, SARIN, SOOMER, STEPHANIE, TKV, WUPER, and XYMO. IMT featured: BOLERO, DEMON, ENOSTER, FOKS, GATE, GEARS, GUA, NATU, NES, NOKS, PAYO, PONE, RULE, SILE, SOTER, TAZ, TOKYO, VITEZ, WUNSTE, YAKUZA, and ZOOLOOM.⁵⁰

When it comes to the artistic concept of these festivals, the organizers were not thinking of setting any topics in advance. And so, the 2006-2010 jams were freestyle. In practice, that meant every writer had their piece of the wall/fence, 6-8 spray cans, and could express themselves and paint whatever they wanted. Naturally, some used the opportunity to paint their tag or character, their street stylistic trademark, and by doing so add an extra layer of affirmation to their alter ego on the scene. In fact, that's what the organizers had in mind from the beginning. From 2010 and faced with the first larger wall, there was a need for a more complex production, merging several graffiti letters and characters into a whole with background, and that's how thinking about a topic came to be. It was also conditioned by the color palette the organizers had access to. However, the topics were developed just a few days before the jam, except for in 2013 when ARTEZ came up with the idea and mural draft in Dorćol sometime prior to the jam.

www.flickr.com/photos/stan1/6115026581; MoS (2011) 26–28 August 2011, Belgrade (Serbia), 26. August 2011, 1. July 2024, <https://meetingofstyles.com/26-28-august-2011-belgrade-serbia/>
48 Stevanović, B. (2024) Interview with Wunste, 1. May 2024, Belgrade.

49 Ibid.

50 MoS (2013) 21-23 June 2013 – Belgrade (Serbia), 21. June 2013, 1. July 2024, <https://meetingofstyles.com/21-23-june-2013-belgrade-serbia/>.



Figure 16: Meeting of Styles, Belgrade, 2012. (photo: Ljiljana Radošević)



Figure 17: Meeting of Styles, Belgrade, 2013 (photo: Ljiljana Radošević)

Conclusion

With its early steps in the mid-80s, the graffiti movement gained traction in Belgrade from 1995, when JENS came back from Paris and started forming the first crews and supported teenagers in New Belgrade's Block 45 who would eventually form the first graffiti generation. The later generations spread graffiti throughout the city, and in 1999 introduction of cheaper spray cans enabled more production. The same year marked the first graffiti jam, and there were more to follow in the consequent years. In early 2000s, Belgrade and Serbian writers gained extra visibility through the first website dedicated to graffiti BGILLEGAL. This first wave of writers started to wane in 2004, when other artists and new graffiti writers took over and started developing the scene in different directions.

The graffiti movement in Belgrade was shaped by the foreign influences from the USA and Europe, just like in many other places around the world. It started mostly with popular hip-hop and graffiti movies and music in the 1980s, when the first writers left their short mark in the city. But from the 1990s, a young group of Belgraders accepted it as a means to express the hardship they lived through during the decade. The local writers developed their own original styles which enabled them to gain respect from other graffiti scenes in Europe. This is further emphasized by the fact that after the sanctions and Yugoslav civil war, artists from abroad have been a continuous part of various events and the scene starting from 1999.

When it comes to graffiti jams, what have these events meant for the scene? Aside from the organizer's need to affirm the local graffiti scene, particularly through the Meeting of Styles, it is important to state that in the period between 2006 and 2013 there were new writers who had the possibility to see live and in one spot other experienced writers and network with them. That aspect was missing in the in-between generation after the pioneers during the period 1996-2003. The expansion came at the right time, together with more quality sprays and caps, brands and shops, which enabled a faster development of the Serbian graffiti scene, as well as the emergence of quality writers and muralists of the new generation.

However, in the background of this story about the graffiti movement in Belgrade, there is always the following question: why did certain young people from Belgrade during the social and economic collapse of the 90s decided to use graffiti to gain visibility and resist a destructive value system dictated by the official political and cultural elites? The answer might lie in the very definition of the graffiti movement by photographer Henry Chalfant, one of the makers of the seminal *Style Wars* documentary on New York graffiti. He defined the writers as a group of youngsters who surmounted the imposed, handicapped social standards and tried to break from anonymity of their time.⁵¹ This resonated with youth from all around the world who identified with the graffiti culture and developed their own scenes, such as the one in Belgrade.

51 Chalfant, H. and Silver, T. (1983) *Style Wars*, PBS.

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Бојан Стевановић

Београд

WRITING MY NAME: ГРАФИТИ ПОКРЕТ У БЕОГРАДУ 1984–2003.
И ПРИЧА О ГРАФИТИ ЦЕМОВИМА 2006–2013.

Сажетак: Аутор се фокусирао на почетке и историју графити покрета у Београду. Због недостатка литературе, било је неопходно снимити интервјуе са неколицином активних цртача да би се ова историја уопште и написала, излистали главни учесници на сцени, разумеле технике, стилови и значење, представиле локације и генерално развој саме сцене. Новобеоградски Блок 45 се традиционално узима као почетна тачка графити покрета и једна од првих градских „мека“; узимају се у обзир и друге локације које су активирани ширењем графити културе по граду, формирање многих екипа/круова (crews), сарадња између самих графитера. Након почетних корака и малобројних примера током средине осамдесетих, графити покрет добија ветар у леђа од средине деведесетих када је формирана стабилнија и континуирана сцена. Краткотрајна пауза у раду многих дотадашњих графитера настала је 2003, а дотад је сцена сазрела, произвела неколико генерација графитера и добила значајну медијску пажњу. Томе су такође допринели организација неколико графити џемова од 1999. и постепено укључивање графита у званични уметнички свет. У другом делу чланка аутор пише о графити џемовима (graffiti jams), фестивалским окупљањима од велике важности за развој, зрелост и видљивост графити сцене, као и приликама за умрежавање графитера и нову продукцију. Џемови имају потенцијал да инспиришу младе и нове графитере и дају им могућност да виде и упознају старије, активне и релевантне графитере на сцени на једном месту. Аутор је учествовао у организацији бројних фестивала између 2006. и 2013. године, укључујући *Sabotaz Jam*, џемове на фестивалу *БЕЛЕФ* и *Сусрет стилова (Meeting of Styles)*. Представљен је кратак преглед џемова, њихова организациона позадина и значај за београдски (и српски) графити покрет.

Кључне речи: Београд, историја графити, графити џемови, *Meeting of Styles*

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Belgrade

CITY AND A PAINTING – THE IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF PAINTING IN PUBLIC SPACE

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Abstract: *Doctoral art research project City and a Painting – the Importance and Role of Painting in Public Space considers the topic of possible roles of painting interventions in public space through theoretical research based on the analysis of already existing interventions in the area of the inner center and several remote Belgrade settlements. This interdisciplinary project seeks to categorize representative examples of different types of interventions based on their function, in relation to the artistic, social, political, and context of relations with institutions. The research has led to the conclusion that Belgrade owes not only the rich diversity of painting interventions to artistic activity at different levels, but that the use of painting stimulated by non-artistic motives, which vary from simple commercial promotion to ideological propaganda and hate speech, is also hugely represented, thus confirming the relevance of the image in the public space of the contemporary city.*

Key words: *painting, public space, mural, street art, graffiti*

Introduction: About the Methods¹

This project thesis was defended in 2018 at the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade, and this text represents its reduced version. In its original form, the doctoral research consisted of a research (theoretical) part and an artistic (practical) segment, the latter of which is excluded from this text. The research consists of the categorization of representative examples of different types of interventions based on their function, in relation to their artistic qualities, social, political and the context of relations with institutions. The research as a whole is interdisciplinary, based on field research and various methods of theoretical research. The material gathered from the summer of 2013 to the summer of 2017 is categorized based on parameters that are not primarily based on

¹ Danilović, A. (2017) *Grad i slika: Značaj i funkcija slikarskih intervencija u javnom prostoru*, PhD dissertation, Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu, Fakultet primenjenih umetnosti.

visuals or aesthetics, but based on their content, i.e. meaning within a specific socio-spatial context, which is a key factor in understanding the function of specific work. In addition to the analysis of their visual qualities, works are subjected to analysis from the standpoint of its non-artistic characteristics, relevant for a specific example (time of creation, place, author), the socio-political and cultural context of their creation, and then grouped with other interventions carrying similar meaning, from where conclusions about their function are drawn. The grouping and conclusions are based on a theoretical method that is based upon an interdisciplinary approach and relies on social sciences that are relevant for specific examples, but also on media reporting as a source in a specific context and inductive-deductive method. The interview was deliberately omitted. The nature of street art and painting in public space is anti-discriminatory and implies direct communication with the observer and the absence of interpretation, therefore the involvement of mediators or interpreters (curators, institutions, authors) in the context of this research, seems to be contradictory with the very nature of interventions in the public space.

The starting point of the research is centered around the question *What is the role / function of the painting in public space?* or – *What is the purpose of the painting in public space?* Permanent placement of painting in space that people use every day imposes the painting as a factor of shaping the space, forming the very impression of it, but it also serves as a means of transmitting information indirectly – as a means for influencing and shaping opinions. The key points of this consideration are public space - its complexity and indispensability, the institutions that manage it, and the need to intervene on public walls.

Public Space, Institutions, Painting

The goal of leaving pictorial traces in public space, whether monumental in size or interventions of negligible dimensions, exceeds the mere need to aestheticize the public space and connects the visual effectiveness of the image with the possibilities its uncensored visibility in public space unlocks, placing it in a far more complex constellation. This creates a wide field of possibilities of using and misusing the painting on various levels. The modern city and contemporary society, whose functioning is based upon sets of established norms, rules, laws and sanctions for their violation, recognizes and seeks to regulate and channel apparent human need to intervene on the walls using painting, through the concept of art in the public space. However, the fact remains that painting and aestheticization are not the only goals of pictorial marking of public space.

Defining the concept of public space is not a simple task, because it is extremely complex, conditioned by a multitude of different factors as well as it is crucial for different spheres of human activity. However, my goal is not to settle on a single definition, but to set a theoretical framework based upon the requirements of this research that will serve as a tool to understand the pictorial content that we find on the city facades.

To define the concept of public, it is necessary to define its opposite, that is, the concept of private, intimate or personal. This distinction will serve as a starting point for

building the foundation of some of the key characteristics of public space that are important for the specific research. Personal, intimate and private are constructs that can serve as the opposite of the construct of public, and thus enable us to perceive and establish boundaries of what we intend to define from several relevant standpoints. Linguistically, the term personal, among other things, is:

a. one that refers to a particular person, person, own, private, personal – interest, card, ruble, property, doctor; b. relating to one's own personality, which stands out from the common, based on something of one's own, private – sacrifice, diagnosis, trust, personal reasons, aspiration; and the term public as undisguised, known, 2.a., which anyone can attend; b. which is intended for everyone – library, local, v. that took place in front of everyone – scandal; 3.a. relating to society, socially significant – works, interest.²

From the ownership standpoint, the correlation between private (property) and public (space) is delimited by the existence of the concept of ownership, i.e. the legal right of an individual to control or decide upon a certain space. Based upon this, a public space is one that is not owned by an individual i.e. one that is public or common good; the one that is used by the wider community.

Article 10 of the Law on Public Property of the Republic of Serbia defines common goods in general use as follows:

Common goods, in the sense of this Law, are considered to be those things which, due to their nature, are intended for use by all and which are as such determined by law. Everyone has the right to use common goods in the manner prescribed by law, i.e. by a decision of an authority or legal entity to whom such goods have been given for management.³

Theoretician of urbanism and architecture Ali Madanipour conceives the analysis of the relationship between private and public spaces by grading them based upon the criteria of autonomy and inviolability, exposure and intensity of social interaction. Gradation begins with the only completely intimate and inviolable space called the inner space of the mind, which is followed by the space of the body that directly interacts with the surrounding world. The size of the socio-psychological space or bubble that surrounds the body is dictated by social and cultural norms. He proceeds by considering intermediate values such as home and neighborhood, spaces of social encounters and ends with impersonal public space of the city.⁴ Particularly interesting for us are the intermediate values, “semi-public” spaces, overlaps of personal and public, such as

2 Вујанић, М. и др. (2007) *Речник српског језика*, Нови Сад: Матица српска 497, стр. 1034.

3 Закон о јавној својини, “Службени гласник РС”, бр. 72 од 28. септембра 2011, 88 од 6. октобра 2013, 105 од 3. октобра 2014, 104 од 23. децембра 2016 - др. закон, 108 од 29. децембра 2016.

4 Madanipour, A. (2003) *Public and Private Spaces of the City*, London: Routledge.

neighborhoods, exposed facades of private buildings, passages connecting residential buildings and such.

Based upon all of the above, the term public space within this research and further text will refer to the (physical) space of the city that is (physically) accessible to every member of the wider community, while neglecting the ownership of the object, except in cases where the presence of pictorial intervention in a particular place is conceptually and semantically connected in some way with ownership.

Describing the nature of street art, Martin Irvine uses the phrase *regimes of visibility*, explaining the influence of various institutions on regulation of visibility (of painting) in public spaces.⁵ Irvine sees these positions as positions of competing; street art with visibility regimes embodied in law and system of government on the one hand, and the regime of the world of art and ruling aesthetics on the other. Irvine recognizes the rules and restrictions imposed by both regimes as a systematic aspiration to determine and control who deserves and what has legitimacy (and where) to be visible and seen, and who (and what) will be labeled as a mere noise of the city life.

Understanding the level of “monopoly” over public space is significant because it helps deepen the understanding of paintings in public space. The first level refers to jurisdiction over the usage of common (city) goods, i.e. public space. An illustration of this type of monopoly over a common area is, for example, locking the gate of a park at certain times of the day. Thus, the time of stay in a common area is systematically limited, and violations of the rules are sanctioned. Same principle applies here - intervention on the wall is permitted with the appropriate permission of the managing institutions or are banned altogether, and self-initiated intervention is sanctioned. Louis Althusser defines this branch of organization of society, of maintaining the given models of functioning under the threat of sanctions, as an apparatus of coercion.⁶

The second level of the visibility regime refers to the criteria established by cultural institutions and art theory, by which something is recognized or not recognized as a work of art. In relation to this level of monopoly, certain forms of action in the public space are recognized as artistic, as opposed to vandalism or kitsch, and as such they are granted their presence and visibility in public space.

The simple division between art and vandalism, perceiving institutionally supported and legally recognized painting as an artistic activity, and intolerance towards any other model of action labeling it as vandalism, is not legitimate from the art theory point of view. This does not mean that every institution-sponsored intervention is artistic - on the contrary. In addition to institutionally supported, no less valuable is non-institutional, illegal and subversive artistic activity. The problem of defining concepts and distinctions between public (representative, institutionalized) and street art is complex, and

5 Irvine, M. (2012) The Work on the Street: Street Art and Visual Culture, *The Handbook of Visual Culture*, edited by Sandywell, B. & Heywood, I., London and New York: Berg, pp. 235–278.

6 Altiser, L. (2008) Ideologija i državni ideološki aparati, *Studije kulture*, edited by Đorđević, J., Beograd: Službeni glasnik, pp. 143–147.

the question of the legitimacy of their presence in the public space cannot be explained by the division into institutional / non-institutional, i.e. legal / illegal.

Defining street art, Alden Riggle emphasizes the use of public space as an artistic resource and an integral part of work, thus placing in this category exclusively those works for which the part of the space in which they are located represents a building element (in the conceptual and physical sense), for which any displacement from a specific spatial context would mean complete disempowerment.⁷

From the overlap of Riggle's and Irvine's views, public and street art could be defined as following - works of art that are placed in public space, with the support of institutions and the permission of the regime of visibility, that are to a certain extent conceptually dependent on public space, and that serve as a representative of the dominant cultural and ideological trends, fall into the corpus of public art. Works that arise without institutional support, and beyond the limitations of the visibility regime, by the initiative of an individual or group, that are of limited durability and for which public space is an indispensable material or artistic resource and integral part, belong to the corpus of street art practices. Nevertheless, even this formulation, in relation to the conservative division of *mural = art – graffiti = vandalism* requires further clarification.

The term *graffiti* is what causes confusion, and in common communication it implies a spectrum of different actions – from mere writing of a message on the wall, to murals executed by aerosol. Terminology of street artists and art theory uses *graffiti* as a term that refers to typographic works, in a visual sense defined by a certain writing style. Graffiti relies on the use of aerosols, but also on the use of façade paints and rollers. Graffiti is therefore a narrower and more concrete concept than the concept of street art, determined by different practices of action, different goals, explained by a different internal terminology and valorization of works.⁸ Early graffiti-movements from the 70s and 80s of the 20th century, set the foundation for street art. The opening of the doors of New York's alternative galleries to graffiti artists was also the opening of doors that led to the formation of the first generation of street artists who found themselves between the legacy of graffiti in terms of the subversiveness of the very act of self-initiated drawing on the street, references to earlier artistic movements and authentic artistic languages. Confusion in the separation of the terms mural and graffiti is partially

7 Riggle, N. A. (2010) Street art: The transfiguration of the commonplaces, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (Volume 68, Issue 3), pp. 243-257.

8 Graffiti subculture valorizes, evaluates and relates to works in different ways than it is the case with any other practice of expression through painting. Hierarchy and gained reputation among writers and groups, territory, complexity of work, and their gradation in terms of – what can be overwritten with which based on the complexity of work (more complex and demanding forms can cross over the less complex ones) – these are some of the key places of this practice. Some of the main types of graffiti are: *tag* – the signature of a writer which stands as an independent work, and the goal is to mark as much territory as possible with his signature; *throw-up* – a signature consisting of a contour line or contour line and one color with which the inner surface of the letters is filled; *piece* (short for Masterpiece) – a work (letter) consisting of at least three colors.

caused by the use of aerosols, because spray is traditionally associated with graffiti and vandalism.⁹

Many muralists, whether working under the auspices of institutions or on their own, often use aerosols. A painting or drawing tool or medium itself is not a relevant distinguishing factor here. It is often not even possible to tell which painting materials have been used on specific murals. Mural as a discipline of applied arts and a form of public, representative art is created with the cooperation and support of institutions, and street art and graffiti are created as subversion in relation to institutions. However, among the works created within the category of street art, there are works that are no less murals in a formal sense. Therefore, one can talk about the distinction between legal and illegal murals in terms of ways, reasons and motives for the creation, and even the durability and inviolability of works, but not in terms of the very nature of the art form. The mural, therefore, as an artwork, whether it is part of institutionalized artistic practices or street art, constitutes a separate category of painterly intervention in public space, the preconceived painting on the dry cement of the wall surface.¹⁰ Therefore, the mural, whether executed by traditional means of painting or aerosol, without losing its meaning and form by hypothetical displacement from a concrete spatial context, does not belong to the category of street art, but represents a separate category.

The question of authorship in the aforementioned categories has different values. The muralist in a formal sense signs his work with the name and concept of authorship that is intended to protect his work from alterations, abuses and destruction. The street artist, who most often under a pseudonym performs his work illegally, will not rely on authorship as a guarantee of the inviolability of his creation on the street, but possibly on mechanisms of avoiding the destruction of work. For graffiti artists, however, a tag, or belonging to a particular crew, is a matter of prestige and a measure of status, which gives authorship a completely new dimension. Endangering authorship by “crossing over” (full or partial overlay or crossing over someone else’s graffiti) has the gravity of personal provocation or insult and often implies counter-action of equivalent or stronger intensity. The aforementioned different notions of authorship, inviolability and evaluation of work are occasionally in conflict due to the inevitable overlapping in public space.

In addition to the considered sphere of paintings in public space with artistic pretensions (within muralistic and street art practices), the painting with no artistically oriented goals is also very common. By overlapping cheap and effective methods used

9 See: Kelling, G. L. and Wilson, J. Q. (1982) Broken Window – Police and Neighborhood Security, *The Atlantic*, March 1982 Issue, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/> (accessed 02. July 2024). The authors suggest a connection between the presence of self-initiated inscriptions and paintings in space with the appearance of crime, recognizing “graffiti” as one of the signs of the absence of care for space, and linking the neglect of space with lawlessness and marking it as fertile ground for petty crime. The essence of the text is the idea that by drastic punishment of petty offenses, the more serious ones are prevented.

10 This does not mean that the fact that murals can exist in interiors or spaces for personal use is overlooked. However, such murals are not the subject of this research.

by street artists and awareness of the strikingness and potential for conveying a message, painting interventions in the public space are common means of commercial or political marketing and integral parts of broader marketing campaigns. Mural-like practices, adapted to the social dynamics of a specific space, can become a means of demonstrating territoriality or the voice of the collective self.



Figure 1: Murals in Savamala: Never Crew, Super Timor, Miša Most
(photo: Andrijana Danilović)

*Painting as a Means of Enriching the Space –
the City as a Space for Exploring Personal Artistic Voices*

The painting as a means of (artistic) expression without other intentions than the refinement of the space itself, influencing and changing its visual features and atmosphere and exploring one's own visual poetics within the context of urban environment, is firmly established through the history of public art in Belgrade, regardless of whether it is created in cooperation with institutions (whether cultural or legal) or as a result of the author's own initiative. I emphasize that the word *refining* in this context does not refer to skillful wall painting, banal decoration, the absence of artistic and conceptual qualities or poetics, but to the function of these works, which is aimed primarily at changing the impression of space. In this category we classify, without diminishing their value or significance, those works in which the artistic, aesthetic aspect is set as a primary or only goal. These do not insist on the message or social engagement, they are not a means of commercial promotion or part of a broader, non-artistic campaign.

Such works in Belgrade appear in various forms: permanent ones such as murals, combinations of murals and graffiti, stencils and paste-up interventions of limited durability. Whether they are works whose function of refinement is based on aestheticization and illustration of factual references and associations to the space in which they are located (e.g. school-fairytale-childhood) or that by their very presence they represent an additional visual, aesthetic and conceptual quality. Without losing sight of the legacy of murals from the eighties and nineties (Ljubović, Rabuzin, Miljuš, Protić, among others), it is important to keep in mind the changes in the artistic climate and the development

of street art. Interventions from the end of the first and second decades of the twenty-first century, which at the time of the beginning of the collection of materials for this research existed in the public space are those I am focusing on. The city as a set of personal impressions and public space in the physical sense are, in the context of street art, a space of research of personal visual language and poetics – an open-air sketchbook, in which there are often small drawings and quick interventions that are unpretentious in the context of sending a message, but by no means devoid of artistic qualities or visual effectiveness. These notes, often humorous and appealing, do not have the potential to greatly transform the appearance of the space as a whole, but to turn an ordinary space into a space of artistic activity simply by being present in it.

*Painting Intervention as a Means of Commercial Promotion,
Campaigns and Lobbying*

The dizzying technological development of information technologies and the emergence of mass media that are no longer exclusively unilateral offer an endless selection of content, and have led to changes that strictly profiled previously generalized target groups. The ability to choose appropriate and remove unwanted content made it difficult to reach the widest audience whose attention was once focused on a handful of television channels. Another drastic change of the former viewer or consumer of the offered programs is that thanks to social networks and various Internet services, they can now also be producers of media content. Nevertheless, despite the (seemingly) democratic nature of the virtual space of the Internet, due to the direction and self-direction towards certain types of content, the audience's attention is either no longer guaranteed or there are specific obstacles in obtaining it. Therefore, as the only remaining meeting space of the most diverse profiles of the audience, comes up the one that they inevitably have to use – public space.

Many of the interventions that make up the campaigns which utilize painting function independently, and could be analyzed as integral products of the painting activity. However, due to their function, they will be viewed and analyzed primarily as a media text. Physical, public space in comparison to the virtual one seems archaic. This is due to the fact that it does not offer the possibility of choosing content, it becomes a place where every user of public space, without the will or consent of his own, is being exposed to primitive forms of media campaigns that rely on pictorial interventions, which for various reasons have recognized the public space as important for their actions. Aestheticization and refinement of space, therefore, in the case of these works, are not primary, and visual effectiveness, receptivity, ease of understanding and clarity of the message represent their key elements.

*Image in the Function of Commercial Promotion –
Promotional Campaigns That Imitate Street Art*

For the reasons elaborated previously – impossibility of avoiding the content, accessibility, free of charge advertising space and very modest investments in terms of mate-

rial, lobbying campaigns and those whose goals are commercial in character, imitate street art or use murals as a means of promotion, and are common in public space. The use of a painted advertisement is not a recent practice – on the contrary. Before today's giant printed promotional banners and building wrappers became available, blind facades were painted with company logos and illustrations related to the services and products they offer. Some of them, as is the case with the preserved “C market” mural on the façade in Despot Stefan's Boulevard (late 1980s or early 1990s), are basically painted billboards – presenting the product range, from coffee to various food supplies the company used to produce, with clear emphasis on the company logo. However, compared to today's models of image use, despite its large dimensions, the old murals utilized as means of commercial promotion seem very moderate and unobtrusive. One of the reasons for the comeback of painting as a means of advertising lies in the interest in street art and mural, which has developed in the meantime, and which, among other things, is reflected in taking photos and sharing “catches” from the street, the development of technology that allows quick, easy and free documentation, and finally the development of social networks that enable endless dissemination of information.

Painting as a Means of Building the Image of Space

Murals, or legalization of painting freely in a specific zone, are tools many cities often resort to in the process of creating a certain image.¹¹ Berlin, after the fall of the Wall, along with New York, established itself as one of global centers of creativity and progressive artistic attitude, and have been maintaining such image partially due to murals and street art. Notable presence of public art, murals and street art sends out the message of cosmopolitanism and progressiveness, but such images can occasionally be unfounded. In addition to Berlin, the idea of “city of murals” and systematically planned public painting was adopted by cities such as Loggia, Tirana, Lion, and in our country, along with Belgrade on several occasions, Kraljevo and Užice.

In the history of public art of Belgrade, it is possible to clearly mark the stages of systemic, planned painting – in 1989, as part of preparations for the Summit of Non-Aligned Countries, in 2008 and 2009 as part of Belef (Belgrade summer festival) and starting from 2012, until 2015, with activities within Mikser festival. Each of them had the same goal – to influence the impression of the city by artistic means. The youngest of these actions achieved the most drastic result. The whole campaign was focused on a single neighborhood. Savamala is a part of the city that was gradually transformed by various means at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century; from transit and neglected, to what was described by phrases such as the *center of creative industry* and *Belgrade's new bohemian quarter*, which in a relatively short time became an important point on the tourist map of the city. To use the language of marketing – Savamala has become a brand, a package that offers art, entertainment and *the spirit of urban Belgrade*.

A significant role in this process was played by systematic painting. Even before the Mikser festival 2014, which was undoubtedly the most generous in terms of the number

¹¹ Kelner, D. (2004) *Medijska kultura*, Beograd: Clio, p. 418.

of works that were created, smaller projects started shaping the artistic image of Savamala. A cycle of street drawings Ghosts of Savamala (authors: Kriška Studio, part of the City Acupuncture project), and among them the most quantitatively memorable project Red Bull Door Deco (earlier edition of Mikser festival), in a very effective way marked the onset of this process. Painted doors and gentle and cheerful drawings of spirit-like creatures showed diversity, playfulness and joy – in short, they illustrated the desired image of the neighborhood. The works that were created as part of the Mikser program in 2014, and those that followed, determined and further developed this image. Apart from a few subtle details in the series Ghosts of Savamala (rainbow socks and hairy legs of two figures) and nominally the feminist nature of Femikser Street Art, a part of the Mikser Festival program from 2012, and the mural The People by the Russian artist Misha Most, there is a noticeable absence of social or social engagement of individual works, and their distinctly ennobling role. Concentrated in a small area of Savamala, the quantity of works whose primary function is visual enrichment and transformation of a large part of the neglected space, creates or establishes the image of the neighborhood as a space for art and space of art. The openness in the conceptual sense that characterized this action through the diversity of approaches, styles and motifs of the works that are its product, created in the physical space an atmosphere of artistic openness and provided a visual component in the process of branding Savamala.

Football Fans and Murals – Territoriality, Collective Identity, Politics

A separate category of interventions in the city area consists of football fans' murals, interventions that resemble street art and *marking* of the territory with colors. Although different fan groups are created by various groups, aesthetics and modus operandi, with rare exceptions, are the same. Skillfulness in their execution varies. To understand this group of works, just like for example graffiti, it is necessary to understand the subculture it belongs to - and in Belgrade, that subculture is massive. Territory, colors, social relations and interaction of groups, determinants of identity and collective identity, ideological determination are just some of the factors that must be taken into account when analyzing and determining the function of fan murals and other pictorial interventions. The category of *football fan* and the use of the *fan* in this specific context does not apply to mere liking of one club and healthy sports rivalry in relation to a rival club or clubs. Cheering and being a football fan in this case refers to belonging to a group in which collective identity is a key point, and belonging and loyalty to a group is a matter of social prestige, as well as a measure of social success within a relatively small community. The fan we are dealing with here is the one described by the colloquial designation "hooligan". Extreme football fans are commonly referred to in such a way, but what separates the fans we are talking about here from "ordinary" groups of football hooligans is their involvement in politics, ideology and crime. Ivan Čolović¹² and Ivan Đorđević¹³ dealt with the transformation of the collective self from the context of the stadium into the

12 Čolović, I. (1997) *Politika simbola: ogleđi o političkoj antropologiji*, Beograd: Radio B92.

13 Đorđević, I. (2015) *Antropolog međū navijačima*, Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek.

collective self utilized in wars in the former Yugoslavia, providing valuable material for the understanding the generations of fans who are active today and seemingly illogical links between hooligan groups, right-wing politics and nationalism that is conspicuously present on their murals and other pictorial interventions.

With this in mind, the motifs that refer to medieval Serbia, the insistence on Cyrillic, which mimics Miroslav's Cyrillic lettering and traditionalism in the works of fan groups, among which Zvezda fans are leaders in this regard, becomes logical. Thus, in verbal inscriptions, the club is often referred to as "sacred", and dealing with the issue of Kosovo and "family values" becomes an element that, in terms of importance and frequency of representation, challenges the sport-related subjects.

Documentary and investigative television series *The Real Football Factories* and *Insider*, which dealt with the topic of football hooligan groups in Serbia, revealed a part of the brutality and violence that characterizes them, but also their connections with the criminal underground. A fan, therefore, in the context of modern fan groups in Belgrade, is not a fan of football who follows the game of the club he is rooting for on weekends, but a person whose primary identity determinant is belonging to a group that has political and ideological attitudes, who nurtures the image of a macho hooligan who is no stranger to violence.

In terms of technique and usage of visual means and symbols, the motifs of the works of these groups are very similar, with exceptions that are conditioned by the ideological determinants adopted by the group. Fans rarely resort to ephemeral materials and techniques. Façade paints, concrete paints and aerosol are all in use. The foundation of the works consists of the colors of the club (red and white for Zvezda, black and white for Partizan, blue and white for OFK Belgrade, blue, black and white for FK Rad, etc), coat of arms, in different ways typographically stylized slogans and the name of the club and the group. It's all about size and quantity. All four groups used stencils as a quick and inexpensive multiplication technique.

The portrait appears as a motif sporadically, in the function of paying posthumous tribute (there will be more talk about this function of the painting in a separate chapter) and in this case realism is pursued. Fan groups in their pictorial and propaganda activities abundantly use symbols that are not exclusively related to football (Celtic or Odin cross which is a global, racist symbol of white supremacists, the confederation flag that is also associated with racism, cockade, coat of arms with four S letters, coat of arms of Belgrade, Serbian flag, etc), all with the aim of demonstrating ideological convictions and demonstrating power. The use of symbols (some of which are extremely problematic) testifies to the ideological and political determination of groups and illustrates the claim that the spheres of activity and interest of hooligan groups are not nearly limited to sports and stadiums. One of the more radical examples of mixing fan and ideological propaganda is the works and activities of the fan group of FK Rad, United Force. An objectively small group drew attention to itself by participating in right-wing public rallies, conspicuously propagating racial, religious and national hatred.

Portrait as a Symbol – a Familiar Face in the Function of Representing Ideas

Portraits of famous, socially and media-exposed contemporaries and historical figures, whether triggered by current events or historical reminiscence, carry significant associative value, and can become a visual metaphor or symbol. For example, Bob Marley, a Jamaican musician, is the most famous figure in the history of reggae music and the Rastafarian movement; the mention of Bob Marley is associated with both, and his portrait ceases to be a mere visual representation of his face and becomes a symbol, because it contains more than immediate meaning. Similar examples include portraits of Adolf Hitler, Che Guevara, Marilyn Monroe, Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein, and others. A portrait that has acquired symbolic value often appears in the public space as a carrier of a message relating to the current moment in the local space, which in some way refers to the values that such a portrait in a metaphorical sense represents. These examples have gained the status of global recognition, but the same principle applies to portraits of locally famous people and fictional characters. However, the consensus over the values that portraits represent is not always granted, so they are often subjected to additional interventions by those who do not share the same values. These interventions represent an illustration of a conflict of opinion, an uncensored and anonymous form of discussion in the public space. Sometimes it is a banal mockery, like drawing a mustache, and sometimes it has more complex content.

Painting as a Means of Posthumous Tribute – Memorial Portraits

Posthumously devoted portraits of people unknown to the general public are characteristic for Serbia, and especially for the facades of Belgrade. In the conventional sense, it is not about individuals who have in any way indebted the local community with their work during their lifetime, but most often about individuals whose often violent death shook a part of that community, or about individuals who had strong ties with a social group (most often football hooligan groups). Local-geographical determinants are of great importance for these works, as they appear most often within residential neighborhoods, in the spaces between buildings, in parks used by the neighboring community, or on school buildings in neighborhoods which the life of the portrayed person is associated with. What makes this group of works particularly interesting is that the very idea of these works represents a combination of elements of sacral, which is atypical for the contemporary image in the public space, and the elements of a specific brand of collectivity, which are one of the main reasons for their creation. From an anthropological point of view, speaking about contemporary verbal models of communication in the context of “beyond” and “sacral”, Ivan Čolović presents an argument that is fully applicable to visual language:

The study of communication in magic, ritual (sacred or secular), in myth or solemnity, shows that it takes place through special codes or sublanguages which enable man to establish a connection with the otherwise unfathomable world of the otherworldly forces, gods,

*heroes, and the same connection with other participants of that rite or feast. The peculiarity of these codes, verbal and non-verbal, is not something that is only reached by analysis, but it is, on the contrary, highlighted in the foreground.*¹⁴

The function of these portraits can most accurately be described as memorial, but the means in this case surpasses the traditional ceremony associated with burial and cemetery, which are expressions of personal grief or respect of relatives and friends. In this case, personal grief is transferred to the level of public, to the level of the entire community, that is, to the level of collective. The sacral or ritual element of which Čolović speaks, can be recognized in these works in several layers. Shifting the center of gravity of events from the level of personal to the level of public, i.e. the transformation of the personal sense of loss to the level of general loss. This way, the entire local community, without having any say of their own, becomes involved in the ceremony of grief for the deceased. Verbal messages accompanying these portraits, references to *the beyond* are also noticeable. In addition to the name, years of birth and death (information that appears on tombstones), messages not unlike epitaphs also follow these works, which further emphasize the sacral nature of these paintings which then reflects upon the part of public space in which they are placed.

The third level at which the elements of the sacral are particularly noticeable is communities' treatment of these paintings. Unlike other self-initiated visual interventions (especially in residential neighborhoods), they manage to avoid whitewashing, removal or subsequent interventions. Such an attitude of a local community that has previously been mobilized to participate in collective grief serves as an argument to the sacral nature of these works. Their destruction is not only an intervention in a common space, it is much more than that an expression of gross disrespect for the deceased, and as such much of an attack on a memory or "monument" than a trivial act of cleaning walls. Unlike the portraits of celebrities that appear at a specific moment, whose creation is due to media pomp regarding the news of their death, which appeal to empathy on a very generalized universal level, the portraits in question operate on a much more specific level, referring directly to the pathos of the very act of death of the individual, and the spiritual continuity of his connection with the neighborhood and the social group to which he belonged during his lifetime.

Memorial portraits dedicated to famous actors, those amongst them that are not being painted at the moment associated with the news of death, differ from memorial portraits-obituaries by not containing the element of pathos, but by being focused primarily at the public image and the work of an individual. It is notable that portraits of actors are often based on their roles, so, for example, the famous actor Danilo Bata Stojković, is paid tribute through the painting of Ilija Čvorović and Laki Topalović, some of the most famous roles he played.

¹⁴ Чоловић, И. (2000) *Бордел райника – Фолклор, иполишика и райи*, Земун: Библиотека XX век; Београд: Чигоја штампа.

Painting as a Means of Ideological and Political Propaganda

Political and ideological propaganda is based on action in the public sphere, and the public sphere in this context implies not only public space, but also electronic and print media, and the virtual space of the Internet. However, only those examples of political and ideological propaganda that rely on painting and symbols in the physical, public space are relevant to us. Probably the most effective use of the image in public space in the service of political propaganda is the *Otpor fist*, by the student resistance movement. The symbol itself, a raised fist, is a reference to the anti-fascist struggle in the Spanish Civil War, and the raised fist and slogan *No Pasaran!* have become universal symbols of antifascism and non-abandonment. So, a symbol whose history significantly determines its meaning, in this case is a form of political propaganda that is clearly ideologically directed. In the period from 2013 to 2017, there were not many extensive or striking campaigns that rely on the symbol and multiplication, but this does not mean that the principle itself is neglected – on the contrary. Noticeably, the focus shifted from small, quick interventions (such as stencils) to murals as the dominant means. Political and ideological propaganda and symbols were abundantly found among football hooligans' works, either as independent elements or incorporated into larger compositions.

Hate Speech and Responses

Graphic signs (sometimes unrelated to the original meaning and context from which they originate) that are appropriated and incorporated into visual identities of groups and organizations that propagate racial, religious or national intolerance, have become independent associations – these are known as the hate symbols. Some of them are generally known, such as swastikas, and their presence provokes negative reactions from a large part of the public, and their use is punishable by law. However, an incomparably larger number of hate symbols that are not as commonly known or represent a “variation on the theme” of over-obvious hate symbols, appear often in the public space, either as parts of wider political and ideological propaganda, or as elements of fan murals and inscriptions, or independently. Unnoticed by most users of public space, due to a certain degree of coding, symbols of hatred, except for the most obvious ones, linger on the walls for a long time without causing particularly passionate reactions from the general public. In public space, they serve as tools of promoting ideas that are socially unacceptable and as such do not have open access to electronic media, printed media, social networks (because they sanction the language of hate to some extent), so the only spaces of propagating such ideas are personal blogs, semi-open forums – walls. This type of activity in public space is followed by responses, using the same means – spraypaint most commonly. Various groups and individuals engage in crossing hate speech over. These back-and-forth actions on certain locations have been seen to last for months.

Painting as a Means of Socially Engaged and Political Commentary

Socially engaged art, in the context of painting in public space, consists of works which in addition to visual qualities and personal poetics, hold socially relevant mes-



Figure 2: *Pravda* (Justice), TKV
(photo: Andrijana Danilović)

sages and initiate an open discussion. What separates the works of socially engaged art from political or ideological propaganda, although they are often a political stance par excellence, is their goal, that is – the absence of striving for power as a goal of action. They may have an ideological connotation, but they are not utilized as a means of promoting the political activity of an organization or group.

Conclusion

A multitude of categories that have been established during a three-year period of researching roles of painting in the public space of Belgrade, lead to the obvious conclusion that painting is largely recognized as a powerful and suggestive tool in achieving various goals. The use of painting as a means of ennobling and transforming space from ordinary to artistic through the presence of a painting, as a means of commercial promotion, lobbying, building the image of space, marking the territory and demonstration of territoriality, building the image of a social group, promoting the idea and value system through portraits that have symbolic weight, demonstration of patriotism and constructs of collective identity, political and ideological promotion and as a means of sending socially engaged messages, confirm and firmly establish the initial assumption

that, apart from art-oriented motives, the image as a means is also utilized for non-artistic purposes.

All this serves as an argument that the image in the public space, despite completely different and often conflicting positions and reasons for which it comes to be, tends, and largely succeeds, to influence the way we perceive the space we use every day, but also the way we perceive our place in it. The widest spectrum of messages is being sent through the use of painting to each one of us, whether we are willing to engage them or not. These should not be overlooked, especially since each of them is a publicly stated attitude of an individual or a social group that fights for visibility, affection and mobilization of the like-minded. Understanding the function of the paintings that we encounter every day is a way to understand the people who live in that space, their habits, attitudes and behavioral models. They are also a way to draw attention to those topics that, for various reasons (tabooization, censorship or social unacceptability) are not represented in the media, but are very current among people who live in the observed space.

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Андријана Даниловић
Београд

ГРАД И СЛИКА: ЗНАЧАЈ И ФУНКЦИЈА СЛИКАРСКИХ ИНТЕРВЕНЦИЈА У ЈАВНОМ ПРОСТОРУ

Сажетак: У уметничко-истраживачком пројекту *Град и слика – значај и функција сликарских интервенција у јавном простору* анализирају се могуће сликарске интервенције у јавном простору кроз теоријско истраживање засновано на анализи већ постојећих интервенција на подручју ужег центра и неколико удаљених београдских насеља. Овај интердисциплинарни пројекат тежи категоризацији репрезентативних примера различитих типова интервенција на основу њихове функције, у односу на уметнички, друштвени, политички и контекст односа са институцијама. На основу резултата истраживања може се закључити да богату разноврсност сликарских интервенција Београд не дугује само уметничком деловању на различитим нивоима, већ да је у огромној мери заступљена и употреба слике из неуметничких побуда, које варирају од прости комерцијалне промоције до идеолошке пропаганде и говора мржње, чиме се релевантност слике у јавном простору савременог града вишеструко потврђује.

Кључне речи: *слика, јавни простор, мурал, улична уметност, графити*

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THE ADVENTURES OF INSPECTOR YODA THE WRINKLED

NON-VIOLENT ACTIVISM AND QUEERING THE STREETS OF BELGRADE

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Оригиналан научни рад

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Abstract: *Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled is an activist project which brought a distinct critical commentary and humor to the streets of Belgrade, Serbia, between 2014 and 2018. Inspector's work is closely interwoven with the LGBTQ+ history and street art interventions in the past two decades in Belgrade. Inspector playfully appropriated vernacular language, often subverting the meaning, and offering an important gender and social critique in the nationalistic and sometimes violent public space of Belgrade during the mid-2010s. It is paramount to look at these interventions as situational artworks which serve as tools of queer place-making and non-violent activism. The stenciled little pug could be interpreted as a sign of resistance and hope in an environment prone to desensitization to violence and general apathy.*

Key words: *Street art, Belgrade, 2010s, Activism, LGBTQ+, Humor*

*Introduction*¹

Imagine you are walking down a familiar street lined with charming but somewhat run-down pre-WWII buildings and more recent gray socialist blocks. You pass by cafes and parks, until you realize a dog is following you and even trying to address you as a passer-by. Every so often, you see a pug painted on the walls, with dozens of messages, such as *Izvini, nisi moj stereotip* (Sorry, you're not my stereotype), *Šta gledaš?*

¹ Tunić, S. (2023) *The Adventures of Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled: Queering the Streets of Belgrade*, MA thesis, Department of Art University of California, Davis, Department of Art History. An abbreviated and edited version was published in 2024, see: Tunić, S. (2024) *Queering the Urban Space: The Adventures of Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled in Belgrade, Serbia*, SAUC – *Street Art & Urban Creativity Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 1, Lisbon: Urban Creativity, pp. 72-89. This version was adapted to correspond with the issue's main themes.

(What are you looking at?), and *Diže mi se (rEVOLucija)* (I'm having a hard on [the rEVOLution]). The dog is Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled (Inspektor Yoda Zgužvani), an activist (from art + activism) project by Nikola Herman (Nikša), which also included his pug Yoda in creating a mysterious street art character. They² operated mainly throughout the streets of Belgrade, Serbia, between 2014 and 2018, and communicated almost 200 unique messages by using stenciled pugs with speech balloons, ranging from activist comments to everyday sayings. In these messages, Inspector playfully appropriated vernacular language, often subverting (or queering) the meaning, and thus offering an important social, gender and especially LGBTQ+ themes critique in an overtly nationalistic and sometimes violent public space during the mid-2010s.

Despite their significance, as well as notable presence and original style, Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled's opus has not been properly analyzed as a whole. Their work has been discussed in several interviews and newspaper articles, but analytical pieces are few and part of a wider discussion on Serbian street art, activist interventions in the city, or part of mapping social extremism. It is my goal to provide a more informed glimpse of their work, by offering more context and interweaving queer theory, visual analysis and social art history, in order to demonstrate how their activism is still relevant today.

Turning to Inspector is timely, and can be a means of supporting existing and future queer and activist movements in challenging this troubled sense of progress. This effort is also closely related to writing a responsible contemporary history of LGBTQ+ voices and experiences in Serbia which is often unstable, under threat of suppression or invisibility, and hard to grasp due to social, political, class, religious prejudices, and especially rightwing extremism.³ An additional sense of urgency is the fact that Inspector's stencils, as a form of street art which are often used for activism, are ephemeral in their core, and many pieces have already disappeared. Considering there has been no continuous production since 2018, their work is no longer in the public focus aside from occasional documentary exhibitions and street art aficionados' social media posts. This also brings to mind an issue that several authors have addressed: although popular, street art is often decontextualized with the overwhelming digital dissemination in the past ten or so years, often tied with the lack of direct contact with the lived environment. Therefore, I would like to propose a more experiential, embodied and grounded line of inquiry.

To avoid any possible confusion, I am using the word street art in a very narrow sense. Street art is a type of contemporary art made at the intersection of graffiti subculture and fine arts techniques, operating in public spaces. It is ephemeral, done both with and without permission, with larger communicative potential than graffiti since it employs

² To avoid confusion, I am using *he* when referring to Nikša as an individual/author, and *they* when talking about the Inspector as a collaborative project which also includes Yoda the dog.

³ Blagojević, J. and Dimitrijević, O. (2014) Još uvek nismo kvir: tragovi prošlosti i/ili osmišljavanje budućnosti, *Među nama: Neispričane priče gej i lezbejskih života*, edited by Blagojević and Dimitrijević, Beograd: Hartefakt Fond, p. 9; Bilić, B. and Kajinić, S. (2016) LGBT Activist Politics and Intersectionality in Croatia and Serbia: An Introduction, *Intersectionality and LGBT Activist Politics*, edited by Bilić and Kajinić, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–29.

clear messages and/or characters.⁴ With its origin in the late 1970s and early 1980s in the United States and Europe, it quickly spread and became an international phenomenon in the 1990s, while in Serbia it has been present from the mid-2000s.

One of the most common techniques in street art is the use of stencils—template patterns one sprays or paints over to leave letters and images on the surface below. While the preparation could take some time, the execution in the street itself is rather quick, depending on the number of colors or layers the creator wants to utilize. Comprehension and direct messages are of the defining features of street art, and due to this very nature, stencils are commonly used for both artistic and activist ends.⁵ One of the key defining aspects of street art is ephemerality—the art is not made to last. The life of a given artwork in the street is dictated by the law of the street. Since a larger part of the production is made illegally (or without permit), it can be taken down anytime. Despite the political and community potential, intersections between street art and LGBTQ+ rights and creativity worldwide seem to exist in the margins, outside the mainstream.

Methodology

The intersection between street art, queer theory, and Serbia is rather a particular field. Street art has been well present in academia in the last twenty years with the internationally growing (and exploited) movement. Despite the ongoing gender analyses, however, discussions about queer street art seem to be in its infancy. There is very little mention of Serbia in the global street art world (and a rather small amount of in-depth analyses from the region), while queer theory is well received in the academic sphere. Combining the three areas, it is my aim to try to bridge this gap between the fields and advocate for interconnectedness of issues on a glocal (global + local) scale, by using Inspector's non-violent activism as a case study.

In approaching street art in general, I am echoing concerns by several researchers that street art needs to be approached in a contextualized and experiential way, especially in our era of overwhelming digitalization and popularization of street art.⁶ In following this advice, I rely generously on Mitja Velikonja's analytical framework which takes into consideration the message (content, artwork), the producer (artist), location (physical context) and reactions (public). This approach can provide the researcher a more rounded, informed and contextualized insight.⁷

4 Radošević, Lj. (2013) *Graffiti, Street Art, Urban Art: Terminological Problems and Generic Properties*, New Cultural Capitals: Urban Pop Cultures in Focus, editor L. Koos, Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, pp. 1–13.

5 Waclawek, A. (2011) *Graffiti and Street Art*, London: Thames and Hudson, p. 33-36; Velikonja, M. (2020) *Post-Socialist Political Graffiti in the Balkans and Central Europe*, London & New York: Routledge, p. 62.

6 Bengtson, P. (2014) *The Street Art World*, Lund: Almqvist & Wikander Press, pp. 146–159; Lennon, J. (2021) *Conflict graffiti: from revolution to gentrification*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 19; Waclawek, op. cit, p. 61, 192; Velikonja, op. cit, p. 6.

7 Velikonja, op. cit, pp. 36–44, 87–130.

To achieve this inquiry, I implemented several methodological tools to contextualize Belgrade, collect the material, and demonstrate what makes public spaces really queer in Inspector's case. Embodied research methodology emphasizes physical presence of the researcher and temporality in constructing shared social meanings with other people involved in the study and embodied experiences.⁸ In this case, it includes my discussions with the artist and exploring the streets of Belgrade in person, both as a native speaker, guide, and a local. When it comes to the artworks, social semiotics is employed to understand social meanings and humor of Inspector's messages.⁹ This is supplemented by two interviews and several informal chats with the artist.

In collecting, selecting and analyzing the material, I relied on a mix of ethnographic, digital, and semiotic tools, to understand Inspector's choice of locations in a given space and viewers' potential encounter with them. These locations and Inspector's artworks were geocoded, mapped and grouped by relying on several digital photo archives,¹⁰ artist's social media (Facebook and Instagram),¹¹ and the use of Google maps. The latter was useful to see the wider street context and clusters of other artworks and messages nearby by way of Google's photographing Belgrade's street views in 2013 and 2014, during the Inspector's initial peak period of activity.

Another means of contextualization is to define queer in the local framework. Within the history of LGBTQ+ activism in Serbia, queer/kvir has often been employed strategically, as an innovative, self-reflective, politically charged and critical call for radical action.¹² One of the noteworthy critical appropriation examples of queer was QueerBeograd Cabaret from the latter half of 2000s. According to several researchers, the QueerBeograd collective playfully translated queer into *kvar* (malfunction), "pointing to a malfunction in hegemonic regimes, and queer politics as the politics of interconnectedness".¹³ Overall, their approach was relational and based on political solidarity, avoiding pigeonholing themselves on a single issue or exclusive gender and sexual identity issues.¹⁴

8 Fransberg, M., Myllylä, M. and Tolonen, J. (2021) Embodied graffiti and street art research, *Qualitative Research*, 0(0), p. 5.

9 Sørensen, M. J. (2016) *Humour in Political Activism: Creative Nonviolent Resistance*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 17–26; Velikonja, op. cit, pp. 48–50.

10 Aside from my own collection, I relied on the material from the artist and from my street art colleagues Ljiljana Radošević and Aleksandar Đalek Đorđević, courtesy of Street Art Belgrade.

11 Inspektor Yoda Zgužvani's Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/inspektoryoda>; realnost_ujeda Instagram page: https://www.instagram.com/reálnost_ujeda/.

12 See: Maljković, D. (2013) A lesson in queer (Interview with Federico Sicurella), 5. September 2013., 23. June 2024, <https://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Areas/Serbia/A-lesson-in-queer-141023>; Blagojević and Dimitrijević, op. cit; Petković, S. (2015) LGBT aktivizam u savremenoj Srbiji: politizacija identiteta i strategije LGBT aktivista, *Etnološko-antropološke sveske* 25, (n.s.) 14, pp. 52-56.

13 Marjanović, I. (2017) *Staging the Politics of Interconnectedness between Queer, Antifascism and No Borders Politics*, PhD dissertation, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, p. 4.

14 Marjanović, *ibid*, pp. 92-98, 238-246; Bilić, B. and Dioli, I. (2016) Queer Beograd Collective:

Having this intersectional perspective in mind, I argue that queer/kvar can be useful in interpreting Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled's creations. From 2014 to 2018, Inspector served as a proxy for Nikša in continuing the legacy and activism of past queer initiatives and collectives. Additionally, Nikša also queered the streets in Belgrade by communicating messages promoting queer relationally, a non-normative of sociality, that went beyond identity politics and included commentaries concerning established systems of power and exclusion (such as the trans community, people living with HIV, migrants, homophobia and hate speech).

Context

The key for understanding LGBTQ+ activism in Serbia, and previously SFR Yugoslavia, is feminism. "The women's movement in the territory of former Yugoslavia has a long history and it represents a crucial point in the struggles against the oppression of patriarchy, but it also overlaps with hidden histories of homosexuality."¹⁵ The "softer ideological cage" of orthodox socialism saw feminism as either unnecessary or a bourgeois concept, but the conference opened new perspectives and possibilities. Under the tenets of feminism, the first LGBTQ+ activist groups were formed in the 1980s.

Officially the first gay-lesbian organization in Serbia was Arkadija, formed in 1990, with the main aim to lobby against homophobia and decriminalize homosexuality (which occurred in 1994), among other goals. After the breakup of Yugoslavia due to the civil war in 1991, many feminist and LGBTQ+ organizations in Serbia were dedicated to the anti-war movement and were critical of the nationalistic regime and rising political role of the Serbian Orthodox Church. During these years, a once peaceful socialist country turned to aggressive nationalism and polarizing war rhetoric, introducing regressive gender policies where both feminism and everything LGBTQ+ related were labeled as foreign enemies, a homosexual conspiracy, and a Western vice.¹⁶

After 2000, there was another turn. With the first democratic elections in 2000, Serbia entered an allegedly democratic, liberal and pro-EU period of stabilization and growth after almost a decade of economic sanctions and conflicts. However, this process has been observed to be simplistic and misleading; the core system remained unchallenged and a rubber band effect took place. In the past two decades we have seen an almost schizophrenic process of retraditionalization under the banner of ethno-nationalism (which is essentially against LGBTQ+ rights) and neoliberalism following European Union policies.¹⁷ LGBTQ+ activism seems to be stuck somewhere in the middle, between local struggles and international support.

Beyond Single-Issue Activism in Serbia and the Post-Yugoslav Space, *Intersectionality and LGBT Activist Politics*, edited by Bilić & Kajinić, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 110-112.

15 Marjanović, *ibid*, p. 70.

16 Gočanin, S. (2014) Počeci LGBT organizovanja u Srbiji – Pismo iz Slovenije koje je pokrenulo istoriju, *Među nama: Neispričane priče gej i lezbejskih života*, edited by Blagojević & Dimitrijević, Beograd: Hartefakt Fond, 338-339.

17 Velikonja, *op. cit*, pp. 131-145.

Against this broad backdrop, Inspector's peak activity between 2014 and 2018 was marked by two cornerstone events: a third successful Pride parade in 2014, after which no further Pride parades were banned or prevented until today, and the appointment of Ana Brnabić as the first gay/lesbian prime minister of Serbia in 2017. Critics noted that during this period, the right-wing, nationalistic and conservative government failed to advocate for better LGBTQ+ rights and equality, introducing surface-level changes aimed to satisfy the EU.¹⁸ While these events have contributed to better visibility and a more stable presence of LGBTQ+ community in Serbia, it is paramount to question this false sense that LGBTQ+ rights have been finally won with ongoing officially sanctioned Pride parades and a lesbian prime minister.

Keeping this in mind, communicating any LGBTQ+ topics and issues in public spaces in Serbia in the last twenty years was risky in multiple ways. The overwhelming hate speech created a very toxic and challenging environment to work with and in.¹⁹ This atmosphere significantly influenced LGBTQ+ artistic expressions and culture in Belgrade, and Serbia overall. Many initiatives were semi-public, if not entirely private, creating a safe space for expression. Other, more radical initiatives challenged the status quo by *poking the bear*,²⁰ and speaking up about problematic issues in the public, at least for a short period of time.

From the 2000s and well into the 2010s, with the proliferation of LGBTQ+ initiatives and public controversies (such as the Pride parade), the street became an important place for resistance. Many activist tuned to stencils; some noteworthy examples are Gayrila's (Gejrila) *Gej je OK* (Gay is OK), pop culture superheroes defending the attempted 2009 Pride parade (with Batman, Joker, Modesty Blaise, and Superman), *Ne j*bu vas p*deri nego kapitalizam* (The f*gs don't scr*w with you but capitalism does), promotional messages for Pride 2013, IPAK mirrors and stencils with famous feminist authors, and many others.²¹ Many employed humor with political critique, a legacy that Inspector relied on, yet none of them established a continuous presence apart from one-off or short-termed actions which were mostly reactive. The situation changed with Inspector's arrival to the street art scene.

Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled

The groundwork for Inspector's beginnings lie with one of the most influential street artists in Serbia, TKV–The Kraljica Vila (The fairy queen). She and a couple of other

18 Lhullier, C. (2022) The First EuroPride in the Balkans: Why it might take more than a walk to address LGBTIQ+ rights in Serbia," 11. November 2022., 23. June 2024, <https://platform.mk/the-first-europride-in-the-balkans-why-it-might-take-more-than-a-walk-to-address-lgbtiq-rights-in-serbia/>.

19 See: Petković, op. cit; Bilić & Kajinić, op. cit; Danilović, A. (2017) *Grad i slika: Značaj i funkcija slikarskih intervencija u javnom prostoru*, PhD dissertation, University of the Arts in Belgrade, Faculty of Applied Arts; Kisić, I. (2020) *Desni ekstremizam u Srbiji*, Beograd: Helsinški odmor za ljudska prava u Srbiji.

20 A common expression *Ne čačkaj mečku* (Do not poke the bear) means do not look for trouble.

21 See: Tunić, *The Adventures of Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled*, pp. 14-18.



Figure 1: Jolana Miličičová - Yoda with *Drugačiji pa šta?*, 2013, stencil, Braće Krsmanovića street (photo: Inspector)

women artists introduced street art in Serbia when the first stencils started appearing in Belgrade in 2004. Since then, she has been the Queen, as graffiti writers would say, with an art career that often intersects with activism. In 2012 for IPAK Center and together with Kornelija Sabo, TKV took part in a project and workshop called *Rodno čitanje grada* (Gendered readings of the city), aimed at supporting young artists.

Nikša, who would later create Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled, took part in their workshop, a crucial point for his way to activism. As one of the outcomes, a team of participants including himself realized an independent project called Kissing Area (Mesto za ljubljenje) which operated from late 2012 until 2014.²² Behind Kissing Area was the idea to mark metaphorical safe spaces around the city and position them on public sidewalks and in parks. Playing with the common homophobic saying that LGBTQ+ people should keep to themselves inside their own four walls, the authors created a stencil marking the four corners signifying the walls of a room (or a brick triangle signifying a house), framing an inscription which is (usually) the very name of the project in Serbian.

However, Nikša at some point was dissatisfied with the project since its essentially pro-LGBTQ+ and non-heteronormative messages appeared unclear and people were appropriating the popular stencils as romantic urban spots. At the time he was also expe-

22 Authors were: Anđela Čeh, Sanja Seliškar, Petar Došev and Nikola Nikša Herman. See: Stošić, M. (2015) Face the Wall – (De)kontaminacija javnog prostora, *Politike (ne)prijateljstva: politike jezika i pitanje odgovornosti*, edited by Stošić & Vasiljević, Beograd: Centar za istraživanje kultura, politika i identiteta (IPAK.Centar), pp. 42-43; IPAK.Center, “Kissing area”: <http://ipakcentar.org/kissingarea>; Mesto za ljubljenje/Kissing area Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Mesto-ZaLjubljenje>.

rimenting on his own, under the Nique Chat pseudonym. Some of his early street interventions were playful and humorous counter renditions of homophobic messages and stencils with Freddie Mercury. With the new knowledge of stencil-making and LGBTQ+ activism, very soon he came up with the new project which made its debut at the second Vreva festival in Savamala in 2014.

Like in previous examples of LGBTQ+ activism, Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled utilized the medium of stencils to communicate a combination of text and images, this time coupled with speech balloons drawn manually with markers. The dominant image in the stencil is a pug called Yoda, an adopted pet dog of Nikša. The name comes from Yoda from Star Wars, referencing not only the outward appearance of both characters, but also their age. Together they embody Inspector, in a collaboration between the human and the animal. The dog not only served as inspiration for the character, but accompanied Nikša to almost all of the street interventions, and served as a mouthpiece for his messages (Figure 1). To paraphrase Nikša, “It was as if I was imagining what Yoda would say to all these [homophobic and hate] messages we were encountering during our walks.” The stenciled pug is predominantly life-sized, positioned either within the reach of Yoda the dog (often emphasized on Inspector’s social media accounts), or at the average line of sight of us humans.

In an interview, Nikša described Yoda as: “...a pug, reaction, answer, message, awareness, sobering up, kick in the butt, wordplay, empowerment, defense, protection, questioning, critique, intervention, conversation, joke, memory, recycling, activism, Kissing area.”²³ This multifaceted and repetitive image made this street alter ego a true character tag, at the same time of recognizable authorship and anonymity, a common feature in the world of graffiti and street art. According to our interview, TKV’s colorful stencils and paste ups of strong women inspired his approach, as well as Shepard Fairy’s stickers Obey Giant. In both cases artists were covering the city with their characters, creating persistent and alternative advertising with a sense of mystery. Just like in the Obey Giant case, Nikša was not signing their pieces. In a way, you needed to know who the artist was beforehand or through word of mouth.

One could argue that the choice of a dog brings several interpretations to mind. Dogs are present in the streets of Belgrade, as desirable pets or undesirable strays. Symbolically, “marking the territory” is often related to dogs, as well as social groups such as gangs and sport fans. But Inspector’s approach is far from violent: “I consider myself a peace loving lunatic and that’s somehow a story that I figured out sits well with people and the authorities [...]”²⁴ Doing graffiti and street art through the action of tagging and bombing—covering a large area with your signature/character—is also a way of claiming the public space visually and symbolically. And with a queer perspective in mind, it is a way of claiming space, asking for cultural validation and breaking the silence about one’s existence.²⁵

23 Balaž, M. (2016) Ulično gaženje hejta! *Liceulice*, br. 3 – Sloboda, p. 28.

24 Herman, N. and Jovanović, N. (2016) Yodorus (drugi deo), 1:42–1:53, 26. January 2016., 23. June 2024., <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVx57MmG9VQ>.

25 Getsy, D. J. (2016) Introduction//Queer Intolerability and its Attachments, *Queer (Documents*

According to Nikša, Yoda the dog helped him to overcome personal challenges, and by taking care of the animal, he was empowered to make positive changes in his own life and immediate surroundings. The motivation was to face indifference and ignorance, fight violence and hate, and “start with something positive.”²⁶ After taking part in several festivals and collaborating with artist Sanja Pantić between 2017 and 2018, until the dog passed away in 2018. During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, he made just a few stencils with Yoda in 2020, and has a large number of messages pending for years that he wanted to put up. Since then, Nikša has been trying to continue his work, possibly with a different approach and a new character. Until that happens, there is a large body of past work that deserves our attention.

Some of the key aspects of public interventions that Inspector introduced was a combination of: an amiable character; clear, critical and diverse messages; humor and wit in playing with words and meanings; queering the public space; and a continuous production. A little pug is an instantly recognizable image, made intentionally cute and benevolent. He stands as the artist’s surrogate, a proxy, and a transmitter of messages. In a fashion typical of stencils in particular, their messages are written clearly, in Latin script, and a great majority in Serbian. The aim was to reach a large audience in public spaces, by utilizing this alternative media of street art. There is also care to the surface below to make the message legible, using markers to contrast the background color.

While activism might sometimes seem dull in its seriousness and utilitarianism, it does not necessarily need to be so. Humor operates in a social, cognitive and emotional way that allows activists to playfully and publicly criticize power. And when activists use it to destabilize dominant ideas, in a discursive guerilla war, they can stir up public opinion and offer alternatives to the prevailing order of things.²⁷ However, many of these humorous and political stunts suffer from a lack of continuity. Many times they are responding to a particular political event or cases of discrimination and do not continue with their engagement.²⁸ The situation is quite different in the case of Inspector who maintained public production for a number of years. Another important element is that Inspector’s messages are not worn-out political slogans, prescribing the desired behavior or attitude. They are targeting our sense of humor and intelligence, like carefully crafted riddles, leaving our interpretation open, but well-informed and with an edge.

Diving into this production is not an easy feat. Unlike Kissing Area, Inspector communicated a larger body of content. According to my research, from almost 200 unique messages, about 30% is related to everyday sayings and general positive messages, 30%

of Contemporary Art), London: Whitechapel Gallery and Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, p. 44, 79.

26 Marčetić, D. (2014) Krenimo od onog što je dobro – Inspektor Yoda Zgužvani u Zagrebu, 26. November 2014, 30. June 2024, <https://libela.org/razgovor/krenimo-od-onog-sto-je-dobro/>.

27 Sørensen, op. cit, pp. 7-9, 21-22.

28 See: Hvala, T. (2023) Streetwise Feminism: Feminist and Lesbian Street Actions, Street Art and Graffiti in Ljubljana, *Amnis* [Online] 8, Femmes et militantisme, 1. September 2008., 23. June 2024., <https://journals.openedition.org/amnis/545?lang=en>.

question gender and sexuality, and the last 30% are some sort of a social critique.²⁹ They range from pop culture references, social media (mis)use, and everyday sayings, to social critique, gender expectations, and animal rights. In socio-political commentary, Inspector's messages were always relevant to current events.³⁰ The majority of them employ a combination of wit and humor, often subverting the meaning of words, in revealing alternative or transgressive meanings. Nikša tagged the city relying on an interplay between the message, location, available surface and inspiration. Therefore, taking into consideration the physical public space as the space of production and communication in analyzing street art is paramount.

The city space is, after all, a large part of the meaning of these situational artworks, its primary context, created purposefully to be communicative and democratic.³¹ In order to understand the power of both artistic and political street art, we should address not only the content (artwork) and producer (artist), but also context (location) and audience (public, reception). Given the overwhelming number of Inspector's messages, I will focus on a few threads tackling humor and non-violent social critique and discuss placing and meaning-making in interaction with the surrounding context.

Hejteroseksualci: Deconstructing gender



Figure 2: Jolana Miličićová *Budi muško oženstveni se*, 2014, stencil, near corner of Zagrebačka and Koče Popovića streets (photo: Inspector)

²⁹ This number does not include how many times a given message was reproduced in streets.

³⁰ See: Danilović, op. cit, p. 90.

³¹ Young, A (2014) *Street Art, Public City: Law, Crime and the Urban Imagination*, London & New York: Routledge, pp. 7-8, 25-28; Waclawek, op. cit, pp. 79-90.

Many Inspector's messages are juxtaposing a familiar character—a small almost comic book looking pug—with messages that playfully question everyday life. One of the prime locations for such a strategy is Savamala urban neighborhood where a lot of gender and sexuality messages found their place. From the late 2000s, the neighborhood became known for its art scene, nightlife, clubs, independent, and LGBTQ+ spaces. Nikša's activity in Savamala, first with Kissing Area in late 2013 during BeFem festival and then independently from 2014, takes place at a time when the artistic scene was still vibrant and gentrification was starting to take over, right before the Belgrade Waterfront demolition and construction took place.

A corner between Cultural center GRAD—which is an important LGBTQ+ institutional ally—and the co-called Spanish house features a closely knit group of three stencils on concrete blocks and a wall. *Hejteroseksualci* (Haterosexuals) is a twist on heterosexuals, purposefully mislabeling and problematizing whether being straight equals hate toward sexual and gender difference. *Pis mačo* (Shoo macho) plays with the words mačo (macho) and maco (pussy cat), where instead of shooing a cat (Pis maco) one does so with aggressive masculinity, weakening its power. *Femmenalno* blends *fenomenalno* (phenomenal) and *femme*, equating exceptionality with women. All three can be seen as a critique of masculinity and aggressive heterosexuality which is essentially patriarchal.

Several other messages follow this confrontational gender thread, but one really stands out, *Budi muško oženstveni se* (Be a man, feminize yourself, 2014, Figure 2). “Be a man” is usually said as a teasing encouragement to enact a stereotypical masculine gender role, a synonym to “be brave” in facing difficult situations or proving oneself. According to Judith Butler, since social reality is not a given, but continually constructed through language, gender itself is a performance. She uses this argument to emphasize the fight against oppression that governs “normative heterosexuality.”³² In this line of thinking, we could say that Nikša is performing through his activist queer character as well as commenting on the social performances of gender.

By intentionally employing queering, they are destabilizing heteronormative language and gender (stereo)types, creating fissures for multiple, often contradictory readings. Here the message has a tone of a challenge where manliness should be proven by the very opposite—by being feminine. This is visually underlined by the pug's pinkish background. It functions as a paradoxical contrast which destabilizes common sense and gender expectations. I would also argue that the message could be read in another way. By abandoning toxic masculinity, the message might call to accept the non-patriarchal, non-macho qualities of being a man, creating a balance of stereotypical feminine and masculine behavior (like men publicly crying, showing their “weak” side, etc).

One of the prominent pieces is *Do jajnika*, a funny multilayered world-play which refers to “do jaja,” which roughly translates as awesome. Literally, it means “to the egg,” where egg has the same connotation as testicles in English. IYW replaced the sexual

32 Butler, J. (1988) Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory, *Theatre Journal* Vol. 40, No. 4 (Dec., 1988), pp. 519–531.

organ by inserting the word *jajnik* (ovary), while the original meaning remains recognizable.³³

Another one, *Ovde je butchno* plays with the words *butch* and *bučno* (loud), referencing the more masculine lesbian identity. Of two examples known to me, both are near not only LGBTQ+ spaces but also clubs, whose music is often heard from the street. By this intervention, IYW seems to signal a coded connection between the often protective indoor safe LGBTQ+ social spaces and sometimes threatening outdoors world, but it can also be a commentary about the loud night clubs or amount of noise that this heavy transport hub experienced at the time.

Inspector's messages can be interpreted as a means of claiming existent queer spaces and queering the public space. In the case of locations which have a prior LGBTQ+ history or contemporary social use, but which are often obscured for protection and privacy sake, Inspector was contributing to their coded visibility. On the other hand, everyday public locations which are not explicitly associated with the LGBTQ+ population were queered by inserting queer subjects and topics in a space where they are unexpected, suppressed or invisible.

Drug od drugog: Solidarity, difference and interconnected struggles

Be a man, feminize yourself could also relate to the surrounding neighborhood, filled with graffiti tags and sport fan paroles. Today's Park Luke Čelovića has been called P*cin park (P*ssy park), known for its cis-women and trans sex workers for decades. Challenging masculinity and praising femininity with stencils could be Inspector's way of acknowledging their presence, something Inspector also did with pro-trans content around the city. Interestingly, it is also a place with shifting identity in the mid-2010s which allows kvar—abandoning single-issue and identity struggles. For example, a group of stencils were addressing the notion of otherness and migration.

Around Park Luke Čelovića and along Karadorđeva street, on the walls and large garbage bins, Inspector made a few pieces of *Drug od drugog* (Companion of the other), playing on the words *drug* (friend, buddy, comrade) and *drugi* (other, literally second). At that time the message was made (2014), Savamala was transforming from a transit into migrant hub, especially from 2015 with the large influx of immigrants from the Middle East who were located in the park itself. The stencil called for companionship, to side with the migrants (especially because the message was written in Serbian and not English or Arabic), resisting their othering and exclusion from Serbian society, adding up to other activist voices in the area which addressed notions of racism, class solidarity, war and nationalism. Following the trend, Inspector temporarily abandoned the iconic pug and stenciled the neighborhood with the message *Rasizam ubija* (Racism kills), while *(Od)baci stigmatu* (Throw away the stigma) found its way throughout the city on both walls and garbage cans.

A set of stencils tackled the general issue of difference, such as Kissing Area's *Дру-
іачију іа иііа?* from 2013 (Figure 1) and Inspector's *Drugačija, pa šta?* from 2014

³³ *Jajnik* (singular, nominative case), *jajnika* (singular or plural, accusative case).

(meaning: Different, so what?). The latter was reproduced next to an IPAK mirror with Audrey Lorde, both strengthening the feminist undertones and creating a dialogue with the pre-existing piece. Several Inspector messages address the stigma of HIV, which is still widely regarded as a virus that predominantly affects the gay population. Breaking the taboo in a playful fashion, one found in Savamala says *HIV sloveni*. Here Inspector referred to the previous, socialist Yugoslav anthem *Hej, sloveni* (Hey, Slavs), which was used from WWII until 2006. Catchy and subversive, the message has both a historical-cultural reference and acknowledges the visibility of people with HIV among the Slavs (Serbs included). Following the gender thread, many messages addressed the trans* population, emphasizing their visibility in the LGBTQ+ acronym and struggle. Some of them stated: *Padam na trans* (I'm falling for trans), *Trans*fer Ponosa* (Trans*fair of Pride), and *Ne trans*fobiši se trans*formiši se* (Don't trans*phobe yourself trans*form yourself).

As we had a chance to see, although it seems easy to remain in the narrow circle of LGBTQ+ messages, queering as an artistic strategy should not be essentialized. Looking over Inspector's entire opus can provide multiple points of connection and interpretation. Challenging gender norms and posing taboo questions, offering solidarity and confronting ignorance all operate at the same time, and sometimes even place. The combination of these stencils in situ might emphasize a thread, like resistance to gender or social discrimination, or simply expose the passersby with bits of Yoda's wisdom.

Čekam ovas: Countering the Hate



Figure 3: Jolana Miličičová *Neznanje rađa strah* and *Strah rađa nasilje*, 2014, stencils, Knez Mihailova street (photo: Inspector)

By virtue of being in the public space, street art is accessible to the passersby, for better or worse. Due to its unsanctioned character, people might object and react. Street art pieces can be erased, white walled (painted over by city services or tenants), buffed (crossed over by other street artists), or people can engage creatively by adding content of their own. To go back to Velikonja's approach, given location, including third-party interventions, also play a significant role in contextual analysis. We must not forget that this combination of elements is crucial for analyzing the artworks in situ.

In several interventions Inspector reacted upon the already existing hate speech, with the strategy to “decontaminate” the streets.³⁴ For example, in 2015 they joined forces with the initiative *Ne budi ograničen. Misli!* (Don't be ignorant. Think!) to react against ultra-right wing, nationalistic, neo-Nazi, and hooligan hate messages in Belgrade.³⁵ Erasing hate messages in public space is a staple activist activity, but in this case the artists aimed to leave their creative mark as well. In the action called *Hejt ubija – četke na gotovs* (Hate kills – paintbrushes ready), Inspector's made small stencils of pugs walking over “clouds,” areas of paint that covered the undesirable content. The joyful colors also make a contrast with often gray or dilapidated surfaces underneath. As we can see in the example from Strahinjica Bana street, an upscale area, they transformed the negative messages into a visual pleasure of looking. This action was coordinated among several cities, which resulted in a unified regional response with other antifa groups.³⁶

While this strategy erased, blurred, or simply crossed over hate messages, contributing to a wall palimpsest, anonymous public feedback can also reveal multiple readings of a given message. Originally reproduced in several locations, standing solo or reacting to a nearby hate message, *J*beš p*dere* (F*ck f*gs) from 2014 received a special treatment (Figure 4). According to Nikša, the motivation was to react to a set of nearby hooligan graffiti by Partizan fans, which were aggressively claiming the area with their signature black and white color. Looking at Google maps, the area is full of them—the closest ones are sexist *Jer lepa si do mog, ГД* (Гробари Дорћол, Grobari Dorćol), *PFC/ПФК* (Partizan football club), and a nationalistic stencil *Пиши ћирилицом* (Write in Cyrillic). Inspector's message explicitly reflected the dual-meaning, implicating both the sexual intercourse (as attraction or aggression) and indifference. Many homophobic men turn out to be unsure of their sexuality and even “latent homosexuals,” who channel their aggression towards the LGBTQ+ population. According to Nikša, there is a parallel sentiment where actual gays just want to be left alone from these hetero pressures and frustrations.

34 Velikonja, op.cit, p. 53; Velikonja, M. (2020) Ustavimo LGBT revoluciju! – Kar poskusite! (Anti)homofobni in (anti)patriarhalni grafiti postsocialistične tranzicije, *Časopis za kritiko znanosti, domišljijo in novo antropologijo* #280, Boj z neumnostjo / novi feminizmi, pp. 269–284.

35 Danilović, op. cit, pp. 85–86; Danilović, J. (2015) Slavimo Beograd, operimo grafite mržnje, *Liceulice* br. 24 – Bolje da se uzalud boriš, nego da uzalud živiš, pp. 16–17; Balaž, op.cit.

36 Martinović, I. (2015) Zajednička akcija antifašista regije: Ne grafitima mržnje, 25. June 2015, 30. June 2024, <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/ujedinjeni-antifasisti-regije/27092100.html>; Bagarić, D. (2018) Kako se crta ekstremizam, 30. June 2024, https://autonomija.info/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/kako_se_crta_extremizam.pdf.

Possibly because the speech bubble used a derogatory word, somebody reacted crossing over in red spray the word *p*dere* and wrote *homofobiju!*, thus changing the message to *J*beš homofobiju!* (F*ck homophobia!). In this interesting twist, with an exclamation mark, the sexual agency and critical indifference is again targeting the homophobic sentiment. In an additional twist, two police officers caught Nikša in the act, asking him why he was writing a seemingly homophobic message on the wall.³⁷ Located on a wall in a small street overlooking the memorial Museum of Vuk and Dositej and kindergarten Mestašće, as well as the nearby Mihailo Petrović Alas elementary school, it was no wonder he caught the police's attention. Eventually, the location remained attractive to other artists; TijanaTri from studio Кришка (Kriška) and Hepa (Nera) made their mural piece just below the Inspector's, directly inspired by his work.³⁸

Nearby Savamala was also not immune to hate messages targeting the LGBTQ+ population that usually appeared before the Pride parades during the 2000s and 2010s, and which proved durable in the streets due to general neglect and/or apathy. Right-wing extremist groups were trying to spread fear and oppose the Pride parade, which they achieved several times with the Pride parades being canceled due to alleged police understaffing and threats of urban violence. Many of them used to spread *Čekamo vas!* / *Чекамо вас!* (We are waiting for you!) messages throughout the city in order to scare the Pride attendants and supporters. While not the first such activist response in Belgrade,³⁹ Inspector introduced a message that challenged the hate messages themselves (2014). By recomposing the two words from *Čekamo vas* into *Čekam ovas* (I am waiting for oats), the original threat has been humorously neutralized with an absurd twist.

Some messages commented on violence in general: *Neznanje rađa strah* (Ignorance gives birth to fear) was sometimes coupled with *Strah rađa nasilje* (Fear gives birth to violence, Figure 3). Others, such as *Ne tuci (p)se* (Do not beat dogs/yourself) extended the fight against violence towards dogs the artist saw being beaten or neglected in city parts.

Sada je najbolje: Hooligans

Many hate messages were employed by a number of sport supporter/hooligan groups, such as the ones in Dorćol neighborhood, aggressively tagging the public space. Dorćol is an old neighborhood, with a rich history and multicultural heritage (Austrian, Jewish, Muslim), in a prime location between the very center and Danube river. Territorially, it has been divided into upper and lower Dorćol, where sport fans of Partizan (called Grobari, gravediggers) claim the upper, and fans of Crvena Zvezda (Delije, warriors/braves) claim the lower part. Both groups of these two biggest sport clubs in Serbia use graffiti, murals and street art for marketing and to extend their reach, physically and

³⁷ Herman & Jovanović, op.cit.

³⁸ Nearby there was a tag by Noriaki from Poland, as well as still standing murals of Snout and GTR/Deroks, the latter featuring the actor Bora Todorović.

³⁹ Example of stencil intervention with superheroes prior to announced Pride in 2009, see: Tunić, *The Adventures of Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled*, p. 17.



Figure 4: Jolana Miličičová *J*beš p*dere*, 2014 (photographed in 2017), stencil and spray paint, Gospodar Jevremova street (photo: Srđan Tunić)

symbolically. Hooligans at the time were generally notorious for street violence, homophobia, and their political and criminal ties.⁴⁰ In a few instances, Inspector decided to counter and address their messages that sometimes oversaturated the streets. Given that Dorćol was Nikša's and Yoda's primary home at the time, we can see the pugs as a way to reclaim the public space.

Reacting against hate is only one strategy, as we had a chance to see in the previous section. Apart from clear activist messages, a large part of Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled's opus are everyday sayings, spontaneous jokes and "spreading positivity." One of the positive stencils is *Sada je najbolje* (something like: Now's the best) from 2017. According to Nikša, this "saying which our grandmothers used" indicates a state or situation when all is well. What is interesting is that one of the versions of this stencil found its way to an unlikely place, a football fan mural in their own territory. Near Nikša's neighborhood, lower Dorćol, many walls and almost entire residential blocks have been marked as belonging to one of the largest sport clubs in Serbia, Crvena Zvezda (Red Star). Inspector wanted to test their territoriality by placing another *Sada je najbolje* stencil on their wall, while respecting the existing color scheme (red and white). Poking the bear indeed. Some young fans spotted him during the act, but due to his benevolent behavior and message, let him go unharmed.

⁴⁰ Danilović, *Grad i slika*, pp. 52-62; Velikonja, *Post-Socialist*, pp. 273-326.

But the real elephant in the room is what happens to hooligans who oversaturate the area with their tagging which often remain unchallenged, not to mention hate messages? Popular explanation is that there is no money to whitewall and decorate the old facades, where some owners might be just preparing a fresh clean wall for next taggers, but I think the underlying reason might be simple desensitization and apathy. In other words, the citizens do not notice the discriminatory language anymore, it all becomes white noise in an environment already filled with public advertising. While this might suggest the hate messages are semi-neutralized, even abandoned by not being erased or reacted upon, their content continues to spread and “contaminate” the environment.

A few other interventions also addressed the sport supporters/hooligans. A classic inscription of Red Star’s *Делије!* (Delije!) at Lower Dorćol was repurposed by adding an extra Г (G) in front and ? at the back, humorously turning the message into a question *ГДелије!?* (Gdelije?!, Where is he?!). Throughout the city, Inspector also utilized the pug commenting *I navijači tepaju*, playing on the double meaning of the word *tepati* which means both to beat and coo, and so the message stated *Sport fans/supporters beat/coo too*. In a way, in these examples Inspector managed to make a lasting physical and symbolic intervention within the space which is usually extremely homophobic. Seeing this message in its contextual use, I think Inspector created a potent double-alternative: both to violent or overly politicized messages on Belgrade’s walls, and the sometimes prevalent victim discourse of the LGBTQ+ community.

Conclusion

I mean, a police officer asked me, “do you truly think you’re going to change anything by doing what you do?” [...] I don’t think so but I can’t be silent anymore, I mean... somehow I think that there’s been enough silence. You can only be silent for so long.⁴¹

Many of these examples can be interpreted as cases of kvar—malfunction of logic, expectations, normative relationships and “common,” “public” opinion. That is, purposefully challenging the alleged neutrality and objectivity of these everyday notions which have been hijacked by ultra-right nationalism, coupled with social solidarity and antifa sentiment. When everyday language reproduces violence and homophobia,⁴² Inspector’s guerilla war interventions create ruptures in the dominant discourse by confronting the passersby. The value of these actions is not just in reacting publicly against hate and condemning violence, but also in challenging the desensitization of the public, where these hate messages remain unsanctioned or unquestioned in the streets for a long time. As we had a chance to see, many messages in public spaces made under the ultra-right wing or “banal nationalist” pretext are violent in content or call for violence, contributing to a toxic and fearful atmosphere targeting certain minorities. According to Velikonja, in regards to nationalism, “[s]arcastically speaking, there is always someone to hate.” Street

41 Herman and Jovanović, op. cit.

42 Blagojević and Dimitrijević, op. cit, p. 11.

art can challenge apathy, by giving a public voice to a certain social group, a counter-narrative, and as such is inherently a democratic and political act.⁴³

Reviewing Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled's activism, I want to underline that this little pug is a symbol of hope. While the physical stencils have mostly been erased by now, its messages resonated with the public and are still relevant in today's Serbian society. As we have seen, marginalization, stigmatization and violence towards the LGBTQ+ community have been reproduced in public space, physically and symbolically. Having a critical minoritarian voice in this setting has great potential to create fissures in this context, reacting against desensitization of the general public, confronting the hate messages, and presenting a discourse of its own. Inspector is one of those voices who was queering the streets, destabilizing "the common sense," questioning gender norms, challenging the status quo, and providing alternative gender and social relations.

His own personal empowerment was intentionally reflected in his immediate surroundings: the city of Belgrade, artistic, activist and queer circles. This enabled a certain temporal queer space, interwoven in the everyday fabric of the city. And by expanding the focus outside of "pure" LGBTQ+ topics and activism, Inspector managed to tackle some intersectional potential which reflected not only Nikša's interests, but also the interconnection of struggles. After all, the same urban space is shared by a variety of social groups and individuals encompassing multiple identities, which all points to an awareness of the local context and belonging. As a queered space, it reflects an aesthetic choice, but also fosters minoritarian politics of visibility and brings the private into the public as a means to face prejudices. This is an important decision given the often marginalization and imposed secrecy of queer everyday experience in the public.

Finally, Inspector Yoda the Wrinkled brought play and positivity into the gray city which might be overlooked looking at the sometimes grim messages they were reacting to. Therefore, it is important to shift the weight from pure discrimination, hate and violence (or reaction to it), towards this discourse which brings and supports critical hope. After all, despite the fact that a little pug could not change society, their example challenged desensitization and apathy, which serves as the groundwork for resistance.

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⁴³ Velikonja, *Post-Socialist*, p. 105. But Velikonja also claims that certain extremist political groups can misuse this assumption by voicing out dominant discourse under the guise of a spontaneous anonymous public (publicly stating what the government cannot) or aiming to erase that very same freedom of speech. See: Velikonja, *Post-Socialist*, p. 20, pp. 110-111.

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АВАНТУРЕ ИНСПЕКТОРА ЈОДЕ ЗГУЖВАНОГ

НЕНАСИЛНИ АКТИВИЗАМ И КВИРОВАЊЕ УЛИЦА БЕОГРАДА

Сажетак: *Инспектор Јода Згужвани* је активистички пројекат Николе Хермана Никше, који је заједно са својим мопсом Јодом као алтерегом стварао уличну уметност и уносио критичке коментаре и хумор у нашу свакодневицу и на београдске улице између 2014. и 2018. године. Њихов рад је блиско везан за ЛГБТ+

историју и активистичке интервенције кроз уличну уметност последње две деценије у Београду и пример је локално контекстуализоване и критичке апропријације концепта и термина queer/квир као квара. Кроз скоро 200 различитих порука, Јода се поигравао са свакодневним говором, често кварећи или подривајући оригинално значење, нудећи једну важну родну и друштвену критику у јавном простору који је често био препун агресивних порука мржње почетком двехиљадитих. Неопходно је да сагледамо ове интервенције као „ситуациона уметничка дела“ која служе сврси квировања простора и промовисања идеала ненасилности. Мали шаблони мопса Јоде које је Никша користио да би обележио град могу да се интерпретирају као знак отпора и наде у околини која је склона десензибилисаности на насиље и општу апатију у друштву.

Кључне речи: *улична уметност, Београд, архивизам, ЛГБТ+, хумор*

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BEYOND AESTHETICS: ETHNOGRAPHIC ENCOUNTERS WITH MURALS IN BELGRADE

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Abstract: *The streets of Belgrade are filled with all kinds of street (art) interventions, including murals. In this article I argue that murals are not merely a means for artistic expression or beautification of urban space. While approaching murals from an ecological perspective, that goes beyond their aesthetic and visual aspects, I show that murals are complex entities that not only manage to communicate with each other and take on new meanings over time, but they are also intertwined with the “ecosystem” of the capital and Serbian society. Based on ethnographic encounters with two Belgrade murals, I trace the post-socialist transformation of both Serbian and ex-Yugoslav society, and the way people here deal with shifting temporalities.*

Key words: *Murals, Ecology, Yugoslavia, Urban space, Serbia, Post-socialist transformation*

Walking through the streets of Serbia’s capital, Belgrade, it seems as if you come across a street (art) intervention almost at every turn.¹ Or at least that was my impression when I started a research for my master thesis *Ecology of Walls: Ethnography of Belgrade Murals*, which was defended in 2023 at the Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague, and on the findings of which this article is based.² And indeed thousands of writings, tags, graffiti and street art pieces, stencils and murals

1 The research was supported by the specific university research project 260736 Crisis and Uncertainty of Contemporary Worlds: Anthropological Perspectives, conducted at Charles University, Faculty of Humanities. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6978-0825>.

2 Miličičová, J. (2023) *Ekologie zdi: Etnografie bělehradských murálů*, master thesis, Faculty of Humanities, Charles University in Prague, <https://dspace.cuni.cz/handle/20.500.11956/181537> (accessed 02. July 2024). In case of interest in the English version of the master thesis, please contact the author at milicicovaj@gmail.com.

inhabit the walls of Belgrade's streets. As city dwellers though we can tend to overlook them. If it captures our attention we often see it in just two ways: vandalism or aesthetic beautification of urban space. We rarely look further at the richness of life that flourishes on the surrounding facades. To some extent the same can be told about social scientists. Slovenian researcher Mitja Velikonja has recently pointed out that street interventions – despite being an important part of public space all over the world – are rarely considered a legitimate topic for social scientific research.³

Along with it there is no consensus that would clearly and uniformly differentiate what is street art, graffiti or a mural.⁴ Through literature, it is possible to come across many (sometimes contradictory) definitions of what street (art) interventions are and what forms of them can be distinguished. When I started my research, some of the first questions I began to ask myself in the field were: what exactly is a mural, how is such an image on a wall perceived by people inhabiting a given urban space along with it, and what can it in turn tell us about a given society and place.

I really think that what a mural is depends on a context. (...) A mural doesn't exist without a context. If you go out of the context, you just get a painting. And a painting works in the vacuum of a gallery. On the other hand, a mural has to respond to its immediate spatial context. It's created in a temporal context, it's created in a certain political environment, in a particular social environment. (...) You can't see it as an isolated image. Because otherwise you take away everything that really makes it what it is.⁵

This is how a muralist Jana Danilović described her perception of what a mural is when we sat together in a café in Vračar, one of the districts of Belgrade, and discussed the variety of forms that a mural can take. And, as I try to show in this article, not only a mural can not be viewed without its immediate and wider context, nor can it be approached as a mere static image on a wall.

In this article, I go beyond the aesthetic aspect of murals. (1) First I introduce two researched Belgrade murals, (2) then I explain how, with a help of ecological perspective, I – in my ethnographic approach – view murals as complex entities with their own socio-material life and agency and (3) finally on the case of the two murals I show how this approach allows me to study not only the lives of the murals, but also post-socialist transformation and reflections of lives of the people in the region.

3 Velikonja, M. (2020) *Post-Socialist political graffiti in the Balkans and Central Europe*, London and New York, Routledge, p. XIII

4 Bengtson, P. (2014) *The Street Art World*, Lund, Almqvist & Wikander Press, pp. 11-25; Schacter, R. (2016) Street art is a period, PERIOD: or, classificatory confusion and intermural art, *Grffiti and Street Art: Reading, Writing and Representing the City*, edited by Avramidis, K., Tsilimponidi, M., New York: Routledge, pp. 103-118.

5 Miličičová, J. (2022) *Interview with muralist Jana Danilović*, personal interview, Belgrade.

Meet the murals

In Rajičeva Street in Belgrade you can find a building of the Belgrade Faculty of Fine Arts (FLU) and, opposite the faculty, a building of the former Jugobanka. And it is on the side wall of this building where a mural is painted in bright colors. This mural is one of the oldest in Belgrade. It was created here in 1984 by professor from FLU, Čedomir Vasić, with his then-students Perica Donkov, Darija Kačić, Vesna (Milivojević) Knežević, Mirko Ognjanović and Igor Štepančić.

Hundreds, maybe even thousands, of people pass by the mural every day. But if you don't know about it, you might pass it unnoticed. Despite its monumentality, the mural is a bit hidden in the folds of the street. The houses here don't form a straight line. This creates a small plaza that reveals a view of the side wall of the former Jugobanka, with the mural facing directly onto the famous Knez Mihailova Street.

Two central elements dominate the mural. A young man with his back turned to people walking on the street, so he does not properly show his face, and streams of spilled paint that seem to flow down from the top of the building. The young man is wearing a denim jacket, jeans and sneakers. He holds a large orange sketchbook in the armpit of one hand and his other hand is casually tucked in his pocket. Like this, he is looking somewhere upwards.



Figure 1: Mural “Rajičeva,” Čedomir Vasić & students, Belgrade, 2023 (photo: author)

On the other side of the city, in Bežanijska Kosa district, you can find a mural that resembles the one from the 1980s. The mural is called *Promena boja*, which means *Transformation of colors*. It was created 36 years after the first of the murals, by a muralist Pijanista as part of a Runway Festival. The surroundings in which this mural is located are different from the bustling city center. Bežanijska Kosa has a more residential atmosphere. The mural inhabits one of the corner walls of a block of apartment buildings. In front of the mural is a small grassy area, a pavement and a small parking lot. On the mural we see an elderly gentleman with a white beard. He is wearing a hat, a dark shirt and trousers and an unbuttoned greenish shirt. This man is facing people walking on the street. With one hand in his right pocket, his left hand pointing upwards, his eyes follow this gesture. From the roof does not stream paint, as in the first mural, but something brown. Something the artist himself referred to as feces during our interview in 2022.



Figure 2: “Mural *Promena boja*,” Pijanista, Belgrade, 2023 (photo: author)

As part of my field work research in Belgrade, I participated in many events related to the local art community. There I gained new information and contacts. I began to realize that the mural on Rajičeva Street and the mural on Bežanije Kosa are related at a conference where I first met Pijanista – the author of the second mural I researched. From his presentation it became clear that the mural *Promena boja* not only pays homage to the one on Rajičeva Street, but also tries to reflect a perception of a certain transformation.

Soon after this meeting, I began to ask myself various questions: how and in what circumstances murals come to life? What does the transformation of colors embody and what is it trying to tell us? With whom the murals communicate? And can messages of the murals gain complexity when they interact with one another?

Anthropological journey to the life of murals

The core of the anthropological approach is qualitative, or more specifically ethnographic research. Its main focus is on participant observation. The principle of this method involves being in the field for a long-term period of time, immersing oneself in the local environment, spending time with local people and researching the chosen phenomenon.⁶ Such an approach opens up the possibility to study in depth, for example, those contexts Jana mentions at the beginning of this article. As a researcher, I spent a total of approximately 6 months in Belgrade over the course of two years (2021 and 2022).

There is a rich body of literature that addresses the meanings that murals represent.⁷ However my aim during the research was not to look at the murals 'only' from their artistic and meaning-making side. Instead, or rather alongside, I have tried to think of them holistically. As an intersection of actions and events involving walls and facades, artists and passers-by, local moods and global politics. The metaphor of the *ecology of walls* helped me to do this. Thanks to it, I was able to view the murals as a kind of *living organisms* that are embedded in a certain socio-material environment, and thus closely intertwined with the *ecosystem* of the capital and Serbian society. In this ecological approach, I build on the concepts of Gregory Bateson's *ecology of mind* and Tim Ingold's *ecology of materials*.⁸

In its broadest sense, ecology is about the relationality of all organisms coexisting and interacting in a particular physical environment, together forming specific ecosystems.⁹ Bateson argues that if we want to understand a phenomenon, we need to view it in a

6 Madden, R. (2010) *Being Ethnographic: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Ethnography*, London, SAGE Publications, pp. 77-94.

7 See for example: Danilović, A. (2017) *Grad i slika: Značaj i funkcija slikarskih intervencija u javnom prostoru*, PhD thesis, Fakultet primenjenih umetnosti program Primenjena umetnost i dizajn, Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu; Goalwin, G. (2013) The Art of War: Instability, Insecurity, and Ideological Imagery in Northern Ireland's Political Murals, 1979-1998, *International Journal of Politics, Culture* no 26(3), Published online: Springer Science+Business Media New York, pp. 189-215; Rolston, B., Ospina, S. (2017) Picturing Peace: Murals and Memory in Colombia, *Race and Class* no 58(3), Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC, Melbourne: SAGE, pp. 23-45; Upalevski, I. (2017) Murals make (Our) history: paintings on the wall as media of cultural memory. Interpreting the current state of Warsaw's commemorative murals, *Przeglad Socjologii Jakosciowej* no 13(4), Published online: University of Lodz, pp. 114-135.

8 Bateson, G. (1972) *Steps to an ecology of mind*, San Francisco, Chandler Pub. Co; Ingold, T. (2012) Toward an Ecology of Materials, *Annual Review of Anthropology* no 41, Published online: Annual Review, pp. 427-442.

9 Pimm, S. L., Smith R. L., „Ecology“, Encyclopedia Britannica, May 2, 2024, June 4, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/science/ecology>.

context of the interconnectedness of a given (eco)system – with all the related contexts and relationships in which it is embedded.¹⁰ Ingold criticizes the asymmetrical view on human and non-human actors. From his perspective, artifacts – such as murals I would add – are seen as too passive and dependent on human agency. In his view, we should rather view them like living organisms, as something that develops, grows and is an active part of the process of becoming.¹¹

Following this, I base my research on the assumption that murals, like any other organisms, are part of the environment that affects them, just as they affect it. By environment here, I mean all the surrounding entities and conditions affecting a given organism. From air, water or other organisms – for example, other murals – to the various cultural and social forces shaping all forms of life in a given environment.¹² In order to understand the phenomenon of murals, I am, with Bateson, trying to understand the *circuit* of which murals are a part and which they allow to enter.¹³

The very nature of qualitative research required narrowing the focus to a few selected murals.¹⁴ Initially, I wandered around the city and observed the variety of what Belgrade's walls had to offer. Gradually five murals crystallized that I began to examine more closely, two of which I present in this article. Each of the studied murals demonstrated an ability to embody and reflect significant topics resonating in contemporary Serbian society. Whether it was air quality, gender equality, nationalism or the process of post-socialist transformation.¹⁵

I subsequently created detailed field notes from the days spent in the local streets and with the local people. Alongside this, I conducted informal and semi-structured interviews with street artists, graffiti writers or muralists, experts with particular knowledge tied to particular murals, or people who were just passing by the murals.¹⁶ Those appearing in this article are presented here either under anonymous names or under their artistic or civic names. Depending on our agreement in terms of written or verbal “ethnographic” consent.¹⁷ Using the strategies and tools of qualitative analysis, I then attempted to view these data in some new and (anthropologically) relevant ways.¹⁸

10 Bateson, op. cit, pp. 287-312.

11 Ingold, op. cit, pp. 427-442.

12 Lock, M. (2020) “Permeable Bodies and Environmental Delineation”, *Biosocial Worlds: Anthropology of Health Environments Beyond Determinism*, edited by Seeberg, J., Roepstorff, A., Meiner, L., London: UCL Press, pp. 15-43.

13 Bateson, op. cit, pp. 229-232.

14 Flick, U. (2007) *Designing qualitative research*, London, SAGE, pp. 61-67.

15 Miličičová, op. cit.

16 Madden, R. (2010) *Being Ethnographic: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Ethnography*, London, SAGE Publications, pp. 59-76.

17 Fassin, D. (2009) Nad rámec etických pravidel: Zamyšlení nad etnografickým výzkumem praktik zdravotní péče v Jižní Africe, *Biograf* no 49, Published online: Časopis Biograf, pp. 25-41.

18 Gibbs, G. R. (2007) *Analyzing Qualitative Data*, London, SAGE, pp. 143-145; Konopásek, Z. (1997) Co si počít s počítačem v kvalitativním výzkumu, *Biograf* no 12, Published online: Časopis Biograf, par. 106.

Murals and transformation(s)

The mural in Rajičeva Street is closely related to the history of the boom of murals in Belgrade in general. Although it was not the first mural to inhabit the walls of this city, it had an ambition to be the protagonist and the start of an initiative aimed at finding new ways to contribute to the positive (urban) transformation of Belgrade. It was Professor Vasić and his students from the Faculty of Fine Arts (FLU) who were one of the most active initiators of creating murals in Belgrade between 1984 and 1997.¹⁹ And many contemporary muralists and murals more or less directly follow this tradition.²⁰

As Professor Vasić revealed to me, his idea was that murals would become part of Belgrade's urban planning: *„It was about the need for something to move, something to change in the environment as it was then. And it seemed to me that murals were a means that could contribute to that.“* With his students, he therefore created a plan for 50 murals, along with a list of suitable locations which the murals could inhabit, and submitted it to the city council. The mural in Rajičeva Street was the first of this initiative. Based on a sketch by Perica Donkov. According to the professor, the mural had no other purpose at that time. Perhaps only that:

...one could say that one enters the city through Kalemegdan [nearby park and fortress] And this could have been a symbol that the city had some other ambitions than just buildings, but also some life. Some kind of artistic life that starts with this building.²¹

According to Vasić, with this mural and with the initiative murals slowly began to enter the consciousness of the local population and the city's leadership. And how it seems based on the research, the mural has developed for itself also a new purpose with passing time and interaction with another mural – the mural *Promena boja*.

There are three things to mention about the *Promena boja* mural in this context. (1) Its author, Pijanista, is known for his critical perspective on the current conditions in Serbia. His works tend to be filled with criticism, irony and a certain amount of provocation. (2) The young man in the 1980s mural and the older gentleman in the 2020 mural are the same person. In fact, one of the students who worked on the first mural, and later also a professor, Mirko Ognjanović, stood as a model for both of the murals. (3) The *Promena boja* mural, according to Pijanista, consciously refers to the Rajičeva Street mural created in the 1980s – i.e. in the time of Yugoslavia.

Most of the people I spoke to were unaware of this linkage. Including those living in Bežanijska Kosa. For example, when I approached an elderly lady with her granddaughter while wandering around the block, she said she knew nothing about the mural,

19 More on the history of murals in Belgrade: Stojanović, S., Miletić, M., & Radovanović, M. (n.d.) Istorijat oslikavanja murala u Beogradu, March 12, 2023, <https://www.udruzenjekurs.org/radovi/istorijat-oslikavanja-murala-u-beogradu/>.

20 Miličićová, op.cit, pp. 79-86.

21 Miličićová, J. (2022) *Interview with professor Čedomir Vasić*, personal interview, Belgrade.

“for example, who is this person anyway” with an undertone that suggested in my eyes a question: “and why do we have him here at all.”

Ability to transmit information can sometimes tend to be viewed through a filter of logocentrism, reducing it to a spoken word or written text.²² As a result, the power of what the murals are trying to tell us may be overlooked. Some murals may be openly activist.²³ However, as the intertwined lives of these two murals will show, sometimes a seemingly subtle message becomes visible only through communication of two murals at once.

Pijanista himself describes the relation between these two murals as follows: the man from the *Promena boja* mural is no longer a student, but a professor, and a lot has changed. And not only in the young man's life:

*I wanted to show what has changed in society. And in fact, nothing has changed except the colors. And here [in Serbia], when we say colors, in the jargon we most often refer to parties in a socio-political sense.*²⁴

However, according to Pijanista, where used to be bright colors, feces, represented by brown streams, are now pouring down from the top:

*Which is also a connotation of the fact that when one thinks of those who are currently in power, dictator or whatever, one says, „At the top.“ (...) So you could say that feces are pouring down from above, and that is the only transformation that is really happening here.*²⁵

When I talked to local people about the relationship between the two murals, I did not want to influence them with my already acquired knowledge and interpretations. That is why I always gave them a photo of each of the murals separately without any additional notes. People usually recognized the mural in Rajičeva Street. It was often referred to as their favorite mural or figured in their memories of their childhood. In contrast, the *Promena boja* mural was unknown to most of them. However, from the very beginning, most of them, as soon as they saw the two photographs side by side, began to suspect that the murals depicted one and the same person.

22 Koháková Haakenstad, M. (2015) Vizualita národní identity v Mexiku: Odras kolektivní paměti, či mocenského diskursu? *Lidé města* no 17(1), Published online: Fakulta humanitních studií Univerzity Karlovy, pp. 3-44.

23 Tunić, S. Grafiti u pokretu, December 13, 2019, June 4, 2024, <http://www.seecult.org/vest/grafiti-u-pokretu>; Stammen, L. and Meissner, M. (2022) Social movements' transformative climate change communication : extinction rebellion's activism, *Social movement studies* no 23(1), Published online: Taylor and Francis, pp. 1-20.

24 Miličičová, J. (2022) *Interview with muralist Pijanista*, personal interview, Belgrade.

25 Ibid.

Many of the informants assumed that the young man in the first mural is looking towards a better future. At the *Promena boja* mural some of them suggested that the man was pointing out that the roof was leaking or that he might be turning to God with his troubles. These reflections are nicely illustrated by an example from a discussion over photographs of the two murals during focus group interview, in which Marko and Petar, students at the University of Belgrade, and Suzana and Jovana, two assistants at the University of Belgrade, participated.²⁶

Petar: *He's holding something [the man on the mural on Rajičeva Street], maybe holding some books, maybe some work, I don't know, and looking at the sky. And the man is facing the future. Eternity. And he is looking upwards. But other than that, I don't know what to say... Well, he [the person on the Promena boja mural] is pointing to something. Is he pointing to the fact that it's leaking from the roof?*

[Everybody's laughing]

Suzana: *Well, it really looks like it. Literally, that's what it looks like!*
(...)

Jovana: *I have a very similar feeling as Petar about this [the mural in Rajičeva Street]. A glimpse into the future. These intense colors remind me of some brightness, something beautiful that has yet to happen. Something that awaits us. And this person here seems to me to be one promising young man who is absolutely ready to embark on what lies ahead. Maybe he's just out of school, and those colors are what's coming. Absolutely some glimpse towards some of the beauty of the life that is ahead of him. And as for this guy [the Promena boja mural], it makes a lot of sense that maybe he's pointing to some work that needs to be done on that building. But if I consider that maybe he's looking up to the sky, maybe he's addressing God. Maybe he's even turning to God [develops a reflection thoughtfully], maybe he's thinking about life. And the look on his face is kind of sad. Kind of melancholic, like, 'God, why'. It's like he's wondering why something is happening in his life. So let's put it this way, maybe he's turning to God. Maybe he's asking for something. I find that expression very strange. I can't quite define it. But I would say he's not entirely happy...²⁷*

After a while, when Marko and Suzana also comment, I reveal that the same person is depicted on the mural 36 years apart. Or rather Petar precedes me with his assumption.

Suzana: *That's more or less what we were talking about. He was expecting some super shiny future here and he got a leaky roof – just kidding. He got some kind of disaster. This is such*

26 Hyde, A., Howlett, E., Brady, D. and Drennan, J. (2005) The focus group method: Insights from focus group interviews on sexual health with adolescents, *Social Science & Medicine* no 61, Published online: Elsevier, pp. 2588-2599.

27 Miličičová, J. (2022) *Focus group interview with two students, Petar and Marko, and two assistants at University of Belgrade, Suzana and Jovana, Belgrade.*

a classic Balkan story, a classic Serbian story. We keep looking forward, expecting some beautiful future and instead we grow old in a disaster. In wars, in despair, in some abnormal situations, sanctions and so on. So now the murals are even better for me. And I like the fact that he's addressing us. Communicating directly with us and sending that message: hey guys, it's a disaster here, move out [laughing]. I'm kidding...²⁸

As curator Slavko Šterk writes, graffiti can “entertain, provoke and stir thought.”²⁹ And the same can be said of murals. Conversations with local people and thinking about and with the murals led me to conclude that the murals together seem to reflect a more general mood in the country. Like Marko, Petar, Suzana and Jovana, most of the informants perceived the age of the man in the second mural as an embodiment of the passed time. The change of colors, then, was most often seen either as a change in conditions in artistic circles or as a change for the worse in the life of the depicted person or in the current situation in Serbia in general.

Among the people in Serbia, both the older and the younger ones, there is a certain degree of shared nostalgic narrative relating to the period of the former Yugoslavia, Yugo-nostalgia.³⁰ The murals themselves seem to make these discourses present in their lives – the bright colors illuminating the future for Yugoslavia and the swamp of fecal matter of the current conditions in Serbia.

Velikonja in his research on political graffiti throughout the space of the former Yugoslavia, speaks of the fact that of hundreds of photographic materials of street interventions related to the former Yugoslavia collected in his archive, there are five times more pro-Yugoslav than anti-Yugoslav ones.³¹ In most cases, these are various writings or images referring to Yugoslavia or its important figures or symbols. Velikonja then subjects the collected data to a semiotic analysis, taking Barthes, Eco or Foucault as his guides. But what to do if the message the street (art) intervention tells is not explicit at a first glance? Or it is even located somewhere in the space between two murals. As in the case of the Rajičeva Street mural and the *Promena boja* mural. In other words, how to get beyond the surface of the ‘obvious’ meanings? This is where I take an ecological perspective to help me, as it allows me to trace the interconnected lives of these two murals and the *circuit* which they are part of.³²

28 Ibid.

29 Šterk, S. (2004) *Umjetnost ulice – Zagrebački grafiti 1994–2004/Street Art – Zagreb Graffiti 1994–2004*, Zagreb, Muzej grada Zagreba, p. 69. Quoted from: Velikonja, M. (2020) *Post-Socialist political graffiti in the Balkans and Central Europe*, London and New York, Routledge, p. 5.

30 Bošković, A. (2013) Yugonostalgia and Yugoslav Cultural Memory: Lexicon of Yu Mythology, *Slavic Review* no 72 (1), Published online: Cambridge University Press, pp. 54-78; Volčić, Z. (2007) Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia, *Critical Studies in Media Communication* no 24(1), Published online: Taylor and Francis, pp. 21-38.

31 Velikonja, op. cit, pp. 69-77.

32 Bateson, op. cit, pp. 229-232.

On stuckness, nostalgia and hope

As has already been said, the *Pomena boja* mural suggests that the time when the mural in Rajičeva Street was created, the time of Yugoslavia, refers to something better than what people in Serbia are experiencing today. One of my informants, Novak, a photographer documenting art on streets who himself experienced the Yugoslav era, drew my attention to a well-known opinion poll that suggests that currently about 70 % of young Serbs do not see their future within Serbia and think they should move out of the country.³³ In contrast, the Yugoslav period is seen as a period of relative economic stability, a time when people could travel freely and held one of the best passports in the world.³⁴ This was also intertwined with the fact that Yugoslavia enjoyed a recognised position on the geopolitical level at that point in time. Novak stated:

*For the West we were the East, for the East we were the West. And with that passport we could go to the Soviet Union and, on the other hand, to America. So from that side it was all very interesting. We also had enough money to follow some trends...*³⁵

All this was largely due to the specific position of socialist Yugoslavia, which in many ways was very different from the experience of other socialist states in the Eastern Bloc.³⁶ As my colleague in the field, Ljiljana Radošević, once remarked during one of our walks, perhaps the most political element of the Rajičeva Street mural is the young man's Adidas-like sneakers and denim outfit. Such goods were not commonly available in other socialist states. To a certain extent, Yugoslavia owed these different conditions to the events of 1949, when Tito ideologically split with Stalin and thus Yugoslavia embarked on its specific form of socialism in opposition to the Stalinist Eastern Bloc.³⁷

Since I was in the field as a half-Serbian, half-Czech researcher living in Prague, some of my older informants, such as a taxi driver Nebojša, mentioned school excursions to the Tatra Mountains or Prague in the 1980s.³⁸ Compared to the locals, they said, they

33 Mondo, Veliko istraživanje: Mladi bi da odu iz zemlje, April 11, 2019, April 15, 2023, <https://mondo.rs/Info/Drustvo/a1178961/Mladi-u-Srbijiistrazivanje-o-mladima-u-Srbiji.html>

34 Jansen, S. (2009) After the red passport: towards an anthropology of the everyday geopolitics of entrapment in the EU's 'immediate outside', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* no 15(4), Published online: Wiley, pp. 815-832.

35 Miličičová, J. (2022) Interview with photographer Novak, personal interview, Belgrade.

36 Vuletic, D. (2012) Sounds like America: Yugoslavia's Soft Power in Eastern Europe, in *Divided Dreamworlds?: The Culture Cold War in East and West*, edited by Romijn, P., Scott-Smith, G., Segal, J., Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 115-131; Zaccaria, B. (2014) The European Community and Yugoslavia in the Late Cold War Years, 1976-1989, *Disintegration and Integration in East-Central Europe: 1919 – Post-1989*, edited by Loth, W., Păun, N., Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, pp. 264-283.

37 Petrović, J. (2007) The Tito-Stalin Split: A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence, *Journal of cold war studies* no 9(2), Published online: The MIT Press, pp. 32-63.

38 More on the position of halfie anthropologists in: Miličičová, op. cit, pp. 22-24.

had the most modern clothes, could afford to spend money, and felt “like kings” in Czechoslovakia. However, as they all independently added in the same breath, “Today it’s the other way around.”

However, the 1980s, in which the first of the murals was created, was also a period of emerging economic crisis, as well as internal disunity within the Yugoslav federation.³⁹ Nevertheless, according to Novak, for example, in the early 1990s there was an assumption among people that Yugoslavia would be the first of the post-socialist countries to join the West. But then came the other events of the 1990s. This period is seen by many of the people I have had the opportunity to talk to as the moment when the problems that had been bubbling under the surface throughout Yugoslavia’s existence exploded.⁴⁰ Novak said:

*Everything that’s not supposed to happen to a young person happened to you. You had wars, sanctions, lack of everything, you couldn’t travel... and finally the bombing.*⁴¹

It was the moment when the *total collapse of everything* came and the moment when even the hope for a better future was lost. As Novak continues:

*The 1980s had that moment that had been going on since World War II – there was a belief and an idea that tomorrow will be better than yesterday. (...) And you had the ,80s with all the negative things... but you still had this idea that it was only temporary and tomorrow will be better. I think the ,90s destroyed all these thoughts that tomorrow will be better than yesterday in a short moment. And suddenly you knew tomorrow won’t be better.*⁴²

Despite the end of the wars and the calming down of the situation in the region, the drop in enthusiasm and hope, according to some of my informants, continues.

Some authors, such as Hage, write about the need for *existential mobility*, about a need for a sense of moving on in life. And moving towards something that is better than what you are leaving behind.⁴³ However, the research of the lives of these murals and circuit which they are part of suggests that many people in Serbia perceive rather a feeling of a sort of *existential stuckness*. A sense that their lives are not moving *well enough* within the country.⁴⁴ This feeling was attributed by many of my informants to the continued stagnation and scandals that they felt surrounded the current Serbian government. On

39 Yarashevich, V. and Karneyeva, Y. (2013) Economic reasons for the break-up of Yugoslavia, *Communist and post-communist studies* no 46(2), Published online: University of California Press, pp. 263-273.

40 Fink-Hafner, D. (1995) The Disintegration of Yugoslavia, *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes* no 37(3/4), Published online: Taylor & Francis, pp. 339-356.

41 Miličičová, Interview with photographer Novak.

42 Ibid.

43 Hage, G. (2009) *Waiting Out the Crisis: On Stuckedness and Governmentality, Waiting*, edited by Hage, G., Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, p. 99.

44 Ibid.

the other hand, according to many, there is no solid opposition in the country. During our interview, Pijanista himself mentioned that the colors on the older mural symbolize for him a certain happiness and life that “has been infused with color.” However, such a life, according to him, has been extinguished in Serbia with the new colors.

A feeling of such stuckness is often associated with the inability to move from the real or imagined place, as well as with waiting and a sense of wasted time: “To be stuck is both spatial and temporal.”⁴⁵ This may be why some young people in Serbia see a way out of this stuckness through physically leaving this (not only) geographical space. In the language of the researched murals, waiting for a future full of color has turned into a present full of feces. However, the perceptions that can be observed through the lives of these two murals in contemporary Serbian society are not exclusive to this country. Jansen, based on his research in Bosnia and Herzegovina, shows the contrast in the course of post-socialist transformation between some former Eastern Bloc states and some states of the former Yugoslavia. According to him, the people of former Eastern Bloc states, such as the Czech Republic, place the emic category of *normality* – as opposed to the *abnormal* socialist past – in a future embedded in a renewed belonging “to a universe referred to as Europe or the West.”⁴⁶ But as Jansen discusses, and as the two communicating murals suggest, people in the territory of the former Yugoslavia attribute this dreamed *normality* not only to an imagined future, but also to a past that is already gone. And this corresponds both to the nostalgic narrative surrounding the Yugoslav era and to the message pursued by the dialogue of the two murals. According to professor Vasić:

*There’s a lot of nostalgia for those days now. Firstly, because there was peace and because there was moving into something better. You could feel that things, the state, the people, were developing. (...) We had to go through the difficult, 90s. And in a sense they continue. I mean, somehow you don’t come back to the point where you feel that society is moving. Instead, there are always some breaks. Always forward and then back. And we start to be skeptical.*⁴⁷

This nostalgia is embodied in reverse position by the mural *Promena boja*. As Pijanista told me:

*And in fact, the whole point is in the detail that, where there [on the Rajičeva Street mural] were colors, that it was some happier time. Seen from this distance. And that at this moment feces is pouring down. And that simply the situation is what it is. In society, in culture, among people.*⁴⁸

45 Turner, S. (2022) “Camps as Vessels of Hope,” *Material Culture and (Forced) Migration: Materializing the Transient*, edited by Yi-Neumann, F., Lauser, A., Fuhse, A., & Bräunlein, P. J., London: UCL press, p. 58.

46 Jansen, S. (2015) *Yearnings in the Meantime: ‘Normal Lives’ and the State in a Sarajevo Apartment Complex*, New York, Berghahn, p. 36.

47 Miličičová, Interview with professor Čedomir Vasić.

48 Miličičová, Interview with muralist Pijanista.

At the same time, however, Pijanista added during our conversation that Yugoslavia itself does not mean that much to him, as he himself had not even been born yet in that time. Nevertheless, he found it a fitting comparison in the sense of a state that was better than the present one. For example, Novak's reflection was interesting. When we were discussing the two murals, he began to develop the idea that 'objectively' people are no worse off than in the 1980s. On the contrary, they are better off. What has changed is the perception of their situation. A very similar feeling is described by Jansen for Bosnia and Herzegovina: "...although I knew it (and they knew it), few acknowledged that most people in Dobrinja now had access to more and technologically more advanced goods than then. Yet most felt worse off."⁴⁹

An important aspect that many of the informants referred to in their narratives about Yugoslavia was hope – represented in their eyes also in the bright colors of the older Rajičeva Street mural. Hope which is more difficult to find in the current circumstances. The post-socialist transformation is here intertwined with the post-war one. And the imagined future, in the eyes of many, never comes. Instead, as the *Promena boja* mural attempts to tell us, the country remains stuck in the "feces" of the current *meantime*, where many hopes seem to be disappointed again and again.⁵⁰ For many of my informants, the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić in 2003 was a clear moment when hope was lost. For some people in Serbia, Đinđić remains a symbol of "real" pro-European politics and the effort to emerge from the wounds and consequences of the 1990s. For many, the assassination is also a moment when figures who were active on the political scene in the 1990s are returning to power.

All of these motifs are reinforced by the interaction between the *Promena boja* mural and the Rajičeva Street mural. However, not all of those with whom I had the opportunity to discuss the murals completely agreed with the reflection of Pijanista. Especially people who had not experienced the '80s. For example psychologist, in her early 30s, Anja said to me:

*I don't see it that way. But I wasn't even born then. But I often have discussions with my mom about whether or not it was really a golden time. Definitely, when you look at everything that was in the country at that time, that time was great. But I think it was a pure loan. (...) And I think that now is the time when we're paying off that debt and living in sh*tts [referring to Pijanista's comment about feces flowing down the wall] because they were living off what they themselves were creating and could create back then. (...) Yes. It was one rainbow. It was one idyllic color back then. But not because things worked, but because they took out one big loan that will be paid back by our generation and probably the generation after us. So in a way, yes. You have negative things that are more like fecal*

49 Jansen, S. (2014) On Not Moving Well Enough: Temporal Reasoning in Sarajevo Yearnings for "Normal Lives", *Current Anthropology* no 55, Published online: The University of Chicago Press, p. 77.

50 Jansen, S. (2015) *Yearnings in the Meantime*, p. 54.

*matter than what they used to be, but not because we're making any mistakes or because there's bad government policy now or anything like that. I think it's the result of bad policy that we've been dragging behind us for a long time. But I don't think that society as a whole, whether in Serbia or elsewhere in the world, has gotten that much worse.*⁵¹

Kole, a nearly 30-year-old architect, mentioned his belief that the vast majority of people who perceive the period of the former Yugoslavia with nostalgia also associate it with being young. Prof. Vasić eventually expressed similar opinion:

*So it means that it has one very strong message [the Promena boja mural]. That this whole system in which we did this [the Rajičeva Street mural] has failed. Which we know very well. We are aware that it has all collapsed, but what to do with it now. (...) Well, how shall I put it. The big socio-political conclusions are and are not... [hesitates] It was different. It was different. (...) Especially in these years. I've gone over 70 and I don't have much to look forward to anymore [laughs]. So, as I would say, I wouldn't totally jump to conclusions. Because biology influences them a lot.*⁵²

Mural: more than a painting on a wall

The communication between murals in Rajičeva Street and the *Promena boja* mural embodies and reflects a certain perception of life in the given region. Miloš Moskovljević in his article on the (re)imagination of the past and collective memory through murals and graffiti, expresses his belief that "...murals and graffiti, should be observed as communal links between past and present."⁵³ And, I add, between the (imagined) future as well. Regardless of what does or does not influence the perspectives of the people living in Serbia on their lives, research on the Rajičeva Street mural and the *Promena boja* mural suggests that these two murals not only allow us a glimpse into the history of a given place and its people, but they also allow us a glimpse into how the local people deal with this history and how they reflect on their past, present, and just as importantly, on their future in relation to it. And at the same time, as I showed, the murals through their own lives, allow these perceptions to be rethought and reassessed.

In this article I go beyond aesthetic aspect of murals and with help of a metaphor of *ecology of walls* I approach the two presented murals as sort of *organisms*, which have their own socio-material life and agency and has the ability to interact and communicate with each other as well as to open up *circuits* which on different dimensions interconnect them with not only *ecosystem* of the capital city but also serbian society and ex-yugoslav region as a whole. To approach murals in this way allowed me to study not only the lives

51 Miličićová, J. (2022) Interview with psychologist Anja, personal interview, Belgrade.

52 Miličićová, Interview with professor Čedomir Vasić.

53 Moskovljevic, M. (2022) War on the Walls: (Re-)imagining Past And Collective Memories through Murals and Graffiti in post-Yugoslav Serbia, *UXUC - User Experience and Urban Creativity* no 4(1), Published online, p. 27.

of the murals and people who inhabit with them a given urban space but also post-socialistic and post-war transformations which Serbian society undergoes.

Not only these two murals, but countless other interventions on Belgrade's walls show that murals are not mere static images and platforms for aesthetic expression. As my research shows, murals have the ability to embody and sometimes be also active actors in issues that are for various reasons significant in contemporary Serbian society.⁵⁴ And Belgrade walls have become one of the places where these issues are infused and where they come to life.

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⁵⁴ More in Miličičová, op. cit, pp. 121-124.

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ИЗВАН ЕСТЕТИКЕ: ЕТНОГРАФСКИ СУСРЕТИ СА МУРАЛИМА
У БЕОГРАДУ

Сажетак: Улице данашњег Београда испуњене су различитим врстама уличних (уметничких) интервенција, укључујући и мурале. Мурали нису само средство за уметничко изражавање или улепшавање урбаног простора. У овом тексту муралима се приступа из еколошке перспективе, која омогућава да се докаже да су то сложени ентитети који не само да могу да комуницирају једни са другима и с временом добијају нова значања, већ су и саставни део „еко-система“ престонице и српског друштва. На основу етнографских сусрета са два београдска мурала, у тексту је представљена постсоцијалистичка трансформација српског и бившег југословенског друштва и истражени начини на који људи у датом социокултурном и географском простору доживљавају промену различитих темпоралности.

Кључне речи: мурали, екологија, Југославија, урбани простор, Србија, историјалистичка трансформација

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ART AND PUBLIC SPACE IN THE „CITY“
THE VISUAL PROGRAM OF THE BELGRADE
SUMMER ART FESTIVAL (BELEF) 2008 AND 2009
A CASE STUDY

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Abstract: *This essay reflects the process of designing the visual arts program of the Belgrade Summer Art Festival (Belef) in 2008 and 2009 from the perspective of the curatorial team. In both editions, the program focused entirely on the art in public space. This essay deals with the wider context that influenced program orientation; it gives an overview of the program's participants and programs. It also offers an analysis of the production conditions of the festival. Finally, with the benefit of 15 years' hindsight, we will analyze the relationship between our aspirations at the time and the program's impact.*

Key words: *public art, street art, graffiti, murals, workshops*



Figure 1: Terratoria, Belef 08 (photo: Ana Adamović)

After more than fifteen years since the realization of the Belgrade Summer Art festival in 2008 and 2009, the thematic issue of *Kultura* magazine dedicated to street art and art in public space is a good occasion for reflection and a first-hand insight into the motivations, concept, realization and production of the festival's program. From the perspective of coordinators of the visual art program in 2008 and curators and co-producers of the visual program in 2009, Belef Festival seems far behind us. Our professional path has led us towards further research and experiments, and our current preoccupations in the field of contemporary art seem to be far removed from the works realized during the festival. However, even at first glance at the long-written and forgotten text from 2008,¹ we recognize several basic categories that we can easily identify with our current preoccupations. The relationship between art and public space, multi-authorship and a high degree of audience participation are stated in the first sentence as the main interests that guided us while shaping the program. Some of these topics are still important for the work of the Kiosk collective, but the field of research and platforms for experiments have shifted. Nevertheless, it is interesting to detect the changes in the approach and methodologies that have occurred in the past decade. The Belef Festival itself, as an official city manifestation, also has changed its character, structure and program conception over time.

The aim of this review will not be a historical analysis of the development of the festival as a city manifestation (although it could provide certain guidelines for future researchers). Rather, for this occasion, we will focus on our personal experience of working on the festival's program from several different perspectives. We will look at the broader context that influenced the program design and orientation towards the public space as the main platform for the realization of most program activities. We will recall some of the participants and programs realized within these two festival editions, as well as the production conditions of a city manifestation such as the Belgrade Summer Art Festival. Finally, we will try to conclude this review by analyzing the effects of the implemented program, aware that the perspective of direct participants inevitably carries the character of subjective assessments shaped by our own aspirations, beliefs and experiences.

The relationship between the social context and the program design of the festival

In 2008 Belgrade was somewhat different from today's image of the city. Investors' urbanism had not yet become the dominant force behind the changes in the structure of the city, while the effect of the global economic crisis still hadn't reached its peak which will become more apparent in the second half of the year. However, symptoms of commercial interests over public space were already clearly being manifested, from numerous abandoned spaces of privatized public companies whose hidden conversion of purpose has not yet been clear, to the proliferation of commercial marketing strategies and adverts on facades and public areas. The Museum of Contemporary Art and the National Museum of Serbia were closed to the public due to reconstruction, and the

¹ Pekić, M. and Adamović, A. (2008) *Art and the City*, unpublished text from the archive of Kiosk collective.



Figure 2: Mark Jenkins, temporary sculptural street installation, Belef 09
(photo: Ana Adamović)

attempts of the city administration to create a new space for independent culture in the old warehouse of publishing house Nolit in Kraljevića Marka Street resulted in unresolved legal status for the artists and art collectives who were using the space. The plans of the City Council for the construction of a new City Hall gallery on the Republic Square remain recorded only in the domain of certain planning documents. Accelerated commercialization, but also an institutional weakness to represent the public interest, directed the design of the program of the festival toward public art interventions and actions on the streets, squares, parks, facades, schoolyards, sports centers, rivers, the railway station, and city corners.

The choice of locations for program activities as well as the choice of participants was guided by the idea of the right to the city. The right to participate in processes of urban transformation, the right to public spaces and artistic content, but also the right of artists to be actively involved in the processes of public interest. According to David Harvey, the right to the city is “far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts’ desire. It is, moreover, a collective rather than an individual right, since reinventing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization”².

² Harvey, D. (2012), *Rebel cities: from the right to the city to the urban revolution*, London and Brooklyn: Verso, p. 4.

The need to intervene in the processes of urban transformations at the time as well as the need to open a dialogue about the city and its development while engaging artists in this discussion, determined the concept of the visual program. The very nature of the festival as the city's public manifestation motivated us to design the program more ambitiously than it would be possible for us as non-institutional actors, to use the advantages of institutional and infrastructural support. We wanted to include artists still on the margins of the art system but whose voices were already present in the public space through various guerilla actions, to promote the work of local artists outside the galleries in public spaces, to enable a wider international dialogue and exchange with international artists recognized for their works in public spaces, and to enable and encourage the participation of art students within the different festival's programs.

Artists, collectives, workshops, actions³



Figure 3: Alby Guillaume Remed, mural in Karađorđeva street in Belgrade, Belef 08 (photo: Ana Adamović)

One of our initial aims in designing the program was to invite the local graffiti and street art scene rapidly developing on the streets of Belgrade at the time, with already clearly profiled different styles and author's approaches. Several program units in both festival editions brought together a large number of artists around collective actions in public space. The Graffiti Jam program at two locations (panels in Kralja Petra and Uzun Mirkova streets and the courtyard of the "Sveti Sava" high school) was organized by graf-

³ Reconstruction of the festival's program relies on our own documentation available on www.kioskngo.net (last visited 30. April 2024), but also on the catalogs of the both festivals: Kolundžija, D. (editor, 2008), *Belef08*, Beograd: Belef centar; Milin, V. (2009), *Belef09*, Beograd: Belef centar.

ffiti artist Bojan Stevanović and included over 30 authors of the local and regional graffiti scene in 2008. The same year a public street art session took place on Nikola Pašić square, with more than 20 street art authors taking part and creating their works live in front of an audience. Within the next festival's edition, a similar collective street art action was organized in front of the Sports Center "Olimp", in which 13 artists participated in creating works on the public wall over 30m long. This part of the program was curated and organized by the artists Stefan Unković and Dušan Rajić. In 2008, the American collective GRL (Graffiti Research Lab) performed a laser tagging action on the facade of the Youth Theater "Boško Buha" on Republic square, where citizens and the audience had the opportunity to take part in the session, creating large-format temporary light graffiti.

Apart from collective public actions by artists, our second program strategy was to initiate collaboration and exchange through numerous workshops with relevant international street art artists whom we invited as guests of the festival. In 2008, the artist Albi Guillaume known as Remed realized a workshop with local authors using the public space of a small tram tower as a playground and surface for artistic interventions. French artist Black Le Rat, one of the founders of the street art scene in Europe and among the first to introduce stencils to street art in the 1980s, was a guest of the festival in 2009. Black realized a workshop with local artists and students in the independent cultural center Magacin in Kraljevića Marka Street with a series of public interventions mainly in the courtyard area in front of Magacin itself. American artist Mark Jenkins bases his interventions in public space on temporary sculptures, human shape figures made of duct tape, which he places in various city locations, parks, crossroads, corners, creating interruptions and unexpected situations in the daily routine of the city. The implementation of Jenkins' interventions within the 2009 festival program included workshops with art students and the collective creation of sculptures, followed by the collective action of placing sculptures in the public space.

The motivation to work with students and the idea to create conditions for their wider participation in the festival's program resulted in the Teratorija program initiated and mentored by the artist Marko Lađušić. Over 200 students, in both editions of the festival, had the opportunity to work and make terracotta sculptures in the Terra art residency space in Kikinda. During the festival, their sculptures occupied the city, from the pedestrian zone in Knez Mihailova Street to schoolyards, green areas on Ada Ciganlija, kindergartens, libraries and other public locations and institutions in different parts of the city. Due to their large numbers, these terracotta interventions temporarily dominated certain areas of the city, and in 2008, during the protest organized on the occasion of the arrest of Radovan Karadžić on Republic Square, they became an obstruction to movement as well as a cold weapon of street conflicts. The media images of Belgrade that went around the world that day manifested the paradox of the intersection of street riots and art in a strange simulacrum of a public event.

The production of six large-scale murals on Belgrade facades within both festival editions turned out to be the first major initiative of this type after almost twenty years, when in 1989, on the occasion of the 9th Summit of Non-Aligned Movement in Bel-

grade, five murals were created. In the meantime, the continuity of mural production in the public space was maintained mainly at the initiative of the artist and professor of Fine Arts Faculty Čedomir Vasić.⁴ In 2008 and 2009, within both editions of the festival program, murals by the following artists were produced: Remed (Karadorđeva Street), Blu (Pop Lukina Street 6), Valerio Berruti (on the facade of the “Petar Petrović Njegoš” primary school in Resavska Street No. 61), Mariusz Waras M-City (at Durmitorska Street 16), Vladimir Perić (on the facade of the primary school “Sveti Sava” at Mekenzijeva Street 42) and Biljana Đurđević (Mileševska Street 57). Several parameters influenced the choice of the artists: we wanted to present artists active on the international street art scene (Remed, M-City, Blu) whose work influenced local artists of the younger generation. We also wished to promote in public space works of local artists whose contribution for shaping the local contemporary art scene is significant (Biljana Đurđević and Vladimir Perić) and international artist Valerio Berruti who was already active on the local scene and visited Belgrade on several occasions. Before the Belef festival those artists didn't have a chance to produce large-format murals in public space. All the locations were carefully chosen and the selection of the final images was made in dialogue with the tenants of the buildings on whose facades the murals were made and with the administrations of primary schools in the case of Berruti and Perić.

In 2009, one program line was dedicated to the history and fragile memory of Belgrade through the research of various video and photo archives. Within the *Cybercinematography* project, authors Sonja Leboš and Manja Ristić made a collage of archival footage of the city which was then projected onto the facade of the building overlooking the park under the Terazije plateau. As a temporary visual and sound intervention in public space, the artwork confronted one possible historical perspective of the city with the current reality of the location. Project Korzo, on the other hand, offered an open-air permanent exhibition of archival photographs from several important photo collections covering the period from the second half of the 19th century to the 1940s.⁵ Photographs were printed on ceramic plates and displayed on the facades along King Peter street, which connects Belgrade's two rivers, the Sava and the Danube.

Site specific artistic interventions were also produced within several other programs. Exhibition *Sistema Binario* (2008) brought together ten Italian artists (curated by Adriana Rispoli and Eugenio Viola) and seven local artists (curated by Saša Janjić) who created site-specific installations at the Belgrade railway station. Within the *Dazzling Words* project typographic light installations were produced and installed by the river on the facade of the former customs warehouse (now known as Beton hala). These installations were made by a team of designers and artists (Isidora Nikolić, Jana Oršolić, Vladimir Perić, Igor Oršolić i Dorijan Kolundžija).

This brief overview of some of the festival's programs should offer an insight into our curatorial strategies. Guiding principles in designing the program were: a desire to create

4 Stojanović, S., Miletić, M. and Radovanović, M. (n.d.) Istorijat oslikavanja murala u Beogradu, 30. April 2024, <https://www.udruzenjekurs.org/radovi/istorijat-oslikavanja-murala-u-beogradu/>.

5 Collections of Zoran Trtica, the Museum of applied art, and the Jewish museum in Belgrade.

the program in public spaces available to a wide audience, a motivation to include a great number of local and international artists, to decentralize the curatorial role by including multiple curators and artists in shaping various sub-programs, to create permanent artistic interventions which would remain in the public space after the festival is finished, and to engage students as active participants in different programs.



Figure 5: Vladimir Perić, mural on the façade of the “Sveti Sava” elementary school, Mekenzijeva street, Belgrade. Belef 09
(photo: Ana Adamović)

Figure 4: Valerio Berutti, mural on the façade of the “Petar Petrović Njegoš” elementary school, Resavska street, Belgrade, Belef 09
(photo: Ana Adamović)

Conditions of production of the city festival

From today’s perspective, it seems important to reflect on the conditions of work and production background of the festival. Some of the key questions are: in which circumstances the program was realized? What were the problems we encountered and how did we surpass them? What was our experience of collaboration with the festival’s team and representatives of city institutions and local governments during the realization of the program, the scale of which implies coordination of different departments of local government and administration?

We believe that the economic background of every production, as well as the relationships between all people taking part in the production process are significant for the outcome of the program. Our position as external collaborators and independent authors influenced the working process and relations established. Our previous working practice was not burdened by the imposed norms or limitations which our colleagues,

working in the frame of public institutions, sometimes have to face and deal with.

At the time we were invited to join the team of the Belef festival, Kiosk had already realized a number of exhibitions and projects, in collaboration with numerous artists and collaborators. Our working experience, since our foundation in 2002, was shaped by the conditions of work within the independent scene: economic instability, project cycles, administrative burden and the endless and exhausting process of fundraising and project writing. At the time, the main source of funding for us came from international cultural foundations and several companies with developed grant-giving schemes. Available open calls for the independent sector on the level of national and local public administration could not cover the minimum needs of the artistic production and were more in the domain of symbolic support. The opportunity to work for the Belef festival offered us valuable institutional experience, including support on infrastructural, organizational, technical, promotional and operational levels as well as on the level of production. Being a public institution, Belef at the time had an annual public budget, permanent staff and office space;⁶ much more stable resources than any organization active on the independent scene could hope for.

Nevertheless, the program we designed proved to be demanding both at financial and production levels. The production of five murals in 2009, for example, exceeded the capacity of the festival's budget so we had to look for additional support. The partnerships we built in our previous initiatives and projects were key for the implementation of this segment of the program. One of those partnerships was with the Telenor Foundation as well as with numerous local governments in Serbia for the Start Up City



Figure 6: Blu, mural in Pop Lukina street in Belgrade, Belef 09
(photo: Ana Adamović)

⁶ Today the majority of city manifestations, including Belef, has been gathered under one organization called CEBEF–Belgrade Festivals Center. For more info, see: <https://www.cebef.rs/en/about-us.html> (accessed 30. April 2024).

project within which we initiated production of eleven murals across the country.⁷ The experience of negotiation and collaboration with local governments, dialog with local communities and tenants, communication with administration through official letters and requests, learning the procedures and production stages of the process of creating the murals in public space, learning about mural techniques and materials, all proved valuable for this segment of the festival's program.

As already mentioned, the first limitation we faced was related to the festival's budget which was not sufficient for the realization of the murals. The production expenses included: the preparatory construction works on five city facades, rent of scaffolding during the whole process, authors fees, production materials, assistance for the artists during the production and travel and accommodation for international artists. The list does not include the selection of locations, work on securing all necessary permits from relevant institutions, coordination between different city institutions, communication with tenants to include them in the decision-making process regarding the selection of final mural designs and images, as well as numerous side and invisible jobs needed for the venture of this scale. The production and successful realization of this part of the visual arts program depended mostly on our own resources, partnerships, knowledge and experience gained during the Start Up City project. However, the advantage of Belef's public status, relevance and visibility was key for negotiation and communication with public officials, relevant institutions and local communities. With the approval of the Telenor Foundation we reallocated part of the Kiosk's budget for the Start Up City project toward production of the murals within the festival, in the process of which significant partnerships were established with city municipalities of Stari grad, Savski Venac and Vračar. Their local administrations provided us with the necessary permits, scaffolding and construction works on the facades, all of which would have been impossible for us to secure and organize with our original available budget and resources.

Tenants of the building in Karađorđeva street, the ideal location for Remed's mural, had an opportunity to rent their side façade as a marketing space and secure a decent annual income. Convincing them instead to give permission for a mural was not an easy task. Stari Grad municipality helped with negotiation by offering to renovate the frontal façade of the building as well. This proved to be a key argument in securing the tenants' approval.

Production of murals was just one of the numerous festival's programs, so the experience and skills of Belef team played a crucial role in coordinating all the program activities, the administrative, production and organizational parts of the festival, as well as in the domain of promotion and communication of the activities with media and

⁷ The following artists created murals within the Start Up City project: Katarina Šoškić and Dušan Rajić (Kraljevo), Miloš Nušić (Leskovac), Stefan Ikonić (Loznica), Siniša Ilić (Pančevo), Miodrag Stanišić (Šabac), Marko Stojanović (Sombor), Igor Stangliczky (Subotica), Aleksandar Dimitrijević (Užice), Aleksandra Petković (Vranje), Mladen Hrvanović (Zaječar), and Ana Kraš (Zrenjanin). More info on: <https://kioskngo.net/project/start-up-city-2007-2009/> (accessed 30. April 2024).

the public. The program's focus on public space required coordination and continuous communication with numerous city institutions, but also it implied continuous risk of unstable conditions for activities, from weather changes to other unpredictable situations.⁸ Assuring the security of all participants and accurate timetable of all program activities as well as being prepared for unexpected situations and ad hoc solutions, required dedication and good collaboration of all team members.

Overall, the scale and the ambition of the program called for negotiation, flexibility and resourcefulness in realization, good communication with all participants in the process, and additional partnerships, including support of city municipalities and new sponsorships. Being part of a larger Belef team offered us a new experience that we remember today with fondness. The synergy between the knowledge and skills gained within the independent sector and the institutional experience of Belef's team proved efficient and together we managed to overcome all the challenges along the way. It is exactly this type of collaboration and partnership between civil and public sector, between the independent scene and public institutions that offers significant potential for development. Bringing together different experiences and knowledge, resources and capacities, we managed to implement a program which seemed too ambitious at the very beginning. However, continuous lack of public support for the independent scene and mismanagement of public institutions, lack of investments, reduction of institutional autonomy and general devaluation of professional standards in the cultural sphere, have made the capacities of both sectors much weaker; consequently, the potential of civil and public partnership is yet to be explored and practiced.

The effects of the visual program

Reflecting on our direct experience of work within the Belef festival from today's perspective we are inevitably faced with the unstable source of subjective memory and the lack of opportunity for us to take a break, look back and analyze the program's results and effects. Conditions of work on the independent scene in the past decade which do not allow time for the process of reflection and contemplation are surely part of the reason. Many artistic collectives and organizations have been burdened with the project logic, moving from one project to another, from one instability into another. Part of the reason lies also in institutional discontinuity conditioned by political circumstances, lack of institutional memory and lack of evaluation of institutional practices and values.

However, we are still living and working in this city, and many artworks produced for the festival are still part of the city's facades, walls, corners, and yards. Their presence made them part of the city's everyday life and symptoms of some past times. Some of the artworks are gone, while the others show clear signs of decay and the lack of care and necessary maintenance by local administrations.

⁸ For example, during city protests in 2008 a large number of terracotta sculptures were endangered and damaged, or the situation of night tagging over Blu's mural in 2009 just after the author returned to Italy, which prompted an urgent restoration while the scaffolding was still in place.

The program's focus on public space and intention to use the status of a public festival to create permanent artistic interventions in dialog with artists and communities still seems to us a logical strategy given the festival's profile. Some of the terminology we used to articulate the concept of the program (such as the city as a metropolis or the artists as stars) from today's perspective and experience sounds anachronous.⁹ However, the concept of the city as a public workshop is still relevant to us, but changed circumstances and contexts have shifted our tactics of action onto a different path. Even though the Belef festival continued with its dynamic program activity in the following years, it seems that the scope of the program itself and the possibility for larger permanent public space interventions has declined over the years. In the 2009 catalog we stated:

*The idea behind the festival's visual art program is to enable and initiate production of several permanent public artworks each year within the festival, as an artists' response to the aggressive commercialization of the public space in the city.*¹⁰

In an interview for Kwart magazine from the same year we added:

*As a public city manifestation, Belef festival should be a platform for artistic experiments and a platform that will support, promote and encourage innovative practices and new artistic projects that can hardly get any support elsewhere.*¹¹

And again we are faced with institutional weakness and the lack of strategy and cultural policy for the city. Instead of making a comparative analysis between various public space interventions produced within the Belef festival in the past fifteen years, comparing curatorial concepts and strategies and their effect on the structure of the city as well as its influence on the development of the local art scene, detecting the changes in understanding of the notion of public art, we are left with pale traces of old artworks and examples of tireless efforts mostly by of self-organized collectives and a few individuals to maintain public art practice and its development. Aggressive transformation of the city in the past decade and intensified confrontations between political elites and the independent art scene related specifically to the issue of the right to the city and the future of city development influenced the process of radicalization of artistic and cultural actions. Within the current context, any public dialog on the relation between art and urban development seems impossible. The rapid changes of circumstances we are working in have been guiding us and our numerous colleagues towards more intensive mutual collaborations, collective imagining of alternative non-institutional practices; towards creating solidarity platforms within which new forms of collective actions are

9 Adamović, A. and Pekić, M. (2009) Vizuelni program beogradskog letnjeg festivala Belef 09, *Belef09*, Beograd: Belef centar, p. 51.

10 Ibid.

11 David, M. (2009) Belef, *Kwart*, br. 11/12, Beograd: Kwartovi d.o.o., p. 120.

being shaped and new joint struggles for the commons and public space are being initiated.

In the context of ever-shifting circumstances, our Belef experience has remained suppressed by accumulated events in the deep corner of our memory. Even though this brief reflection is based on direct experience and rather subjective analysis, we hope it can offer insight for future researchers. This essay is dedicated to them and future efforts to evaluate and offer a more objective interpretation of the results and effects of the festival's program.



Figure 7: Korzo, Belef 09 (foto: Ana Adamović)

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УМЕТНОСТ И ЈАВНИ ПРОСТОР ГРАДА:
ВИЗУЕЛНИ ПРОГРАМА ФЕСТИВАЛА БЕЛЕФ 2008. И 2009. ГОДИНЕ
СТУДИЈА СЛУЧАЈА

Сажетак: У тексту је представљено директно искуство рада на визуелном програму фестивала *Белеф* 2008. и 2009. године из перспективе дела ауторског тима. Фестивал је у оба издања у потпуности био фокусиран на јавни простор и подразумевао привремене и трајне уметничке интервенције на самој структури града. Ауторке текста баве се ширим контекстом који је утицао на програмску оријентацију и усмереност ка јавном простору, дају осврт на неке од учесника и реализованих програма, али и кратку анализу продукцијских услова рада једне градске манифестације какав је *Београдски лејњи фестивал*. У закључном делу из субјективне перспективе реализаторки програма и са дистанцом од петнаест година даје се кратак осврт на ефекте програма и однос тадашњих стремљења и савременог тренутка.

Кључне речи: *уметност у јавном простору, улична уметност, графити, мурал, радионице*

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GRAFFITI MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN BELGRADE: A CASE STUDY OF PROJECT *RAPRESENT*

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Abstract: *Graffiti, once solely perceived as vandalism, has undergone a shift in interpretation, now acknowledged as a potential art form. This evolution has prompted many western cities to reconsider their approach to graffiti management, incorporating educational initiatives alongside traditional removal and enforcement measures. While Belgrade has just begun to develop its graffiti management policies, they primarily revolve around removal and enforcement, lacking preventive measures like education and community engagement. The text showcases the “Rapresent” project (2010-2015) by the IDE Group, as an example of a possible educational initiative in this domain. The project aimed to transform the city’s underpasses into legal graffiti zones and provide educational platforms for young graffiti writers. Despite bureaucratic obstacles, the project demonstrated graffiti’s potential to enhance neglected public spaces and engage youth positively. It emphasised the importance of clearer city regulations and procedures to actively engage with young artists and promote responsible graffiti practices.*

Key words: *Graffiti management, Belgrade, regulations, enforcement, removal, education programs, Rapresent*

Introduction

Graffiti is a multifaceted phenomenon that elicits varied interpretations depending on the context of study. This text aims to explore graffiti through the lenses of existing graffiti management policies in Belgrade, acknowledging the diverse perspectives within this field and what are the ways for the city to manage this problem. In this text I present and suggest some alternative ways for dealing with it. The main focus is on the Rapresent project, an educational initiative by the IDE Group aimed at designating legal spaces for young graffiti artists to practise their skills, as well as to develop a more responsible attitude towards the urban environment.

Traditionally, graffiti has been viewed as unauthorised markings, etchings, or paintings that deface public or private property.¹ Numerous city ordinances and anti-graffiti programs, notably those adopting a zero-tolerance stance prevalent for a long time in the USA, Australia, Scandinavia, and the UK, classified all forms of graffiti as blight and view graffiti artists as vandals deserving of punishment. However, over the past 50 years, understanding of graffiti has evolved significantly. Some scholars, as well as local municipalities since the beginning of the 2000s, have started to recognise graffiti as a form of artistic expression.² This prompts the question: what makes graffiti an artistic expression? The answer is complex, as the boundary between the art and vandalism is sometimes difficult to pinpoint. Marisa Gomez highlights the complexity of graffiti, noting that there are various types driven by different motivations.³ Understanding these motivations is essential for distinguishing between art and vandalism and for effectively managing graffiti. She proposes a nuanced classification of graffiti into two main categories: “graffiti art” and “graffiti vandalism”.⁴ According to her, graffiti art encompasses works exhibiting characteristics akin to “high art” or “folk art,” often created with the intention of producing artwork. On the other hand, graffiti vandalism refers to simple scrawling driven by motives such as territorial marking, seeking notoriety, or defying societal norms.⁵ While some graffiti may possess qualities of both art and vandalism, Gomez argues that the distinction remains valuable.

To address these complexities of graffiti, many cities today prioritise making distinctions between various types of graffiti in their graffiti management programs.⁶ By recognising differences in characteristics and motivations, cities are developing targeted strategies tailored to address specific challenges posed by different types of graffiti. This may involve implementing legal graffiti programs and mural art programs, to provide a

1 Weisel, D. L. (2004, revised 2013) *Graffiti: Problem-oriented guides for police*, series no. 9, *Office of Community Oriented Policing Services*, Washington, p. 5.

2 Halsey, M. and Young, A. (2002) *The Meanings of Graffiti and Municipal Administration*, *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* Vol. 35, No. 2, Australia: Sage, pp. 165-186.

3 Gómez, M.A. (1993) *The Writing on Our Walls: Finding Solutions Through Distinguishing Graffiti Art from Graffiti Vandalism*, *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform*, Vol.26, Issue 3, Michigan: University of Michigan, pp. 634-635.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 634.

5 *Ibid.*

6 For example this distinction is made in following texts: Calne Town Council, *Policy and Procedure Street Art, Graffiti and Anti-Social Behaviour*, Calne 2014, 24. 04. 2024, <https://moderengov.microshadeapplications.co.uk/calnetc/documents/s10074StreetArtGraffitiandAntiSocialBehaviourPolicydocxv1.docx.pdf>; *Graffiti Management Policy 2021*, City of Melbourne. 24.04.2024, <https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/graffiti-management-policy.pdf>; Morgan, A. and Louis, E. (2009) *Key issues in graffiti. Research in practice summary paper*, no. 6. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology; *Tackling Graffiti, A report from Overview & Scrutiny* (2008) Birmingham City Council, 24.04.2024, https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/592/tackling_graffiti_scrutiny_review_february_2008.

space for the expression of graffiti writers while discouraging graffiti vandalism. Effectively managing graffiti requires a nuanced understanding of its various forms and motivations. By embracing this complexity and developing tailored approaches, cities can better address the challenges posed by graffiti while also recognising and supporting its potential as a legitimate form of artistic expression.⁷

Overview of the Graffiti Management Policies⁸

Initially, city graffiti management policies typically focus on identifying and removing graffiti. However, relying solely on removal as a long-term strategy for combating graffiti may not be sufficient. In response to this challenge, cities have developed several other strategies: enforcement strategies utilising legal means, and prevention strategies, which encompass physical protection and proactive measures including education and community engagement.

Removal as a graffiti management program is a widespread approach. Even in cities lacking specific anti-graffiti regulations, removal procedures are often integrated into regular maintenance protocols. Responsibility for removing graffiti from public property usually falls on city administrations, while private property owners are typically responsible for their own premises. Some cities offer specialised graffiti removal services, either for a fee or free of charge, depending on local finances.

Enforcement strategies often involve prosecuting graffiti writing under criminal laws related to property destruction or trespassing. Police have the authority to make arrests for these offences, but they have to catch vandals in the act. Generally, offenders face penalties such as fines or community service, often involving the cleaning of graffiti.⁹ Additionally, property owners can make a civil claim against the writer for the cost of the damage caused. Cities which base their graffiti policy on strong enforcement have even specialised police divisions that focus solely on addressing graffiti problems. They conduct patrols, document tags, and aim to apprehend offenders in the act, with vandals facing maximum penalties upon capture.¹⁰

In the domain of prevention various measures are available: including physical protection, public space design changes, PR campaigns and education programs. Physical protection usually includes employing the anti-graffiti coating, implementation of CCTV systems and bolstering security personnel. Efforts are made to integrate preventive measures into urban and architectural design, such as using graffiti-resistant materials, textured walls, darker colours, landscape solutions as well as mandatory use of anti-graffiti

7 Halsey, M. and Young, A. op.cit., pp. 165-186.

8 This section primarily draws upon the experiences of cities in North America, Australia, and Europe, starting from the early 1980s. It specifically examines the period from 2000 onwards up to the present day. For this purpose, texts by A. Young for Australian cities, M.A. Gomez and H. Shobe & T. Conklin for US cities, as well as various governmental policy documents and city graffiti management plans, were utilised.

9 Halsey, M and Young, A. op.cit., pp. 165-186; Gómez, M.A. op.cit., pp. 633-707.

10 Cities with zero policy, see in: Gómez, M.A. op.cit., pp. 633-707.

coatings. As part of PR strategies anti-graffiti campaigns are intensified through diverse channels, educating the public about the harm and cost associated with graffiti and encouraging reporting. Community-led clean-up initiatives, including 'clean-up days', involve volunteer participation in graffiti removal.

Education and outreach programs primarily target young people involved in graffiti activities. Cities collaborate with youth organisations to offer programs diverting youths from graffiti toward alternative activities.¹¹ For instance, municipalities with a zero-tolerance policy engage schools to educate students about the negative consequences and costs of graffiti. They also encourage youth participation in graffiti clean-up projects. Additionally, welfare projects aim to provide constructive outlets for young people's free time as they see young graffiti writers as troubled, underprivileged, or unemployed individuals acting out of boredom. Consequently, investments are made in programs such as job placement, employment training, and various youth activities like sports, art, and science aimed at providing constructive outlets for their free time.¹²

On the other hand, some cities are adopting strategies that acknowledge and embrace graffiti culture, such as commissioning murals on walls prone to graffiti. This not only covers up graffiti but also enhances urban aesthetics and reduces graffiti vandalism as graffiti writers tend to respect and appreciate artwork.¹³ Education projects such as graffiti workshops and the mural paintings aim to steer young graffiti writers away from vandalism (tagging) and toward cultivating their artistic skills. Typically led by seasoned graffiti artists, these workshops serve as platforms for mentorship and skill development. Cities support instalment of legal graffiti walls and zones, recognising the significance of graffiti culture for youth. Legalised graffiti provides opportunities for skill development and fosters a sense of belonging among young people, contributing to a more responsible attitude towards their communities. One of the most renowned programs of this nature is Mural Arts in Philadelphia,¹⁴ established in 1984 as part of the Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti Network. This initiative engages young graffiti offenders in art workshops to acquire skills and subsequently involves them in creating murals throughout the city. Over the past 40 years, this program has produced between 50 and 100 murals annually in the City of Philadelphia.¹⁵

Graffiti Management Policy in Belgrade

Before discussing the strategies employed by the city of Belgrade to combat graffiti, it is important to outline the types of graffiti commonly found on Belgrade walls and the

11 Halsey, M. and Young, A. op.cit., pp. 165-186.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid. and Gómez, M.A. op.cit., pp. 633-707.

14 More about Mural Arts Philadelphia on their webpage: <https://www.muralarts.org/40years/>

15 It is interesting to note that two cities that represent the cradle of contemporary graffiti culture New York and Philadelphia have adopted two totally different strategies for tackling the graffiti problems. New York adopted a zero policy approach based on total eradication and criminalisation of graffiti while Philadelphia based its strategy on development of the Mural Arts program.

motivations driving them. Graffiti appearing on the Belgrade walls can be divided into five groups:¹⁶

1. Slogans and simple pictograms (often created using stencils), convey a diverse range of messages. These messages can range from personal expressions like love notes to political statements, activist messages, or even hate speech. While some citizens may find them interesting or thought-provoking, they are generally considered vandalism.
2. Tagger graffiti - typically include simple or stylised calligraphic lettering, often forming a unique pseudonymous signature. Additionally, there are more elaborate versions known as throw-ups, characterised by fat bubble-style letters.¹⁷ The primary motivation for taggers is to disseminate their tags across as many locations as possible, as their recognition and reputation hinge on widespread visibility. Although some of them may have artistic aspirations, these types of graffiti are generally classified as vandalism.
3. Pieces (masterpieces) also known as graffiti murals, feature large, intricate lettering often accompanied by characters or imagery.¹⁸ Crafting these pieces demands considerable time and skill, with the primary motivation being artistic expression.
4. Street art is visual expression originated from graffiti culture, characterised by stylised drawings, diverse symbols, often showcasing refined techniques and compositions. This form of art encompasses a range of methods, including drawings, murals, stencils, paste-ups, objects, etc. The main motivation here is artistic expression.
5. Football supporters' graffiti constitute another significant type of graffiti. These serve primarily to mark territory, promote specific groups claiming ownership, and communicate messages to rival factions. They come in various forms, ranging from simple slogans and visual symbols to elaborate murals that reflect the values and attitudes of the groups involved.¹⁹ Even in the case of large murals their primary intention remains more territorial than artistic.²⁰ They are usually considered vandalism.

¹⁶ Some groups could be further divided based on their content, but for the purpose of this text, that is not so relevant.

¹⁷ Tags and throw-ups are integral parts of graffiti culture. They are typically the first step for people getting involved in the graffiti culture, and they often develop their skills through tagging.

¹⁸ Pieces are also part of the graffiti culture, which has a different approach to the concept and practice of graffiti.

¹⁹ This includes portraits of deceased members as well as various nationalistic and patriotic murals.

²⁰ Often, these murals are not created by the group themselves but are commissioned from graffiti artists (from the third group).

Artistic motivations clearly underpin the creations of the third and the fourth group, while the primary aim across all other groups tends to be more the communication of various messages. Sociologically, all these groups hold significance as a means of representing public discourse. However, for the majority of citizens, the first, second, and fifth group are perceived as vandalism. Conversely, citizens typically view the works of the third and the fourth group in a more positive light.²¹

Regulation and enforcement

There is no single universal document that clearly defines all aspects of the graffiti management policy in Belgrade. The fact that until recently (2011) the only city ordinance addressing this issue was the “Decision on the General Regulation of the City” (Odluka o opštem uređenju grada) from 1987 reveals a great deal about the city’s lack of attention to this problem during the last thirty years. In this decision, it is stated that “*writing advertisements and other inscriptions is prohibited*”²² and that for this is a prescribed penalty from 250 to 25, 000 dinars (around 2 to 213 euros today). It also defines the responsibility of the owners to keep wall surfaces clean, or they could be fined up to 500,000 dinars (around 4260 euro). This regulation was replaced in 2011 by the new “Decision on Communal Order” (Odluka o komunalnom redu) in which we can find some general aspect of city policy toward graffiti today - who is responsible for maintenance of wall surfaces as well as existing reinforcement and supervision strategies. Even though the term “graffiti” is still not explicitly mentioned in this regulation the concept is addressed through descriptions. Article 9 states that “*it is prohibited to damage, write on, draw on, stick posters to, soil, or otherwise disrupt the appearance of the exterior parts of the building*”²³ At the same time the article 5 mandates that “*exterior parts of buildings must be maintained, prohibiting damage, soiling, writing, or any other actions that disrupt the city’s appearance*”.²⁴

Responsibility for maintenance of walls differs: the city oversees public spaces, while building owners and users²⁵ are responsible for their buildings, and in case of multifamily buildings, all owners share responsibility together.²⁶ The Secretariat for Communal

21 Пурић, Д. (2014) Однос Београђана према различитим врстама графита, *Култура* бр. 142, Београд: Завод за проучавање културног развоја, стр. 302-323.

22 Odluka o opštem uređenju grada, *Službeni list grada Beograda*, br. 32/87, 29/2007, član 47.

23 Odluka o komunalnom redu, *Sl. list grada Beograda*, br. 10/2011, 60/2012, 51/2014, 92/2014, 2/2015, 11/2015, 61/2015, 75/2016, 19/2017, 50/2018, 92/2018, 118/2018, 26/2019, 52/2019, 60/2019, 17/2020, 89/2020, 106/2020, 138/2020, 152/2020, 40/2021, 94/2021, 101/2021, 111/2021, 120/2021 i 19/2022, član 9.

24 Ibid., član 5.

25 Buildings that are given for use to public institutions and organisations.

26 Odluka o komunalnom redu, *Sl. list grada Beograda*, br. 10/2011, 60/2012, 51/2014, 92/2014, 2/2015, 11/2015, 61/2015, 75/2016, 19/2017, 50/2018, 92/2018, 118/2018, 26/2019, 52/2019, 60/2019, 17/2020, 89/2020, 106/2020, 138/2020, 152/2020, 40/2021, 94/2021, 101/2021, 111/2021, 120/2021 i 19/2022, član 6.

Affairs (Sekretarijat za komunalne poslove), and City and Municipal Communal inspections (Gradska i Opštinska komunalna inspekcija) are responsible for monitoring and reporting graffiti,²⁷ ensuring that buildings meet aesthetic standards. Fines of 5,000 (around 42 euros) to 25,000 dinars (213 euro) may be imposed on non-compliant owners.²⁸ The municipal police (Komunalna policija) enforce these regulations, penalising individuals caught defacing facades with graffiti with a fine between 5,000 (42 euros) and 20,000 dinars (170 euro). They can also be sentenced to community service ranging from 40 to 160 hours. Community service involves individuals cleaning up graffiti.²⁹ Parents of offenders under 14 are fined, while offenders aged 14 to 18 may face corrective measures per misdemeanour law.³⁰

Removal strategies

During the 1990s and the first decades of the 21st century, there was no official strategy for the removal of graffiti, which likely contributed to its flourishing in Belgrade. Economic challenges and widespread poverty during the 90s limited the city's ability to organise more than basic maintenance of public spaces. Additionally, as citizens became owners of their apartments during this period, they also became responsible for the maintenance of multifamily buildings. However, their responsibilities were not clearly defined in city regulations but even if they were, the pervasive poverty hindered their ability to address graffiti and other building maintenance issues effectively.

This began to change in the early 2000s when the city initiated some renovation programs in the central part of the city, such as the *Renovation of facades of buildings under the state protection* project (Obnavljanje fasada zgrada pod zaštitom države) in 2002.³¹ During this time, municipal company Belgrade Road (Beograd put) started a graffiti removal program focused mainly on public transit areas such as underpasses which were cleaned annually or sometimes even twice a year. The Secretariat for Communal and Housing Affairs (Sekretarijat za komunalne i stambene poslove) also began annual (spring) graffiti removal actions in central parts of the city, primarily in municipalities

27 Citizens can also contact the City and Municipal Inspections to report graffiti.

28 Odluka o komunalnom redu, *Sl. list grada Beograda*, br. 10/2011, 60/2012, 51/2014, 92/2014, 2/2015, 11/2015, 61/2015, 75/2016, 19/2017, 50/2018, 92/2018, 118/2018, 26/2019, 52/2019, 60/2019, 17/2020, 89/2020, 106/2020, 138/2020, 152/2020, 40/2021, 94/2021, 101/2021, 111/2021, 120/2021 i 19/2022, član 64b. In practice, fines of 5 000 dinars are usually issued.

29 <https://www.paragraf.rs/dnevne-vesti/230215/230215-vest11.html>.

30 Odluka o komunalnom redu, *Sl. list grada Beograda*, br. 10/2011, 60/2012, 51/2014, 92/2014, 2/2015, 11/2015, 61/2015, 75/2016, 19/2017, 50/2018, 92/2018, 118/2018, 26/2019, 52/2019, 60/2019, 17/2020, 89/2020, 106/2020, 138/2020, 152/2020, 40/2021, 94/2021, 101/2021, 111/2021, 120/2021 i 19/2022, član 64g.

31 Later, projects "Popravimo zajedno" and "Lepša Srbija" were launched. Subsequently, facades on Kosančićev Venac were renovated (2016-18), and the facade restoration continued on Brankova Street. More information about these projects can be found on the page <https://www.beograd.rs/>.

Stari Grad and Vračar, and later expanded these actions to other areas. City Sanitation Services (Gradska čistoća) and Belgrade Road (Beograd put) were typically responsible for these tasks, although specialised companies were also engaged due to a lack of suitable equipment.³²

Some municipalities also organised cleaning actions in collaboration with city communal enterprises, as well as volunteer cleaning campaigns in collaboration with citizens. Essentially, all these actions were seasonal, lasting for a limited period, and therefore inadequate to effectively tackle the problem. It wasn't until 2019 that a city ordinance for graffiti removal was adopted, which precisely defined responsibilities, tasks, and procedures. Today, the public utility company City Sanitation Services (Gradska čistoća) is responsible for year-round graffiti removal.³³ The ordinance defines graffiti "as any image, drawing, or textual message visible from public areas on a structure".³⁴ Building owners are held responsible for maintaining cleanliness, with the city authorised to remove graffiti at their expense if they fail to do so.³⁵

Preventive measures

In addition to removal strategies, the city also implements prevention measures, mostly physical protection by applying special anti-graffiti coatings to surfaces after removal. According to a city manager interview from 2019, all new buildings are expected to have anti-graffiti coatings on the surface up to 2 metres³⁶ and CCTV cameras are installed in some cases.

City's reliance solely on physical protection as a preventive measure reflects a lack of understanding of the complexity of the graffiti problem. This is evident in the city ordinances, which equate all graffiti with vandalism, disregarding the nuances observed on the streets. In reality, many graffiti murals, though illegal, are considered as art by the local community³⁷ and are even tolerated by the city.

32 "The Secretariat for Communal and Housing Affairs will initiate a public procurement procedure for cleaning graffiti, removing posters, and protecting the facades of buildings and other public structures in the broader city centre from graffiti and posters during 2008 and 2009. The estimated value of the works is 25 million dinars" Anonym., Čišćenje grafita i skidanje plakata sa javnih objekata, *DanasOnline*, 24.03.2008, 24.04.2024, <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/beograd/ciscenje-grafita-i-skidanje-plakata-sa-javnih-objekata/>

33 Removal is primarily conducted from spring to autumn due to weather conditions, as it is important for the temperature to be above 15 degrees Celsius.

34 This is the first time that this term is used in official city regulations. Odluka o čišćenju grafita, *Sl. list grada Beograda*, br. 60/2019, član 3.

35 In practice, the removal of graffiti from multi-family buildings is financed through the city budget.

36 Anonim., Vesić: Čišćenje grafita od velike važnosti za uređenje grada, *Danas Online*, 25.07.2019, 24.04.2024, <https://www.danas.rs/vesti/beograd/vesic-ciscenje-grafita-od-velike-vaznosti-za-uredjenje-grada/>.

37 Пурић, Д. (2014) Однос Београђана према различитим врстама графита, *Култура* бр.142, Београд: Завод за проучавање културног развитка, стр. 302-323.

Furthermore, during the last twenty years there were numerous legal murals and mural programs initiated by individuals, NGOs, public institutions and companies, and yet there are no defined regulations in this domain as well as no official city support for such initiatives. The absence of clear procedures for painting murals, especially on city-managed areas, highlights the difficulty of the situation. While the Decision on Communal Order allows for mural decoration on building facades and gable ends under specific conditions,³⁸ these conditions have yet to be defined.

The process is somewhat easier for privately-owned buildings or public institutions, such as schools, where obtaining permission from the owner (or user) or signatures from the majority of apartment owners, along with the opinion of the City Institute or the Republic Institute for the Protection of Monuments³⁹ suffices. However, the lack of established guidelines for mural painting on the city level hampers progress in addressing the issue effectively. In spring 2015, city officials announced plans to launch a city mural program and to establish procedures in this domain. In the fall of 2015, they even formed a Commission under the Secretariat for Culture (Sekretarijat za kulturu) tasked with overseeing art in public spaces projects. Regrettably, these efforts stagnated, and as of today, conditions for mural painting in Belgrade remain undefined.⁴⁰

A significant issue in Belgrade is the absence of educational programs such as graffiti workshops, tailored for young taggers who may have artistic intentions, aimed at teaching them skills to create larger pieces. These workshops could potentially discourage prolific or random tagging by confining it to designated areas around the more elaborate pieces. Additionally, the establishment of legal walls or approved areas where writers can practise their skills could provide further outlets for expression and help channel their artistic energy in a positive direction. In the following section, I present one of the projects initiated by the group of artists represented by IDE Group, which could serve as an example of how educational initiatives can be conceived as part of the city's graffiti management policy.

Project Rapresent

The latter part of the first decade of the 2000s, when the city initiated its first regular graffiti removal efforts, was also a period of significant growth for graffiti culture in Belgrade. Although the beginnings of the graffiti culture in Belgrade are often associated

38 In the Decision on Communal Order article 11 is stated "the facade and side wall of the building can be decorated with a mural, under the conditions and in the manner determined by the city's special regulations". Odluka o komunalnom redu, *Sl. list grada Beograda*, br. 10/2011, 60/2012, 51/2014, 92/2014, 2/2015, 11/2015, 61/2015, 75/2016, 19/2017, 50/2018, 92/2018, 118/2018, 26/2019, 52/2019, 60/2019, 17/2020, 89/2020, 106/2020, 138/2020, 152/2020, 40/2021, 94/2021, 101/2021, 111/2021, 120/2021 i 19/2022, član 11.

39 Zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture grada Beograda or Republički zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture

40 Весић: Мурали и графити у будуће на прецизно одређеним локацијама, 19.03. 2015, 24.04.2024, <https://www.beograd.rs/index.php?kat=beoinfo&lang=cir&sub=1657267%3F>

with the late 1990s, it wasn't until the mid-2000s that it began to flourish more widely. Initially, by the end of the 90s, only a small number of people were involved in the culture, and graffiti could be seen primarily in areas like New Belgrade (especially Block 45) and on transit infrastructure.⁴¹ It took a few more years for it to expand to the city centre. From the mid-2000s onward, graffiti started to rapidly spread throughout the entire city and to an increasing number of towns in Serbia.

Their expansion was largely facilitated by the fact that more and more young people gained access to websites, blogs, and forums dedicated to graffiti, thanks to the internet. Additionally, many of them became involved in graffiti through the widespread influence of hip-hop culture,⁴² which was dominant in Serbia at that time. Graffiti became an integral part of many cultural festivals, such as the Hip Hop Festival and the Mikser Festival. The first specialised graffiti shops were opened and in 2010 a group of graffiti writers started organising the Belgrade edition of the international Meeting of Styles festival. At the same time, smaller graffiti jams were regularly organised, many of them in school yards, providing young people with the opportunity to see experienced writers in action.

Meanwhile, many brands aimed to attract younger consumers by using elements of graffiti aesthetic and by employing graffiti writers for their promotional activities. Even the City of Belgrade, at one point, used graffiti as part of its campaigns for a new city identity, including the Meeting of Styles festival as part of its "Beogradizacija" (Belgradisation) campaign. The same approach was adopted by NGOs, using graffiti aesthetics whenever they wanted to address youth issues.

In 2008, young graffiti writer Bojan Radanov, known by the tag Rapresent (RST), initiated and organised a graffiti jam in an underpass near Student City (Studentski grad) with the help of his friends. The underpass, situated on the outskirts of the city but still highly used by pedestrians, was covered with numerous tags and scribbles, making it an ideal location for such an event. During this time, Bojan was affiliated with the Academic Film Centre (Akademski filmski centar), which was part of the Cultural Centre Student City (Dom kulture Studentski grad) located near the underpass. Utilising his connections at the Cultural Centre, Bojan secured support for the jam, which was also included as an accompanying activity of the Balkanima Festival.⁴³ Bojan's dedication to this project was remarkable, especially considering his challenging past. Before his involvement with the Balkanima Festival and the Academic Film Centre, Bojan faced homelessness on the streets of Belgrade. Graffiti and hip-hop were some of the few positive aspects of his life during those difficult times. Born in Croatia, Bojan experienced tragedy early on, losing his father during the war when he was only three years old. He,

41 More about this period in: Radošević, Lj. (2008) "Nevidna"energija beograjskih ulic, Časopis za kritiko znanosti, domišljijo in novo antropologijo, Issue 231-232, pp. 291-306.

42 While graffiti is often portrayed as an integral part of hip-hop culture, it's important to note that in the early days of graffiti culture in Serbia, writers were listening to various music genres, and hip-hop was just one among them.

43 In the organisation of this event, Bojan collaborated with Mara Prohaska Marković, who was then the PR of the Cultural Centre Student City.

along with his mother and sister, sought refuge in Serbia, but unfortunately, his mother passed away when he was just eleven. Subsequently, Bojan found himself living in the Community Home (Dom za napuštenu decu) and later in the Juvenile Detention Centre “Vasa Stajić” (Zavod za vaspitanje dece i omladine, Beograd). At the age of eighteen, he lost his accommodation rights at the Home, which led to him becoming homeless. In 2007, his compelling story caught the attention of documentary filmmaker Ivana Todorović, who created a short film depicting Bojan’s life on the streets and his love of graffiti.⁴⁴ Through the process of making this film, Bojan became involved with the Academic Film Centre at the Cultural Centre Student City.

Following the success of the initial underpass project, Bojan hoped to organise similar initiatives in other underpasses throughout Belgrade. Unfortunately, he tragically passed away in 2009 before seeing his plans realised.⁴⁵ In honour of Bojan’s memory and his unrealised dreams, a group of Bojan friends decided to continue his work by carrying on the underpass graffiti mural painting project. The founding team of the project in 2009 consisted of Mara Prohaska Marković,⁴⁶ Nebojša Petrović,⁴⁷ and Slavica Radišić⁴⁸. Due to organisational reasons and the necessity to apply for funding, it was decided that the IDE Group would officially organise the project. The IDE group was a Citizens’ Association established in 2009, gathering artists interested in mural painting and community arts.⁴⁹ They named the project “Rapresent” as a tribute to Bojan’s creative influence and enduring impact.⁵⁰

Recognising the pivotal role graffiti culture played in Bojan’s life, helping him navigate through challenging times, IDE Group envisioned a project that transcended traditional mural initiatives. Instead of just making the mural, they decided to craft an educational platform tailored for young graffiti writers, much like Bojan once was, who dedicated their free time to mastering the art of graffiti on the streets. Their goal was to provide those young people with the chance to collaborate with seasoned graffiti writers and street artists, refine their aerosol techniques, connect with peers facing similar interests, and cultivate teamwork skills. The aim was also to teach them how to act more responsibly towards public spaces and to channel their energy and time into creating graffiti murals that enriched rather than diminished the neighbourhoods.

44 Ivana Todorović, Rapresent, short documentary film, 2008, 24.04.2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZeiClSjOhI&list=PLMRoOv65OioLb7KyHvT-54w6Jc0jTF5Gn&index=6&t=958s>

45 He was twenty-one years old.

46 Participated in the first edition of the project in 2010.

47 A member of the Balkanima team and one of the founders of the IDE Group.

48 Member of IDE Group.

49 More about IDE Group projects see: <http://grupaide.blogspot.com/>

50 Bojan chose this tag because of his deep love for rap music, as he explains in the documentary. Additionally, “Rapresent” closely resembles the word “represent”, a term with significant weight in hip hop culture and graffiti. It reflects the duty of hip hop artists and graffiti writers to represent their crew, neighbourhood, and the city.

In addition to this educational goal, IDE Group had a second objective aimed at obtaining permits for New Belgrade underpasses to become legal graffiti zones. Transit infrastructure such as bridges, highway and bridge pillars, protective walls, and underpasses are common sites for graffiti murals in Belgrade. Some of these locations serve as genuine graffiti galleries and are occasionally tolerated by the city, and citizens agree that graffiti murals in these areas enhance urban landscapes.⁵¹ The underpasses in New Belgrade that IDE Group aimed to designate as legal graffiti zones typically suffer from neglect and could indeed benefit from the addition of graffiti murals. These poorly lit and littered spaces are characterised by walls covered with tags, various political and football fans related slogans, layers of torn posters, and advertisements. Consequently, citizens often feel unsafe using these passages, considering them problematic spots in their neighbourhoods. IDE Group believed that involving young graffiti artists in decorating these areas with graffiti murals would not only make them easier to maintain, as graffiti writers tend to avoid defacing murals, but would also instil a sense of pride and ownership among the young graffiti writers participating in the mural painting process. By organising periodic painting sessions every few years, the project would ensure the involvement of each successive generation of young writers in the mural painting and maintenance of the underpasses. Essentially, the project aimed to establish a symbiotic relationship between the city and young graffiti writers, providing them with dedicated platforms for creative expression while simultaneously reducing the city's maintenance costs for these underpasses.



Figure 1: “Student City” Underpass, 2011 (photo Olivera Indić)

51 Пурић, Д. (2014) Однос Београђана према различитим врстама графита, *Култура* бр.142, Београд: Завод за проучавање културног развитка, стр. 302-323.

The Rapresent project had 6 editions and took place every year from late September to early October from 2010 to 2015, except for 2012 when it was organised at the end of July. During the project's tenure three underpasses were painted: the underpass near the Student City two times - 2010, 2011, the underpass in Block 44 in 2012 and the underpass Ušće 2013. Unfortunately, during the project, there were numerous issues in obtaining permits for mural painting. Since there was no precise procedure in such situations, much depended on the goodwill of individuals within the city administration. Due to permit problems, in the last two years of the project, painting was organised outside of the underpasses: one year on the back wall of the Simpo building in Lion neighbourhood (2014) and the last year of the project (2015) in the courtyard of the Vasa Stajić Juvenile Detention Centre.



Figure 2: "Vasa Stajić" Juvenile Detention Centre, 2015 (photo Nebojša Petrović)

Every year, the project began by issuing a public call for participants. The call was primarily distributed through social media platforms and groups where graffiti writers exchange information, as well as through specialised websites intended for young people. The conditions for participation in the project were that participants be between the ages of 14 and 20 and that they submit photographs of their work on the wall, along with two to three sketches.

During the first three years, up to 20 writers per year participated in the workshops, but due to reduced painting areas, the number had to decrease to 10 to 15 participants later on. Participants were predominantly male, with only two female participants in the

first year. The average age of participants was 16-17, but towards the end of the project, younger writers, some even younger than 14, have started to apply. Nearly half of the participants took part in painting twice.

The project was primarily intended for participants from Belgrade, but throughout the years, there were applications from various parts of Serbia. Therefore, the organisers decided to give them a chance as well, resulting in participants from Novi Sad, Smederevo, Pančevo, Inđija, Novi Pazar, Užice, and other cities in Serbia. A lot of participants were attending various secondary art schools, such as School for design, Tehnoart or Architectural school. Many of them opted to pursue further education in the field of arts or architecture, and eventually chose artistic professions for their careers.

Workshops typically began with a documentary about Bojan, after which participants delved into learning more about graffiti art, including its origins, history, various technical aspects as well as how to be more responsible towards public space and help beautify it while avoiding contributing to its degradation. In the subsequent sessions, participants would select an overall subject and colour pattern for their mural, define the spatial arrangement of who would paint where, and begin working on their sketches. The workshops were led by senior and well-established graffiti writers and street artists.

During most editions of the project, special attention was given to informing young people about other important social issues, such as the problem of homeless children and children working on the streets. To address this, documentary about Bojan was often used, along with the animated film “Čudovište”, made by Nebojša Petrović, Natalija Dabić (IDE Group) and Aleksandra Jelić (Aps Art) in collaboration with children from The Shelter for Children in Belgrade (Prihvatište za decu Beograda). Additionally,



Figure 3: Artwork done by children from Drop-In Shelter New Belgrade, Underpass “Ušće”, 2013 (photo Miloš Vujičić)

during the mural painting events in 2012 (Block 44) and 2013 (Ušće), a portion of the wall was allocated for workshops with children living on the streets, allowing them to, by working back-to-back with young graffiti writers, create their own artworks. These workshops were jointly organised by IDE Group and Drop-In Shelter in New Belgrade (Svratište za decu Novi Beograd) managed by the Centre for Youth Integration (Centar za integraciju mladih).

Since one of the project's goals was the promotion of graffiti culture and the establishment of legal graffiti zones, IDE Group insisted that graffiti writers be an integral part of the project team. They were primarily responsible for conducting workshops, organising mural painting sessions, and often participating in project PR. Throughout the project's duration, several graffiti artists were closely involved in its organisation: Aleksandar Slivnjak Lortek (throughout all 6 editions of the project), Marko Veljić Soter (2010, 2011),⁵² Dragan Planinčić Super Timor (2011,2012) and Aleksandra Petković TKV (2010).

Throughout all six years, the project was primarily funded by the Ministry of Culture, initially under the Visual Arts Program for the first four years and later through the Children and Youth Program for the last two years. During the period when the project was funded through the Visual Arts Program, the allocated amount managed to cover the basic project expenses as well as very small fees for organisers. However, in the first year, the amount was rather symbolic (50,000 dinars or 427 euros), which was insufficient even to purchase basic painting materials. Consequently, the IDE Group had to finance some materials themselves, unfortunately of very poor quality, which also affected the quality of the murals in the first year. When the project was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Children and Youth Program, the funding received from the Ministry was significantly reduced and could only cover basic materials. In addition to funding from the Ministry of Culture, the project received support from the City of Belgrade. One year, the support came through the Secretariat for Culture (Sekretarijat za kulturu), and another year through the Secretariat for Youth and Sport (Sekretarijat za sport i omladinu).

Since one of the main goals of the project was to obtain permission for graffiti murals and advocate for legal graffiti zones in underpasses, collaboration with local municipalities, as well as various city institutions and services that could contribute to the organisation and quality of the project, was an important aspect. Throughout the four years of the project in New Belgrade, organisers strived to establish close cooperation with the municipality of New Belgrade. The assistance from the municipality of New Belgrade was primarily logistical in nature, as financial support was not possible since the municipality funded other projects of the IDE Group. This logistical assistance included finding spaces for workshops,⁵³ providing technical support for workshops and mural painting, and offering recommendations from the municipality for obtaining permits from other city institutions. Unfortunately, the municipality's support for the project

52 A member of the IDE Group and the founder of Meeting of Styles Belgrade Festival.

53 In 2012, workshops were held in the premises (Block 45) and with the assistance of the New Belgrade Cultural Network (Novobeogradska kulturna mreža).

was not systematic and mostly relied on the goodwill of individuals interested in this type of project, primarily Miloš Petrović, then Deputy President of the Municipality.⁵⁴ However, Petrović's influence did not extend to other city institutions. For example, although the municipality promised to improve the lighting in the underpass in Block 44 they were unable to do so due to unclear responsibility for maintaining that underpass. All municipality support ceased when Miloš Petrović stepped down from his position (2012/2013).

In 2014, during the mural project on the Simpo building, organisers attempted to establish cooperation with the Municipality of Zvezdara to provide assistance in finding space and the technical support for the workshops. Sadly, communication with the municipality was almost non-existent, and support was obtained thanks to a former participant of the workshops who was then part of the youth organisation of the political party in power in the Zvezdara municipality.⁵⁵

In addition to those two municipalities, the Cultural Centre Student City and Community Theatre Aps Art played significant roles in assisting with the organisation of the project. The Cultural Centre Student City (Kulturni centar Studentski grad) provided substantial help during the first two years with technical and PR support for workshops, which were also included in the official program of the Visual Art Department. The same support was provided by Aps Art during the last edition of the project.

On the city level, the project received significant support from the Office of the City Architect, especially concerning the issue of the lack of procedures for obtaining permits for murals in public spaces under the direct city's control. Obtaining permits was the biggest problem during the organisation of the project. It should be noted that during the initial painting in 2008, obtaining permits was a simple process. Organisers obtained permission from Belgrade Road (Beograd put), which was then responsible for maintaining the underpass. However, in 2010, things changed. Belgrade Road was still responsible for maintenance works in the underpass (regular painting, electrical works) but they could no longer issue permits. They directed organisers to the Secretariat for Transport and the Directorate for Roads (Sekretarijat za saobraćaj i Direkcija za puteve), which was responsible for issuing maintenance orders for the underpasses. When organisers approached them, the Directorate automatically rejected them and directed them to a higher authority, the City Administration and the City Manager, who later referred them to the City Architect.

This process took a long time and significantly jeopardised the organisation of the project (in the meantime, the project received a donation from the Telekom Founda-

54 Petrović also enabled the painting of graffiti mural at the Graphic School in New Belgrade organised by TKV and Lortek, one of the first of its kind in the municipality, and initiated the project of allocating space for cultural non-governmental organisations (Aps Art, Context Collective, Carina Scene) in the building of the Local Community "Student City" (Mesna zajednica Studentski grad).

55 The workshops were organised within the cultural centre "Vuk Stefanović Karadžić". During the mural painting, assistance was received from the Local Community "Lipov lad".

tion, which was lost due to permit issues). Fortunately, the then-city architect, Dejan Vasović, was very interested in the whole project and graffiti and murals' role in the city beautification process in general. During a meeting with him, organisers learned that the main problem that needed to be solved to obtain permission for mural painting was the issue of maintenance. Since underpasses were places where various types of inscriptions and slogans appeared, and some of them were offensive and politically charged, the City Directorate for Roads was tasked with regularly removing them (at that time, Belgrade walls were full of various hate graffiti against the Pride Parade, there were also many nationalist graffiti and those against the then-mayor Dragan Đilas). They had a problem with what to do if such graffiti appeared on our graffiti murals. How to remove them without removing or damaging the murals? For this reason, they were not willing to take responsibility for issuing permissions for murals because they didn't know how to maintain them.

At the suggestion of the City Architect, it was agreed that the IDE Group would assume responsibility for the maintenance of the murals. This meant that they committed to regularly inspecting the murals, and in case any hate graffiti or political graffiti appeared on them, they would remove them themselves and repair the murals if necessary. In addition to that, one of the Directorate's requirements was to issue them a temporary permit for two years, after which IDE Group could seek an extension of the permit (depending on the wall's condition), permit for re-painting, or in the worst case, they would have to restore the walls to their previous state - to paint them white. Furthermore, there was also an issue of which competent city authority could approve the mural sketch since there was no city-level procedure in such situations. For example, City Companies and Institutions did not recognise the term Art in Public Space, and if you wanted to install some temporary artwork in public space, you had to comply with the same conditions as when installing a kiosk or some mobile sales object. No one could provide an opinion on whether, from an artistic point of view, the object met the conditions. In the absence of appropriate procedures, the City Architect agreed to personally review the sketches and approve them (during this process, care was taken to ensure that the sketch did not contain any offensive themes or words, and the artistic aspect was not so important).

So, after nearly 6 months, IDE Group managed to find a way to obtain a permit for graffiti murals, and this procedure was followed during the first three years of the project. However, since this was only a provisional procedure based primarily on the goodwill of the City Architect, with the change of government and the new City Architect, the same problems reappeared. The new City Architect, Milutin Folić, was not willing to take on the obligation of approving the sketch and issuing a permit for murals; instead, his team tried to devise new official procedures in such situations. At that time, the new City Manager, Goran Vesić, often appeared in the media, announcing a tough fight against graffiti but at the same time announcing a city mural program. Unfortunately, nothing came out of the mural program itself, only the Secretariat for Culture was tasked with organising a Commission whose assignment was to assess the artistic quality of

proposals for art projects in public space and to approve whether a work meets the aesthetic and artistic qualities to be installed. By organising this Commission, this important problem - approving the sketch - was finally resolved. There still existed the issue of which specific authority could issue permits for mural painting on the city's property (no City Secretariat or Company can independently issue permits; you always have to obtain a permit from the central City Administration), and how to define the maintenance of such projects. Unfortunately, despite all efforts and constant letter writing and phone calls to the relevant city institutions, this whole process took a long time, and that is the main reason why for the last two editions of the project, we had to find alternative locations where obtaining permits was not an issue. Only what we managed to achieve was obtaining an extension in 2016 from the Commission for the existing murals in underpasses.

Throughout the project, special attention was given to working closely with the media because it was the best way to help people understand graffiti art better. The main aim was to show how graffiti can make our neighbourhoods more beautiful and how everyone can get involved in improving their community. Considering the scale of the project, media coverage of every edition was very good. The project was covered by most of the local newspapers and web portals in sections that focus on Belgrade and topics related to the city. All major TV stations had made at least one short report about the project during its duration. Unfortunately, the project didn't have much visibility from media in charge of culture, except for the web platform Designed.

It was intriguing to discover through conversations with journalists that graffiti culture and street art remained largely unknown to the broader public. Our graffiti artists, both as part of the PR of the project and on their own, worked hard during various media appearances to showcase the culture, its origins, and how other European cities tackle this topic. Nearly every year during the project, graffiti writer Lortek was discussing these themes with journalists of the *Politika* newspaper.⁵⁶ Ultimately, the project received mainly positive feedback from citizens, as seen through social media comments and conversations on the site during the mural painting. Radio Beograd 202 also aired a detailed report on the project during its third edition, which included interviews with passers-by discussing their thoughts on the project.⁵⁷

56 Anonim, Grafit je umetnost, ne samo škrabanje po zidu, *Politika*, 15.02.2015, 24.04.2024, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/319130/Grafit-je-umetnost-ne-samo-skrabanje-po-zidu>

Brakočević, M., Umetnost je i „šaranje” po zidu, *Politika*, 03.01.2010, 24.04.2024, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/118204/Umetnost-je-i-saranje-po-zidu>

Brakočević, M., Grafiti i murali – skrajnuta umetnost ulice, *Politika*, 28.12.2016, 24.04.2024, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/371022/Grafiti-i-murali-skrajnuta-umetnost-ulice>

M.S.M. Grafiti u Zavodu za vaspitanje – znak sećanja na nekadašnjeg stanara, *Politika*, 25.11.2015, 24.04.2024, <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/344172/Grafiti-u-Zavodu-za-vaspitanje-znak-secanja-na-nekadasnjeg-stanara>

57 Author of the report was journalist Hana Gadomski.

Conclusion

Given the circumstances surrounding the project and the issues encountered during its execution, the primary challenge was the absence of clear city strategies for addressing graffiti issues and facilitating art in public spaces. This was particularly evident in the lack of defined procedures in this domain. While there were indications at various times that the city understood and was ready to allocate walls for graffiti and street artists to express themselves, and there were expressed intentions to finally regulate this realm, ultimately, no significant progress was made despite public statements from city officials. Although a Commission for Public Art was established, in reality, it never really commenced to fully work, as there are still no regulations in this domain.

In addition, the city did not make any attempts to engage with young people involved in graffiti art to redirect their energies from vandalism to legal graffiti. There are still no legal graffiti places in Belgrade and this subject is even rarely mentioned in public discourse today.⁵⁸ This is highlighted by the city decision to grant concession rights for 25 years⁵⁹ to a private company tasked with reconstructing and regularly maintaining (including graffiti removal) the underpasses in Belgrade including those three in New Belgrade that IDE Group wanted to convert into spaces for legal graffiti. The initial passages that underwent reconstruction under this new project in 2021, were those in Block 44 and Ušće, which were part of the Represent project, and recently, works were completed in the passage near Student City.⁶⁰ All murals created during the Rapresent project were painted over during the reconstruction, except for one small part with Bojan's portrait and a dedication to Bojan and all children of the street. This part still stands in the underpass near Student City. The reason and the person behind the decision to preserve this part of the mural are unknown, but it was a thoughtful gesture. Besides this small segment, the only remaining mural from the Rapresent project is that painted in the courtyard of the Vasa Stajić Centre as the mural on the Simpo building was also painted over during the renovation of the building in 2018/2019.

58 It is difficult to find any mention of city officials understanding graffiti culture while the City Manager clearly acknowledges an understanding of football supporters culture: "We wish to gain broad public support, and discussions are planned with supporter groups to come to agreements with them as well. Our intention is for them to commit to preserving the city and its protected areas. We have no objections to painting football supporter messages, symbols, or ideas around larger stadiums. The interest of all of us is to have this city organised, despite the need to find space for everyone to express their views."

Vesić: Murali i grafiti ubuduće na precizno određenim lokacijama, 19. 03. 2015, 24. 04. 2024, <https://www.beograd.rs/index.php?kat=beoinfo&lang=cir&sub=1657267%3F>

59 Vuković A., Podzemne prolaze preuzimaju koncesionari na 25 godina, *Politika*, 19. 09. 2019, 24. 04. 2024; <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/438173/Podzemne-prolaze-preuzimaju-koncesionari-na-25-godina>

60 Vuković A., Podzemni prolazi – od rugla do sjaja, *Politika*, 16. 04. 2021, 24. 04. 2024., <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/477186/Podzemni-prolazi-od-rugla-do-sjaja>



Figure 4: Remaining part of graffiti mural in the underpass “Student City”
(photo Olivera Inđić)

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Славица Радишић

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ГРАФИТИ МЕНАѢМЕНТ И ЕДУКАТИВНИ ПРОГРАМИ У БЕОГРАДУ: СТУДИЈА СЛУЧАЈА ПРОЈЕКАТ *РАПРЕСЕНТ*

Сажетак: Графити представљају сложен феномен који се може истраживати на различите начине. У овом тексту истражују се из угла графити менаѢмента и начина на који се градови баве овим феноменом. Мариса Гомез прави разлику између „графита умјетности“ и „графита вандализма“, наглашавајући важност разумевања мотива за настанак графита како би градови могли њима да се баве ефикасније. Овај приступ се огледа у менаѢмент програмима после 2000. године који почињу да препознају графите као специфичан умјетнички израз и то инкорпорирају у своје стратегије. У тексту су приказане и описане основне стратегије које градови примењују са графитима као што су: уклањање графита, регулација и кажњавање, као и нови приступи засновани на превенцији који укључују различите едукативне програме, рад са младим графити умјетницима и покретање легалних програма мурала. У тексту се посебно фокусирамо на искуство Београда у овој области, мапирајући контекст и постојећи регулаторни оквир током последњих двадесет година. Представљене су постојеће стратегије Града Београда (уклањање, регулација и кажњавање), али се указује и на запостављене аспекте (превенција и едукација). Поред тога, идентификују се и постојећи проблеми који се огледају у непотпуној регулацији у овом домену као и недефинисаним надлежностима и процедурама. Посебна пажња у тексту је посвећена пројекту *Рајресент* Групе ИДЕ (од 2010. до 2015) као примјеру могуће образовне иницијативе у овој области. Циљ овог пројекта био је да трансформише градске подземне пролазе у легалне зоне за графите и пружи образовну платформу за младе графити умјетнике. Упркос бирократским препрекама, пројекат је показао потенцијал графита да побољшају запуштене јавне просторе ангажујући младе. Поред тога, показао је и колико је важно да Град Београд има јасно дефинисане прописе и процедуре у овој области, што је један од предуслова за успјешну сарадњу између града и графити умјетника у уљепшавању града.

Кључне ријечи: *графити менаѢмент, Београд, регулатива и сировођење, образовни програми, „Рајресент“*

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THE STREET GALLERY: FOSTERING DIALOGUE IN PUBLIC SPACE THROUGH ART

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Abstract: *The diminishing presence of public spaces in urban settings poses a growing concern, driven by market-driven urban development trends. In cities like Belgrade, Serbia, this phenomenon threatens cultural vitality and community cohesion. Temporary urban practices emerge as a viable solution, activating these spaces through cultural and social initiatives. These interventions challenge conventional urban paradigms by prioritizing community engagement and cultural expression. The Street Gallery (Ulična galerija), located in downtown Belgrade, exemplifies this transformative potential by revitalizing an abandoned passage into a vibrant cultural hub. Through art exhibitions and community involvement, it fosters dialogue and social interaction, enriching the urban fabric. Overcoming obstacles such as resource limitations and bureaucratic hurdles, initiatives like the Street Gallery underscore the role of art in public spaces as a catalyst for social change and urban rejuvenation.*

Key words: *Street Gallery, public space, art in public space, community engagement, temporary urban practices*

Introduction

The disappearance of public space is becoming an increasingly common issue in modern urban environments, particularly in post-socialist cities like Belgrade, Serbia. Contemporary urban development, driven primarily by market-oriented interests, poses significant threats to public spaces and cultural activities. Many urban areas suffer from neglect or misuse, failing to enrich the civic life of the city. Research by the Institute for the Study of Cultural Development (Zavod za proučavanje kulturnog razvitka) identifies various types of unused spaces, including abandoned buildings,

displaced areas, military complexes, and open public zones.¹ These spaces, often overlooked due to their lack of immediate market value, present vital opportunities for urban and social development. The initial phase of projects in Belgrade revealed challenges in managing the surplus of unused urban resources, despite numerous initiatives promoting temporary space utilization.² A major hurdle was the absence of a unified registration system and limited access to available properties, hindering a comprehensive understanding of the extent of unused spaces and their effective monitoring.

At the same time, these spaces are becoming areas of interest for the civil sector, which seeks to participate in urban changes through temporary interventions. Temporary urban practices highlight transitional changes that leave spatial imprints on the city, establishing new systems for redefining urban structures by utilizing unused spaces.³ Unused spaces not only represent economic losses and face constant deterioration, but they also negatively impact the environment and the functioning of the broader urban fabric. Temporary use of these spaces through various cultural and social programs can bridge gaps in the transitional process and inspire visions that reflect the uniqueness of each location.

Addressing the issue of numerous unused spaces is crucial not only from a social perspective but also from an economic standpoint. The reuse and repurposing of these spaces in urban environments are essential considerations. Early research on temporary urban interventions and practices indicates that vacant properties pose economic problems for their owners⁴. Without continuity in property maintenance, these spaces are becoming prone to decay and vandalism. Unused spaces negatively affect the overall image of their surroundings and contribute to a general decline in the market and social value of the urban areas in which they are located.⁵ Focusing on existing, underutilized spaces—both buildings and open areas—is imperative for improving the environment and achieving sustainable urban development.⁶

Therefore, temporary urban practices, through spatial interventions, initiate the process of shaping long-term solutions for socio-spatial issues. These practices rely on the concept that by applying the principles of the right to the city and everyday life, they create spaces for new forms of urban sociability.⁷ Such concepts foster social cohesion and

1 Jovanović, T. (2010) *Prazni prostori Srbije – Prva faza*: Beograd; Beograd: Zavod za proučavanje kulturnog razvitka.

2 Čukić, I. (2013) *Mapa akcije*, Beograd: Creative Lab.

3 Čukić, I. (2016) Uloga privremenih urbanih praksi u aktiviranju prostornih resursa. *Doktorska disertacija*. Beograd: Arhitektonski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu.

4 SUC – Studio Urban Catalyst. (2003) *Urban Catalyst: Strategies for Temporary Uses – Potential for Development of Urban Residual Areas in European Metropolises*.

5 Overmeyer, K., et al. (2007) *Urban Pioneers. Berlin: Städtenwicklung durch Zwischenmutzung / Temporary Use and Urban Development in Berlin*. Berlin: Senatsverwaltung für Städtenwicklung.

6 Perović, S. and Kurtović-Folić, N. (2012) Brownfield regeneration – imperative for sustainable urban development. *Građevinar*, 64(5), 373-383.

7 Čukić, I. (2016), op. cit.

development by shaping spaces based on the real needs of the involved actors through collective action. By differentiating from the dominant paradigm of neoliberal urban development, these practices establish a distinct value system, reproducing everyday life through space production. This approach highlights the potential for systemic change in urban production, as emphasized by the works of Henri Lefebvre⁸ and David Harvey.⁹ By legitimizing new social and cultural values and establishing new urban relationships, the influence, emergence, and development of contemporary temporary urban practices can be better understood.

At the same time, these spaces are becoming areas of interest for the civil sector, which seeks to participate. In recent years, there has been a noticeable development in the theoretical discourse surrounding the phenomenon of temporary urban practices based on the principles of the “do-it-yourself” philosophy of urban engagement. Various forms of temporary urban practices and interventions occupy urban spaces with the aim of provoking dialogue and encouraging long-term changes in the urban fabric.¹⁰ Frequently, the appropriation of unused spaces occurs in a grassroots manner, adopting a “bottom-up” approach. Literature on these practices introduces new urbanism phenomena that could be understood as a philosophy of city engagement: bottom-up urbanism, guerrilla urbanism, do-it-yourself urbanism,¹¹ pop-up urbanism,¹² and tactical urbanism.¹³ In essence, these practices can be better described as deliberate and creative actions on a smaller scale, aimed at “improving” or “contributing” to urban development and space.¹⁴

Temporary urban practices represent creative adaptations and improvisations in space, primarily driven by non-profit groups with limited financial resources and political

8 Lefebvre, H. (1988) *Kritika svakidašnjeg života*. Zagreb: Naprijed.; Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The production of Space*, Oxford: Blackwell; Lefebvre, H. (2008) Pravo na grad, in: L. Kovačević, T. Medak, M. S. Petar Milat, Valentić, T. and V. Vuković, *Operacija grad: Priručnik za život u neoliberalnoj stvarnosti* (str. 16-30). Zagreb: Savez za centar za nezavisnu kulturu i mlade, Multimedijski institut, Platforma 9,81-Institut za istraživanja u arhitekturi, BLOK Lokalna baza za osvježavanje kulture, SU Klubtura.

9 Harvey, D. (2003) *Pravo na grad*. Available at: diskrepancija.hr/hr/2011/05/07/david-harvey-pravo-na-grad/; Harvi, D. (2013) *Pobunjeni gradovi: od Prava na grad do Urbane revolucije*. Novi Sad: Mediterran Publishing.

10 Deslandes, A. (2013). Exemplary Amateurism: Thoughts on DIY Urbanism. *Cultural Studies Review*, 19, 216–227; Iveson, K. (2013) Cities within the City: Do-It-Yourself Urbanism and the Right to the City. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37(3), pp. 941-956; Douglas, G. C. (2011) *Do-It-Yourself Urban Design: “Improving” the City through Unauthorized, Creative Contributions*. Available at: home.uchicago.edu/~gdouglas/GCCDouglas_DIYUrbanDesign-ASA2011.pdf

11 Iveson, *ibid.*

12 Barnett, J. (2011) A Short Guide to 60 of the Newest Urbanisms, *Planning*, 77 (4), pp. 19-21.

13 Lydon, M. and Garcia, A. (2015) *Tactical Urbanism: Short-term Action for Long-term Change*, Washington DC: Island Press.

14 Douglas, *op. cit.*

power. Research indicates that these practices (1) develop with minimal financial investment, (2) are typically organized through networks and clusters, (3) are often initiated by civil society actors or local communities, (4) function as laboratories for new social relationships, cultures, and economies, and (5) occur in specific locations, with certain types of spaces attracting specific kinds of temporary urban practices¹⁵. The diversity of temporary uses reflects the heterogeneous nature of their initiators, who can be artists, cultural entrepreneurs,¹⁶ local communities, volunteers, or political activists seeking spaces of autonomy.¹⁷

Temporary urban interventions, defined as physical manifestations or unplanned activations of vacant or underused buildings and spaces, play a significant role in this context.¹⁸ These interventions, often involving street art, festivals, and other site-specific actions, do not constitute part of the regular urban development cycle but can become permanent fixtures when they gain significant popularity.¹⁹ Guided by the idea of the right to the city and the desire to improve everyday life, these initiatives represent short-term tactics aimed at altering urban living conditions. Their goal is to create new spaces for sociability, cultural, and artistic production, liberated from the pressures of consumerism and sterile commercial city events. Such practices reflect a DIY philosophy and aim to provoke dialogue and encourage long-term urban changes.²⁰

Temporary urban practices and spaces for the street art scene

In the context of the independent and street art scene in Belgrade, it is crucial to highlight that many artists lack dedicated studios or rely on spaces without formal contracts. Some even resort to inadequate spaces that they must rent at high costs. Under conditions of precarious income, artists progressively lose both social and economic rights, particularly regarding social protection, placing them on the margins of society. Despite the existence of available spaces, these are not offered to artists, which would not only serve as recognition but also as much-needed support for this sector.

Independent spaces, such as artist collectives, cultural centers, and squats, play a pivotal role in the development of the street art scene. These spaces provide artists with the freedom, inspiration, and support necessary for creating authentic and innovative works. The significance of these spaces extends beyond merely offering a physical workspace; they contribute to the growth of the artistic community, cultural dynamics, and social activism.

15 SUC, op. cit.

16 Colomb, C. (2012) Pushing the Urban Frontier: Temporary uses of Space, City marketing, and the Creative City discourse in 2000s Berlin, *Journal of Urban Affairs*, Vol. 34, pp. 131-152.

17 Ibid.

18 Haydn, F. and Temel, R. (2006) *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts of the Use of City Spaces*, Basel: Birkhauser.

19 Lehtovuori, P. (2012) Towards Experimental Urbanism, *Critical Sociology*, Vol. 38, no 1/2012, pp. 71-87.

20 Deslandes, op. cit.

Prominent examples of such spaces include the BIGZ building, which has hosted graffiti and street artists like Hope and Master, as well as Jana Danilović. The Dorćol Platz is another key location, currently utilized by TKV. Other notable spaces include the former Inex Film where artists such as Atelje Šoln (Wunste and Marg) Chenipe, Quam, and Orjen Đurić had their studios. Rage had a studio in Ciglana, while Nikola Kori worked in Jugošped, and Sofija Pašalić used a space within Matrijaršija. In terms of exhibition venues, “off spaces” like Kvaka 22 have been essential. For instance, Dulait exhibited there, and artists like Tokyo (alt. Toyko) and Sofija Pašalić showcased their works in Orange Belgrade, a temporary space that existed for one summer in the passage on Terazije.

Despite their significant contributions to the cultural and social fabric of the city, independent artists often find themselves marginalized. Their innovative and authentic works enrich the urban landscape and foster a vibrant cultural scene that benefits the broader society. The marginalization of these artists, however, underscores a broader issue of social and economic exclusion. By not providing these artists with adequate spaces and support, society not only fails to recognize their contributions but also hinders the potential for cultural development and social progress.

To address these challenges, it is imperative to recognize the value of independent art spaces and provide the necessary support to artists. This includes offering secure and affordable workspaces, ensuring social protection, and acknowledging the vital role that artists play in enriching the city’s cultural life. Fostering a more inclusive approach to urban planning and cultural policy can ensure that the contributions of independent artists are recognized and valued, ultimately leading to a more vibrant, equitable, and dynamic urban environment. Moreover, by embracing temporary urban practices and spaces, cities can harness the transformative power of art to enrich public life, stimulate dialogue, and foster a more resilient and interconnected community.

Legal framework in serbia: favouring commercial interests

In recent years, citizen initiatives aimed at activating public property have been recorded throughout Serbia, but with limited success in implementation. According to research conducted over the past decade in Serbia, more than half of registered civil society organizations either lack workspace or must lease property, even when it involves public assets.²¹ The issue with activating these spaces is not the availability of space itself, as there is enough, but rather the absence of clear regulations and mechanisms for transferring public property to civil society organizations. Existing mechanisms for allocating public spaces are often marked by non-transparent procedures, inadequate incentives, and a lack of open calls for space allocation.²²

An analysis of the legislative framework governing the management of public property resources reveals a strong orientation towards commercial interests. This means

21 Pavlov, T. (2021) *Izveštaj o kapacitetima i potrebama organizacija civilnog društva i neformalnih grupa*, Beograd: Grupa 484, Vladimir Petronijević; Čukić, I. (2016), op. cit.

22 Čukić, ibid.

that the civil sector is treated the same as the commercial sector or business entities. Article 20 of the Law on Public Property stipulates that a significant portion of unused public property is allocated for generating revenue for state authorities and organizations, as well as for the bodies and organizations of the autonomous provinces and local self-government units.²³ Thus, commercial interest is legitimized as the primary consideration when institutions manage property that is not necessary for their operations.

When property is transferred without compensation, the normative framework governing the disposal of real estate falls under the institute of direct agreement, which is prone to abuse and non-transparent management. This issue is exacerbated by the fact that direct agreement is not thoroughly detailed either in the Law²⁴ or in the Regulation.²⁵ Specifically, the Regulation defines direct agreement in a single article (Article 12) and provides a list of association types eligible for space allocation, excluding any associations that generate some income, despite this being legitimate under the Law on Associations.²⁶

Different formulations of public interest within the legislative framework indicate a lack of consensus on its precise definition. Several domestic laws reference public or general interest and activities of public or general interest with varied formulations (e.g., the Law on Associations, the Law on Expropriation,²⁷ and the Law on Public Enterprises).²⁸ However, the Law on Public Property allows public property to be leased under commercial terms, with the funds generated used later to implement programs of public interest, whether by public institutions or civil society organizations. Whether this is done transparently and responsibly falls outside the scope of this law.

In a 2015 study by the collective Ministry of Space titled *Who and How Manages Public Property*, it is recommended that this law should recognize public interest criteria for using public property as at least equally important, if not more so, than commercial interest.²⁹ It suggests that public property should not only be utilized indirectly through leasing but also directly as a means to achieve public interest. This approach would enable numerous public properties that remain vacant due to a lack of market interest to be used by civil society organizations for programs serving the public interest.

23 Sl. glasnik RS 72/11, 88/13, 105/14, 104/2016, 108/2016, 113/2017, 95/2018 и 153/2020. *Zakon o javnoj svojini*.

24 Ibid.

25 Sl. glasnik RS br. 24/12. *Uredba o uslovima pribavljanja i otuđenja nepokretnosti neposrednom pogodbom, davanja u zakup stvari u javnoj svojini i postupcima javnog nadmetanja i prikupljanja pismenih ponuda*.

26 Sl. glasnik RS, br. 51/09, 99/11 i 44/2018. *Zakon o udruženjima*.

27 Sl. glasnik RS, br. 20/2009, 55/2013 i 106/2016. *Zakon o eksproprijaciji*.

28 Sl. glasnik RS, br. 15/2016 i 88/2019. *Zakon o javnim preduzećima*.

29 Pajović Van Reenen, J., & Veselinović, D. (2015) *Ko i kako raspolaže javnom svojinom*, Beograd: Mikro Art / Ministarstvo prostora.



Figure 1: DLT (Дулаит), Inex Film
(photo: Dušan Rajić)



Figure 2: Inex Film
(photo: Smirna Kulenovic/Klub Putnika)

The case of street gallery in Belgrade

One of the rare positive examples of using public space for contemporary art and street art in Belgrade is the Street Gallery (Ulična galerija)³⁰ located in an abandoned and dilapidated passage near the Bezistan passage on Terazije Square, right in the city centre. After nearly two years of negotiations and procedures, the Municipality of Stari Grad granted the Ministry of Space collective (MoS)³¹ free use and management rights over the passage between Trg Nikole Pašića and Nušićeva Street (known as Čavketov passage) for three years, with the option for extension. By the end of 2011, a groundbreaking legal agreement was finalized between the Municipality of Stari Grad and MoS, enabling the civil sector organization to temporarily manage the public space for the specified period, with potential for contract renewal.³² The Municipality also committed to reconstructing the space according to the architectural design by the author of this text. MoS was also one of the initiators of the Inex Film Expedition, which resulted in the first cultural squat in Belgrade—taking over an abandoned building formerly used by a Yugoslav enterprise for film production, which had been deteriorating rapidly for years. In addition to their involvement in activating several other spaces in Belgrade—such as Cinema Zvezda³³, the Cultural Centre Magacin³⁴, and the Social Center NNK (activation of military bar-

30 More at: www.ulicnagalerija.rs

31 More at: www.ministarstvoprostora.org

32 Since December 2020, the Street Gallery has been managed by the Belgrade collective Matrijaršija, which has brought freshness and programmatic quality based on their years of work within the independent comic scene.

33 More at: www.instagram.com/novi_bioskop_zvezda/

34 More at: kcmagacin.org

rack)³⁵—this collective has also supported numerous activations in various cities across Serbia, such as Kruševac, Novi Sad, Subotica, Novi Pazar etc.

The Street Gallery project in downtown Belgrade showcases the transformative power of temporary urban interventions, as it revitalized a neglected public space into a vibrant cultural venue. This endeavour underscores MoS's advocacy for the “right to the city,” promoting community engagement in urban development. The gallery revitalizes a once-decaying area, now a bustling artistic and cultural hub. Apart from initial municipal support, the roughly 160-square-meter space owes its revival largely to contributions from local community members and artists who volunteered labour and creative ideas. Street Gallery's location behind small shops selling football equipment and its use of former movie poster display cases as exhibition niches illustrate creative repurposing. The gallery comprises nine exhibition niches (1.4 x 1.8 m) and a billboard (2.6 x 1.7 m) for exhibition announcements. Gallery furniture was made from euro pallets, and local mural artists painted the walls. Maintenance, including cleaning the street, windows, and collecting garbage, was also managed by MoS members.

The Street Gallery has hosted hundreds of exhibitions to date, along with parallel public programs such as workshops, film screenings, performances, concerts, and more. Priority is always given to local and international artists working in independent spaces, particularly those engaging with socially or politically relevant themes, as well as street artist such as Dulait (SR), Ema Ema Ema & Sretan Bor (SR), Stevan Lončarević (SR), Sona Sumraka (SR), Linnch (SR), Miron Milić (CRO), Hope (SR), Džedaj (CRO), Šumski (CRO), Tifani Rubi (CRO), Pekmez Med (CRO), Ojo Magico (CRO), Dunja Janković (CRO /USA), Mor (CRO), Boris Hoppek (DE/ES), Dem (IT) and many others. The idea has been to utilize public space to initiate and foster dialogue on topics deemed important by the collective. The gallery's strategic location in the city centre ensures a steady flow of visitors, ranging from local workers on breaks and passing students to patrons of nearby venues, including punk clubs. This diverse audience enriches the gallery's role as a vibrant cultural hub within downtown Belgrade.

In 2014, the Street Gallery achieved a significant milestone by being shortlisted for the European Prize for Public Space, a prestigious biennial award that celebrates initiatives aimed at creating, reclaiming, and enhancing public spaces.³⁶ This recognition underscores the project's impact in revitalizing urban environments and promoting community engagement through art. Additionally, the Street Gallery's inclusion in exhibitions at prominent venues like the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (CCCB) further highlights its international acclaim and contribution to the discourse on urban revitalization and cultural transformation.

The Street Gallery project in downtown Belgrade exemplifies the transformative power of temporary urban interventions driven by art and culture initiatives. Furthermore, it has inspired numerous initiatives in Serbia to do the same, resulting in open-

35 More at: www.facebook.com/drustvenicentarnnk

36 Available at: www.publicspace.org



Figure 3: Žarana Papić, TKV, Street Gallery, Radost Ludost Festival, 2018 (photo: Aleksandar Đalek Đorđević)



Figure 4: Opening of the exhibition Tight house by Rade Tepavčević, 2017 (photo: Dušan Rajić)

air galleries following the Street Gallery model in Subotica, Niš, Novi Sad, Novi Pazar, Šabac, Valjevo, Kragujevac, and Vranje.

Fostering dialogue through art

Contemporary practices of art in public space have evolved significantly, moving away from traditional, state-sponsored monuments towards more participatory and socially engaged approaches.³⁷ This shift reflects a broader conception of art as a dynamic process rather than a static object. By embedding art within public spaces, initiatives like the Street Gallery encourage community involvement and cultural transformation. Art in public space represents a powerful tool for fostering dialogue and promoting social engagement within urban environments. These forms of artistic expression transcend the confines of traditional gallery spaces, democratizing access to culture and making artistic endeavours more inclusive and accessible to diverse audiences.³⁸ Unlike art isolated within museum walls, art in public space integrates directly into the fabric of everyday life, inviting interaction and participation from passersby and residents alike.

Furthermore, street art, rooted in graffiti culture, has emerged as a respected art form known for its aesthetic innovation and social relevance.³⁹ Street artists utilize urban landscapes as canvases to communicate messages that resonate deeply with local communities, thereby contributing to a vibrant public discourse. For this reason, the Street Gallery organized festivals (Vreva Festival, Radost Ludost Festival) and various mural pain-

37 Miles, M. (1997) *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures*, UK: Routledge.

38 Bishop, C. (2012) *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. London: Verso books

39 McAuliffe, C. (2012) Graffiti or Street art? Negotiating the Moral Geographies of the Creative City. *Journal of urban affairs*, 34, pp. 189-206.

ting formats along the entire passage (Dulait, Fat Kid Beny, Šund, Super Timor, Firma, Sobekcis, TKV). By engaging local and regional artists in these activities, the Gallery not only enhanced the aesthetic appeal of neglected urban spaces but also empowered artists to communicate messages of social importance. This initiative transformed mundane walls into vibrant canvases that sparked conversations, challenged norms, and amplified marginalized voices. Such participatory art projects exemplify the gallery's commitment to fostering community dialogue and enriching public spaces through creative expression.

Therefore, art in public space, such as the Street Gallery, transcends mere aesthetic appeal to become a platform for addressing socially engaged issues and sparking meaningful community dialogue. Through its dynamic exhibitions and installations, the gallery acts as a catalyst for social commentary and activism. It enables rapid responses to current social and political events, employing artistic techniques such as humour, irony, and symbolism to convey poignant messages.⁴⁰ By challenging established norms and inviting viewers to reconsider prevailing narratives, these artworks enrich the urban environment with thought-provoking discourse.

In conclusion, the Gallery project exemplifies how urban interventions can revitalize neglected spaces while democratizing cultural participation. By situating art within the pulse of urban life, the gallery enriches the cityscape with artistic content that stimulates critical thinking, inspires creativity, and fosters dialogue on pertinent social issues. Its inclusive approach signifies a progressive shift towards using art as a tool for community empowerment and cultural enrichment within contemporary urban environments. This transformative potential underscores the importance of supporting initiatives that utilize art in public space to create vibrant, inclusive, and socially cohesive cities.



Figure 5: Street Gallery (photo: Dušan Rajić)

⁴⁰ bid.



Figure 6: Sobekcis, VREVA festival, Street Gallery, 2012 (photo: Iva Čukić)

Conclusion

The Street Gallery project was initially conceived to highlight public space as a fundamental element for fostering social cohesion and addressing urban issues on a broader scale. Thriving public spaces facilitate the formation of social capital, ground participative democracy, and encourage urban stakeholders to actively engage in solving urban challenges. The Street Gallery model positions public space as a dialogue platform where citizens negotiate usage conditions and engage in diverse topics. Thus, the Gallery exemplifies the transformative impact of temporary urban interventions and community-driven initiatives in urban development. By reclaiming neglected spaces and promoting cultural activities, initiatives like the Street Gallery demonstrate the potential of public spaces as platforms for social cohesion and civic engagement. These efforts challenge traditional urban development paradigms by prioritizing community needs and participatory approaches to urban revitalization.



Figure 7: Street Gallery (photo: Dušan Rajić)

Effective management of public property necessitates legislative reforms that prioritize public interest and ensure equitable access for civil society organizations. Recognizing

the role of art in public spaces enriches cultural expression, fosters community identity, and enhances civic participation. By embracing cultural initiatives in public spaces, cities can cultivate vibrant, inclusive communities where residents actively contribute to shaping their urban landscapes.

The success of the Street Gallery demonstrates how art in public space serves as a catalyst for social interaction, cultural enrichment, and urban rejuvenation. By integrating artistic expression into everyday urban landscapes, projects like the Street Gallery not only activate and beautify neglected areas but also stimulate dialogue, provoke thought, and inspire community participation. As cities globally seek innovative ways to enhance public life and promote inclusivity, initiatives such as the Street Gallery exemplify the transformative potential of art in creating vibrant and cohesive urban environments.

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УЛИЧНА ГАЛЕРИЈА: ПОДСТИЦАЊЕ ДИЈАЛОГА У
ЈАВНОМ ПРОСТОРУ ПУТЕМ УМЕТНОСТИ

Сажетак: Смањење јавних простора у урбаним срединама постаје све доминантнија парадигма урбаног развоја, покренута трендовима тржишно оријентисаног развоја. У градовима попут Београда, овај феномен угрожава културну виталност и кохезију заједнице. Привремене урбане праксе појављују се као одговор на овај тренд, али и као одрживо решење, активирајући ове просторе кроз културне и друштвене иницијативе. Ове праксе се у савременој научној литератури дефинишу као феномени који имају своју физичку манифестацију, односно као спонтане и директне праксе у урбаном простору, а односе се на привремено активирање упражњених или недовољно искоришћених објеката и простора. Распон деловања укључује различите уличне уметности, окупљања, фестивале и просторно-специфичне праксе. Улична галерија, смештена у центру Београда, пример је овог трансформационог потенцијала. Ревитализацијом напуштеног пролаза претворена је у живахни културни простор. Кроз уметничке изложбе и укљученост заједнице, подстиче дијалог и друштвену интеракцију, обогаћујући урбани пејзаж. Превазилажењем препрека попут ограничених ресурса и бирократских изазова, иницијативе попут Уличне галерије истичу улогу уметности у јавним просторима као катализатора друштвених промена и урбане ревитализације.

Кључне речи: *улична галерија, јавни простор, уметност у јавном простору, ангажман заједнице, привремене урбане праксе*

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FESTIVAL DAYS OF URBAN CULTURE CASE STUDY

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Abstract: *The festival Days of Urban Culture in Čačak, Serbia, is an initiative that started in 2015 as a grassroots festival without any official support from the city or from the state. However, this festival managed to survive a whole decade on voluntary work, random sponsors and donations in a city without cultural policy or any strategy for cultural development. This makes its contribution all more impressive and admirable. In 2023, Days of Urban Culture produced its 100th mural and put the city of Čačak on the map of Serbia as the city with the largest number of murals. This paper will address the mechanisms of the festival's development, its relations with the local government and the reception of its opus among the citizens of Čačak. Moreover, we will attempt to showcase the contribution of the festival to the project Serbian Capital of Culture 2023 as well as the ever changing relationship with the city government.*

Key words: *muralism, street art, festival, cultural policy, community, Čačak, Belgrade*

Introduction

Festival Days of Urban culture (Dani urbane kulture, DUK) is the first international street art and music festival in Central Serbia and it takes place in Čačak. From its inception in 2015 it was dedicated to the promotion of hip-hop music, extreme sports and art in public space. Now the festival's focus has changed and the dominant art form is murals. Over the course of 9 years over a 100 murals had been painted, with the 100th mural being inaugurated in 2023.¹

¹ Anonim. (2023) *Čačak, kao nacionalna prestonica kulture, dobija stoti po redu mural u okviru festivala Dani urbane kulture*, 16. May 2023., 03. July 2024, <https://www.danas.rs/kultura/cacak-kao-nacionalna-prestonica-kulture-dobija-stoti-po-redu-mural-u-okviru-festivala-dani-urbane-kulture/>.

Čačak is the 12th most populated city in Serbia with 105.840 people, including the rural area.² As many other cities in Serbia, it is dealing with the problem of “brain drain”, with many young people leaving the city to go to bigger cities, or abroad.³ Cultural institutions in the city are the National museum of Čačak, the City library “Vladislav Petković Dis”, the art gallery “Nadežda Petrović”, inter-municipal Historical archive, the Cultural center and the City theater.⁴ All these institutions were founded by the municipality, and there are other actors such as NGOs and festivals⁵ enriching the cultural life of the city.

Even with all the cultural institutions and activities, the city of Čačak never had a strategy for the cultural development until 2023. The strategy was finally introduced during the first National capital of culture through a project “Čačanska rodna”.⁶ The cultural strategy of the city will be followed by an action plan with concrete actions needed to reach the goals, which mainly focus on developing the cultural institutions and activating the youth in the field of culture.⁷

It is important to note that Serbia, as well as Čačak, is a country that deals with many problems related to democracy and that in recent years the ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) has steadily eroded political rights and civil liberties, putting pressure on independent media, the political opposition, and civil society organizations.⁸ This situation also has an impact on the cultural life and, as Vesna Trifunović stated: “Any kind

2 Profil (2024) Official census of citizens by National bureau of statistics, http://devinfo.stat.gov.rs/SerbiaProfileLauncher/files/profiles/sr/1/DI_Profil_Cacak_EURSRB002001004001.pdf (accessed 03. July 2024).

3 Anonim. (2022) Čačak za 10 godina ostao bez 8000 stanovnika, 03. July 2022, 03. July 2024, <https://www.ozonpress.net/drustvo/cacak-za-10-godina-ostao-bez-8-000-stanovnika/>.

4 Official website of the Čačak municipality: <https://kultura.cacak.rs/ustanove/> (accessed 03. July 2024).

5 Other festivals in the city include “Karusel”, festival of ambient and ethno music, rock music festival “PRiČa”, craft beer festival “Cug fest”, international folklore dance festival “Etnofest” organized by the Touristic organization of Čačak and literature festival “Dis’s spring” organized by the city library.

6 The programme “National capital of culture” was first introduced in 2023, with the aim to decentralize culture in Serbia, and the cultural institutions of the City of Čačak were the project holders. “According to the stated decisions, the events of special significance for Čačak are “Dis’s Spring,” “The Nadežda Petrović Memorial,” “The Animated Film Festival – ANIMANIMA,” “Photography Days in Serbia,” the Flute Players’ Gathering of Serbia in Prislonica – ‘Oh, Morava,” “Summer Culture Days in Čačak,” “The International Folklore Festival Ethnofest,” and “Days of Urban Culture – DUK Festival.” *Strategija razvoja kulture grada Čačka 2023 - 2027*. Gradska uprava Čačak. Službeni list grada Čačka 4/2023: http://demo.paragraf.rs/demo/combined/Old/t/t2023_05/CA_004_2023_002.htm.

7 Anonim. (2023), Predstavljena strategija kulture Čačka za narednih pet godina, 21. March 2023, 03. July 2024, <https://moravainfo.rs/predstavljena-strategija-kulture-cacka-za-narednih-pet-godina/>.

8 Anonim. (2024), Freedom in the world 2024: Serbia, 03. July 2024, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/serbia/freedom-world/2024>.

of discussion about culture in the Serbian society, today, turns into a discussion about politics, even the cultural one, and the pursuit of money flows in the budget treasury redistribution”, adding that in redistribution of authority and power, “care for culture” is reduced to allocation of grants for culture which in Serbian society is less than percent of gross national income.⁹

This paper will show the specifics of this festival and how the traditional conveying of muralism¹⁰ doesn't apply to it, by analyzing the main idea and development of the DUK festival, collaboration with municipality, funding, gaining permits for the murals, the impact the festival had on the community, artist's experience as well as media coverage.

The main idea and development of the festival

Festival Days of Urban Culture was started in 2015 by the organization “Alternativa za Čačak”.¹¹ The beginning of the festival is tied to the construction of a skate park in Čačak, when the magazine Tramvaj, issued by the Alternativa za Čačak¹² wrote about the issues of skate culture in the city. Through a project “Together for the community” by NIS company, they got the funds needed for the building of the skate park. “When NIS sent their team to monitor the skate park, the Trag Foundation came to our aid and approved a project for the opening of the skate park in the amount of 300,000 dinars (about 2.500 Euros). This was the initial spark that led us to start planning a three-day festival” said Strahinja Babić in an interview for one of the local papers.¹³ As Vuk Đurić stated, since the start they had sponsorship from Montana cans, and the next years continued in the same course as the first one, although the idea switched from graffiti to murals, and many of local muralists in Serbia, such as Wuper, did their first mural on DUK festival.¹⁴ Strahinja Babić said that during the first 5 years all of the people involved

9 Trifunović, V. (2012) *Kulturna politika u Srbiji - problem centra i periferije*, Univerzitet u Kragujevcu, Učiteljski fakultet, p. 4.

10 Muralism as a movement is connected to initiative from the government, leaving little or no space for artist's expression. See: Souter, A. (2017) Mexican Muralism Movement Overview and Analysis, 22.1.2017, 03. July 2024, <https://www.theartstory.org/movement/mexican-muralism>.

11 Alternativa za Čačak is a non-profit organization founded in 2011 by Strahinja Babić as the director and Milorad Obradović as a member, see: <https://neprofitne.rs/organisation-info?org=7671> (accessed 03. July 2024).

12 Magazine Tramvaj was a magazine for youth and it was first published in August of 2012, with 8 editions being published until October of 2013. It wrote about Čačak and things that are happening concerning young people. See: Anonim. (2016) Tramvaj ponovo vozi, 01. August 2016, 03. July 2024, <https://www.ozonpress.net/hronika/tramvaj-ponovo-vozi/>.

13 Anonim. (2015) Festival DUK otvara skejt park, 29. April 2015, 03. July 2024, <https://www.ozonpress.net/zabava/festival-duk-otvara-skejt-park/>.

14 Vuk Đurić discussed the development of the festival in a panel discussion with Street art walks Belgrade, together with Croatan colleagues who lead the festival “Grafiti na gradele” in Brač. More at: Street Art Belgrade (2023) Razgovori - Grafiti na gradele i DUK, 17. January 2023, 03. July 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eoLhxla6ZSw>.

contributed to the festival in their own way, from fashion shows to dance and skate competitions, but at one point these additional contents were left behind, in order to focus on muralism. As he said:

The year 2020 was a turning point, as gatherings could not be organized due to the circumstances with the Covid virus. That year, DUK focused solely on mural painting, in collaboration with Gornji Milanovac. The following year saw a similar situation, while in 2022, the musical part of the program was not held because the musicians involved had disbanded. The musical program returned to focus in 2023, when the separate program called festival Uzlet emerged within the organization, which gained a new identity and featured more well-known performers, while DUK continued its musical component independently, remaining true to its original concept of underground music and artists. This evolution transformed the festival idea from a social movement of people interested in urban culture into one of the recognizable festivals focusing on street art.¹⁵

The festival changed its legal entity from Alternativa for Čačak to Days of Urban Culture¹⁶ in 2017, and today it is referred to as “the most significant muralism manifestation in the country and region”¹⁷, bringing each year over 10 street artists from Serbia, Europe and the world, to paint large scale murals, while also enriching the “open gallery” which today counts over 100 murals. The organizational structure of the festival in 2024 consists of Strahinja Babić as the director, Vuk Đurić (Endo) as the artistic director, Marko Jozović as the designer, Maja Stojanović (Zmaja) and Irena Jevtović (Kusha Chiks).

Collaboration with the Municipality

The cooperation between the DUK Festival and the municipality has been described by Strahinja Babić as diverse and initially challenging. “Until the festival’s fourth year, the municipality of Čačak did not financially support the festival, but after we presented our achievements, we sought and received their support. In subsequent years, the municipality provided partial funding, although it remained a small part of the overall budget”¹⁸.

The city of Čačak has a city council which is constituted of the mayor, deputy of the mayor and 9 members of the City council which are elected by the City Assembly for a period of 4 years. One of those city counselors is a counselor for the department of education, culture and science¹⁹, and all of the manifestations in culture fall into this department. This is the reason why for this paper we have conducted interviews with two of the

15 Jevremović, J. (2024) Interview with Strahinja Babić, Belgrade, 30.3.2024.

16 See: <https://search.bisnode.rs/rs/1081482/dani-urbane-kulture/> (accessed 03. July 2024).

17 Anonim. (2024) Uskoro počinje 20. DUK festival, 28. May 2024, 03. July 2024, <https://www.oblakodermagazin.rs/uskoro-pocinje-10-duk-festival/>.

18 Jevremović, op. cit.

19 See official website of Čačak municipality: https://www.cacak.org.rs/Gradsko_vece-57-1 (accessed 03. July 2024).

city counselors from this department to see in which way they supported the festival and what is their general opinion on DUK.

During the time the festival first started, this position was held by Dušan Radojević, who was a city counselor for youth and culture in the period 2016-2020.²⁰ “As a member of the City Council responsible for youth and culture, I dealt with initiatives coming from young people. I collaborated with representatives of the DUK association during the development of the Local Action Plan for Youth, and with that document, we defined priorities in the area of youth policy development. One of the priorities was that the social and entertainment life in the city needed to be enriched”. When asked about the cultural scene in Čačak, Dušan stated that he remembers the time when the only event was New Year’s celebration at the city square, and that now the cultural life is much more enriched, although presented with a new problem- many of the events take place on the same day, and the citizens are deprived of the opportunity to attend each activity they enjoy.²¹

This issue was also mentioned by Strahinja Babić, although he stated that:

Significant collaboration with the municipality and other cultural entities in the city began in 2023, when Čačak was the national capital of culture. This period saw dialogue, information exchange, meetings, and networking among cultural actors in the city. However, once the capital of culture year ended, this practice ceased, and communication and collaboration returned to previous levels.²²

The current counselor for education, science and culture, Miloš Papić stated that contrary to the general opinion, for the financial aspect he thinks that “in addition to free space, energy, and the other services, all the festivals have commercial content and sponsors, yet they still expect greater support from the City. Therefore, I believe that the financial support is more than adequate.”²³

Miloš Papić also stated that “There remains regret that the Cultural Incubator was not formed during Čačanska Rodna, but this is something I would address in the next mandate.”²⁴ Formation of the Cultural incubator was one of the goals of the National capital of culture project, where it’s stated that analysis of surveys and focus groups has shown that there is a need to provide civil society organizations in culture with space for functioning and programs. This space would be especially intended for young people.²⁵

20 Anonim. (2021) Dušan Radojević biografija, 29. March 2021, 03. July 2024, <https://032info.rs/dusan-radojevic-biografija/>.

21 Jevremović, J. (2024) Interview with Dušan Radojević, in Čačak, 26. 6. 2023.

22 Jevremović, Babić interview.

23 Jevremović, J. (2024) Interview with Miloš Papić, in Čačak, 26. 6. 2023.

24 Jevremović, op.cit.

25 *Strategija razvoja kulture grada Čačka 2023 - 2027*. Gradska uprava Čačak. Službeni list grada Čačka 4/2023: http://demo.paragraf.rs/demo/combined/Old/t/t2023_05/CA_004_2023_002.htm.

Another important aspect is collaboration with the Tourist organization of Čačak,²⁶ which listed the DUK festival as one of the manifestations in the city on its website, although it does not offer any touristic guidance when it comes to murals.²⁷ Skinner and Jolliffe gave examples of the impact murals can have on development of tourism, one of them being a small town called Chemainus in Canada. After the industry of sawmill the town depended on went into decline, their response was to develop art tourism. “They saturated the town with forty-two community history images on the sides of buildings, developing the blank canvas of a side or gable end into an attractive eye-catching feature. This “al fresco gallery” gave the town some 400,000 annual tourists, sustains over 300 small businesses and points to the town’s sobriquet: “The Little Town That Did”²⁸ Citizens of Čačak have the opportunity to see the murals and hear about their origin through bicycle tours led by local artists. Activists from the local Youth office started organizing these tours in 2019 and since then they are organized annually, although the organizers frequently change.²⁹

In conclusion, the collaboration between the DUK festival and municipality has improved since the festival first took off, and the views on this collaboration are different between the organizers and representatives of the municipality. Although challenging and from the above mentioned could be deemed as complicated, this collaboration is existent and seemingly improving.

Funding of the festival

The DUK festival is funded through projects, municipality, sponsorships and ticket sales, as well as merchandise. Project funding is in the base of the festival, with different foundations such as the aforementioned Trag and NIS³⁰, to other NGOs, such as Center E8³¹ and RYCO³², as well as many others. Project funding is different each year and follows the open calls for project proposals.

On the other hand, collaboration with the municipality, as discussed in the previous chapter, has developed and grown until 2023, when it reached its peak with the project Čačanska rodna. That year also marked the growth of interest in the festival, so many other sponsors joined:

26 For the purpose of this paper we tried to get in contact with the director of the Tourist organization in Čačak, but he did not reply to our emails, calls and messages

27 See official website of the Tourist organization of Čačak: <https://www.turizamcacak.rs/> (accessed 03. July 2024).

28 Skinner, J. and Jolliffe, L. (2019) *Murals and tourism: Heritage, Culture and Identity*, New York: Routledge, pp. 3-4.

29 Anonim. (2019) Okreni pedalu kreni ka muralu - akcija koja je obeležila dan mladih, 16. August 2019, 03. July 2024, <https://www.regionalnevesti.net/?p=39362>.

30 See the section “Main idea and development of the festival”.

31 Anonim. (2024) Proglašeni pobednici Pop culture challenge-a, 04. March 2024, 03. July 2024, <https://rc.gradjanske.org/proglaseni-pobednici-pop-culture-challenge-a/>.

32 See official RYCO website: <https://www.rycowb.org/ryco-announces-winners-of-2nd-open-call-wbycf/> (accessed 03. July 2024).

Early sponsorships came from friends, companies connected to friends, and local firms. As the festival grew, national companies also became involved. Revenue also came from ticket sales, beverage sales, merchandise sponsorships, and sales. In 2023, the funding structure shifted with increased support from Čačak as the national capital of culture, and participation from the French Institute, Austrian Cultural Forum, A1 Foundation, and Quantox company. Until 2023, all festival organizers worked on a volunteer basis, but that year marked the first time organizers received compensation. Many murals were created by artists who recognized the festival's energy and offered their services for free, given the festival provided large surfaces and invested in equipment.³³

As seen from above, the funding of the festival is changing every year, depending on the project proposal, sponsors and involvement of the municipality.

Obtaining permits for mural painting

The city of Čačak has no urbanistic rules for obtaining permits for mural painting, so the only thing needed for a mural to be legal is the permission from residents or the owners of the building.³⁴ Exploring the role of urban cities and street art, Alison Young argues that graffiti and street art have moved from relative obscurity to a prominent cultural position due to influences such as market forces, criminal law decisions, intellectual property, local government politics, and commodification in fashion, music, publishing, and architecture.³⁵ A similar path was followed in Čačak, with the DUK festival having trouble obtaining permission for the first mural on an elementary school Vuk Karadžić.

Strahinja Babić said that initially the principal of the school rejected the idea to have murals painted on it, connecting it with graffiti, but after a few meetings they agreed and once the painting started the principal showed great appreciation and now this school has 6 large scale murals.³⁶

“Now we just tell them we are from DUK, they give us the wall, we show the sketch and then we thank each other” stated Vuk Đurić showing how easily attainable the permits are once the festival has developed.³⁷

Impact of DUK festival on community

For the purpose of this paper a survey was conducted among the community in Čačak through a Google survey during March of 2024. The sample was accidental and

³³ Jevremović, Babić interview.

³⁴ On the official website of the department for urban planning no permits for painting on the facades are listed or required, see: <https://www.cacak.org.rs/212-1-1> (accessed 03. July 2024).

³⁵ Young, A. (2014) *Street art, public city: Law, crime and the urban imagination*, New York: Routledge, p. 151.

³⁶ Jevremović, Babić interview.

³⁷ Škodrić, T. (2024) Svet kakav želiš u Čačku zahvaljujući Udruženju “Dani Urbane Kulture” - “Gradske priče”, UNA TV, 22. January 2024, 03. July 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ll4OZhbh0Yo>.

the survey was shared on social media, as well as in schools through professors. Of the respondents, 71% were aged 15-25, 19% were 26-35, 6.5% were 36-50, and 3% were over 50. Considering the aforementioned brain drain problem the city of Čačak is dealing with, the fact that the majority of surveyed are young is precisely important. As the DUK festival concentrates on urban culture, which derives from youth culture, it is no surprise that young people are the ones recognizing its work the most.

Both male and female interviewees were almost equally represented in the survey. Even though general opinion has it that there are less women in street art, DUK festival has two women in the organization (Zmaja and Kusha Chiks), as well as many street artists that have participated in the festival, such as Hellga (Olgica Terzić, also one of the festival's co-funders), TKV, Jana Danilović,³⁸ Marv, as well as international artists such as Indonesian street artist Yessieow.³⁹

The survey indicated that 192 respondents regularly notice murals while 183 have a wholly positive opinion of them. Despite this positivity, 43% of respondents were unfamiliar with the DUK festival specifically, recognizing murals as separate phenomena.

Favorite murals of the citizens

Contrary to expectations that realistic murals would be the favorite theme, it turned out that citizens almost equally prefer abstract murals and illustrations — 21% prefer abstract, 24% prefer illustrations, and 25% prefer realistic murals.

More than 70% of respondents have a favorite mural in the city, with notable mentions being the murals at Vuk Karadžić Elementary School, the silos painted in 2023, the mural featuring Nadežda Petrović, and the boy eating a cherry tree next to the city park.

School Vuk Karadžić has 6 murals painted by Endo, Artez, TKV, Jana Danilović, Erol Sjajni, Tužni Marin, Chez, Sarame and Stom500.⁴⁰ Concentrated on one place and visi-

38 TKV and Jana Danilović painted the 100th mural together with local artist Endo. See: Anonim. (2023) U Čačku se oslikava jubilarni 100. Mural u okviru Dana urbane kulture, 15. May 2023, 03. July 2024, <https://www.ozonpress.net/kultura/u-cacku-se-oslikava-jubilarni-100-mural-u-okviru-dana-urbane-kulture/>.

39 Forbes Srbija (2024) Indonežanska umetnica sa liste Forbes 30 ispod 30 oslikava fasade u Čačku, 05. June 2024, 03. July 2024, <https://forbes.n1info.rs/vesti/indonezanska-umetnica-sa-liste-forbes-30-ispod-30-oslikava-fasade-u-cacku>.

40 News about these murals: Anonim. (2022) Mural zasadi drvo na čačanskoj školi sastojaće se iz digitalnog i umetničkog dela NOSI VAŽNU PORUKU, 18. August 2022, 03. July 2024, <https://biznis.kurir.rs/zasadi-drvo/3993011/mural-zasadi-drvo-na-cacanskoj-skoli-sastojace-se-iz-digitalnog-i-umetnickog-dela-nosi-vazu-poruku>; Ratković, V. (2023), Dani urbane kulture: Hrvatski grafiteri Chez i Sarame oslikali fasadu Osnovne škole u Čačku, 26. June 2023, 03. July 2024,

<https://www.beforeafter.rs/drustvo/dani-urbane-kulture-hrvatski-grafiteri-chez-i-sarame-oslikali-fasadu-osnovne-skole-u-cacku/>; Ratković, V. (2023), Tužni Marin u čizmama i Erol Sjajni oslikali fasadu u Čačku, 26. June 2023, 03. July 2024, <https://www.oblakodermagazin.rs/tuzni-marin-u-cizmama-i-erol-sjajni-oslikali-fasadu-u-cacku/>; Anonim. (2023) Francuski street art umetnik Stom500 na DUK festivalu, 03. July 2024, <http://www.institutfrancais.rs/francuski-street-art-umetnik-stom500-na-duk-festivalu-u-cacku/>.

ble from a nearby pathway, it is no wonder that citizens are fond of these murals, as well as that they referred to them as a group.⁴¹ All of the current murals were done in 2023, covering some of the earliest murals done by the festival.



Figure 1: Mural by Stom500 on the school
“Vuk Karadžić”, 2023
(photo: Irena Jevtović)



Figure 2: Mural by Atelje Šoln depicting
Nadežda Petrović, 2023
(photo: Bojan Pajić)

The mural depicting famous Serbian impressionist Nadežda Petrović, upon whom the city gallery has been named, was done by Marija and Stevan from Atelje Šoln. It took the attention of the community and the director of the gallery expressed his gratitude for the realization of this mural.⁴²

Another notable example is a mural called Boško by Wuper Kec, depicting a boy eating a cherry. Located next to the city park, this mural was referred to in the survey as “peaceful” and “calming”.

41 Many of the answers in the survey referred to them as “murals on Vuk Karadžić school” with only a few of them separating Stom’s mural of the red panda.

42 Anonim. (2023) Mural sa likom Nadežde Petrović u vinari nova kulturna tačka u gradu, 30. May 2023, 03. July 2024, <https://moravainfo.rs/mural-sa-likom-nadezde-petrovic-u-vinari-nova-kulturna-tacka-u-gradu/>.



Figure 3: Boško by Wuper Kec, 2018
(photo: Srđa Čvorović)



Figure 4: Murals on Silos in Čačak, from left to right painted by Endo, Sobekcis, Kartel, 2023 (photo: Irena Jevtović)

One of the biggest projects done by the DUK festival was painting of Silos in Čačak, an old mill (mlin) factory, which is no longer used. Many young people spent their teenage years at Silosi, so it is no wonder that the murals done on them are one of the most mentioned favorites. Three batteries of Silos were painted by Vuk Đurić endo as a local artist, duo Sobekcis from Belgrade and Kartel from Germany.

On each of the Silos we have one (mural). On the middle one there are line landscapes of houses and villages, as well as a plum in pixels - as a connection between traditional and modern. Plum represents Čačanska rodna, because our city is the capital of culture this year.⁴³

Citizens mostly view murals as works of art, with 70% considering this to be the case and believing that creating murals requires special skill. About 60% of respondents think that murals can initiate social discussions on certain topics. Surveying the perception

43 Kuzmić, J. (2023), Na čačanskim silovima osvanuli murali šljiva u pikselima, 07. June 2023, 03. July 2024., <https://www.agroklub.rs/agro-hobi/na-cacanskim-silosima-osvanuli-murali-sljiva-u-pikselima/87241/>.

of murals created during the festival among Čačak citizens, a Google survey found that murals remain a significant and positively viewed part of daily life.

DUK artists and their experience

Some of the artists that painted murals on DUK festival over the course of 9 years include: Corte (Spain), Stom500 (France), Baki Baki (Japan), Suiko (Japan), HNRX (Austria), Wandart (Czech Republic), Kartel (Germany), HRVB (Germany), Yessiow (Indonesia), as well as artists from the region - Chez, Sarne, Lonac, Tužni Marin, Erol Sjajni from Croatia, and Serbia, such as Sleš, Artez, TKV and Jana. Interviews with three artists who participated in the DUK Festival were largely positive. Carl Kenz, Slash, and Quam reported satisfaction with the festival's organization, food, accommodation, and community interactions. According to Carl Kenz:

One thing I will never forget, there was this old man coming at me talking in your language I really don't understand. So I tried to thank him for showing up and apologize for not understanding. He was talking with his hands then and showed me thumbs up and that I should wait here, he will be back. So after a while he came back with some cake and his wife who was able to speak a bit of english, she translated that he was loving what I am doing and we had a little talk about the intention and idea of my artwork. This was a mind blowing experience.⁴⁴

Experience from the festival itself confirms the satisfaction of the artists by the organization, with many of them stating that they would like to participate again in the upcoming editions.⁴⁵

Media coverage of DUK festival

Media coverage of the festival evolved from primarily local coverage in its early years⁴⁶ to national attention by 2023, coinciding with Čačak's status as the national capital of culture (the same year that the festival employed a PR manager).

Using press clippings and Google search tools, texts were analyzed for this study. Initially, local media focused on the construction of the skate park⁴⁷ and later shifted to cover specific festival activities, particularly murals, starting to refer to Čačak as "the city

44 Jevremović, J. (2023) Google survey on artist's experience of DUK festival, March 2023.

45 We know this from personal conversations with the artists.

46 One of the local media is Ozon press, which has followed the festival from the start: <https://www.ozonpress.net/?s=dani+urbane+kulture> (accessed 03. July 2024).

47 Examples: Anonim. (2015) Otvoren skejt park, mladi iz regiona u Čačku, 03. May 2015, 03. July 2024, <https://www.ozonpress.net/zabava/otvoren-skejt-park-mladi-iz-regiona-u-cacku/>; Anonim. (2021) Arhitekta Milorad Obradović: Izgradnja skejt parka u Čačku delovala je kao borba sa vetrenjačama, 20. 11. 2021, 03. July 2024, <https://morvainfo.rs/arhitekta-milorad-obradovic-izgradnja-skejt-parka-u-cacku-delovala-je-kao-borba-sa-vetrenjacama/>.

of murals”⁴⁸ While some texts relayed direct announcements, journalists often wrote independently,⁴⁹ occasionally interchanging terms like “graffiti” and “murals.”⁵⁰ Čačak’s cultural capital designation, with DUK festival as one of the leading programmes, increased media interest, with both local and national outlets expanding from news articles to features and interviews, and TV coverage leaning towards documentaries.⁵¹ This shift illustrates growing media interest in comprehensive reporting on the festival.

Conclusion

The DUK festival developed from a social movement connected with skate park, extreme sports and street art, into one of the leading muralism manifestations in the Western Balkan region. The city of Čačak has since improved its cultural policy, but it is still in development and the first cultural strategy for the city is yet to be implemented.

The festival’s collaboration with the municipality has been challenging, with the notable lack of collaboration with the Tourist organization of Čačak. During the years this collaboration improved in many aspects, such as financial one, which was missing for the first four editions. Obtaining permits for mural painting in Čačak is reduced to permission from the residents and/or owners of the building, making the community’s opinion on murals important for the work of the festival. Surveying the public opinion on murals, we found out that 183 out of 200 citizens questioned have a positive attitude towards murals in the city.

Artists who painted the murals also point out the positive experience they had with the organization, as well as with the community, which expressed interest in what they were doing. The media coverage of the DUK festival has vastly improved since the beginning, spreading from local media to national ones.

Considering the analysis of these factors, we can conclude that the DUK festival falls into a different category than the traditional muralism. Run by an NGO with challenging collaboration with the government representatives, but a positive relationship with the community, this festival is different from what was muralism led by the government, and has a different impact. This leaves room for future studies on these types of festivals and defining a category under which they could fall upon, as well as broader research on the way the DUK festival has impacted the community in Čačak.

48 Anonim. (2019) Čačak postao grad murala, 15. June 2019, 03. July 2024, <https://www.info-press.rs/drustvo/cacak-postao-grad-murala/>.

49 Nikitović, V. (2016), Svetski umetnici ulepšali fasade u Čačku, 05 June 2016, 03. July 2024, <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/srbija/svetski-umetnici-muralima-ulepsali-fasade-u-cacku/xem-ckr5>.

50 Anonim. (2016) Čačak dobija nove grafite, 19. June 2016, 03. July 2024, <https://www.ozonpress.net/zabava/cacak-dobija-nove-grafite-foto/>.

51 Example at: TV Nova (2023) Oslikavanje murala na 30 metara iznad zemlje - Čačak dobija novi ogromni mural na silosima, 07. June 2023, 03. July 2024, <https://nova.rs/emisije/oslikavanje-murala-na-30-metara-iznad-zemlje-cacak-dobija-novi-ogromni-mural-na-silosima-industrijske-zone/>.

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ДАНИ УРБАНЕ КУЛТУРЕ

СТУДИЈА СЛУЧАЈА

Сажетак: У раду су представљене специфичности фестивала *Дани урбане културе* који се од 2015. године одржава у Чачку. Овај фестивал је фокусиран на сликање мурала. Муралистима се уступају велике површине за сликање, али циљ фестивала је и промоција хип-хоп музике и екстремних спортова. Са намером да се разумеју специфичности овог фестивала, ова студија случаја анализира културну политику у граду Чачку, развој фестивала, сарадњу са Општином, административне поступке: добијање дозвола за сликање мурала, утицај мурала на свакодневни живот грађана, искуства уметника и медијско покривање фестивала. За потребе овог рада коришћене су методе интервјуа и анкета. У интервјуима су учествовали директор фестивала Страхиња Бабић и два претходна градска већника за културу, науку и образовање у Чачку, Душан Радојевић и Милош Папић. Сарадња са Општином се показала као изазовна, али се с временом побољшава, док је медијско покривање фестивала расло како се ширио. У оквиру рада спроведена је и анкета чији је циљ био да открије на који начин грађани Чачка доживљавају мурале, а попунило ју је 200 грађана различитих старосних доба. Резултати су показали значајан утицај мурала на свакодневни живот грађана који су анкетирани. Грађани су навели своје омиљене мурале, њих 70% доживљава мурале као уметност. Финансирање овог фестивала углавном је организовано преко пројеката и спонзорстава, док део финансира Општина. *Дани урбане културе* смештени су у специфичан теоријски оквир који се разликује од традиционалног схватања мурализма.

Кључне речи: *улична уметност, мурализам, фестивал, културна политика, заједница, Чачак, Београд*

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CLAIMING SPACE AND BUILDING LEGACY A CASE STUDY OF THE ALL GIRLS GRAFFITI JAM

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Abstract: *This article presents the All Girls Graffiti Jam (AGGJ) Festival and explores its motivation, growth, and contributions to the regional street art scene. Initiated in 2018 by the first Serbian female street artist, TKV, AGGJ began as a grassroots effort aimed at providing a platform for the empowerment and promotion of female artists and entrepreneurs. By featuring collaborative artistic interventions, panel discussions, exhibitions, and performances, the festival strives to become an important regional platform dedicated to inclusion, community-building, and sustainability. The festival's evolution is documented through interviews with TKV, festival co-organizers and participants, as well as through informal participant observations. The article discusses the festival's organization, funding, and role in community-building. It also examines the broader implications of AGGJ in terms of urban regeneration and the normalization of female presence in street art.*

Key words: *All Girls Graffiti Jam, street art, female artists, festival, empowerment, inclusion, community-building, Belgrade*

Introduction

When TKV (The Kraljica Vila/The Fairy Queen) left her first mark on Belgrade's walls in 2004, she was not just the only girl in a graffiti crew she was part of but also one of the first – if not the first – artists in Serbia to choose street art to express herself. Today, TKV is no longer as lonely as she once was in what she described as “a boy's club”.¹ As the community of street artists, and especially female street artists, grew over the course of twenty years, so did the recognition of their contributions to the art scene. By claiming space for herself, TKV also strived to encourage

1 Koncul, A., & TKV (2020) Creatives That Inspire Us: The Queen, the Knight, the Nightmare, 30. July 2020, <https://livingproofcreative.com/creatives-that-inspire-us/tkv-the-queen-the-knight-the-nightmare>.

other girls and women to paint. This endeavor took many forms, including informal mentoring, workshops, and public engagement.

The most successful among these efforts was undoubtedly the All Girls Graffiti Jam (AGGJ) Festival.² First launched in 2018, the Belgrade-based festival is dedicated to showcasing the work of female artists, highlighting their contributions to the movement, and creating a new kind of cultural heritage. With its fifth iteration scheduled for September 2024 and with success in providing space for underrepresented (female) artists, the festival has grown beyond its initial commitments and aims to also support and promote female entrepreneurship, community building, and sustainability.

This article presents the AGGJ festival, its evolution, and its contributions to the regional street art scene. By providing insight into the festival's aim and motivation, organization, and reception, the article aims to show how the festival not only provides a platform for the promotion and empowerment of female street artists but also regenerates the community and cultural life in Belgrade's Lower Dorćol district.

A brief reflection on the study design and article outline

The findings are based on data gathered from two structured and four unstructured, open-ended interviews with TKV, the festival's founder and program director, informal interviews with the festival's general manager Jelena Vorkapić, four participants, available media articles, and documents such as grant applications and correspondence. As a former grant writer and copywriter for the festival, I also had insight into different aspects of festival organization, meaning that some of the findings are also based on data gathered through informal participant observation. It is important to acknowledge that while the insider perspective endows me with direct access to data, it also compromises my objectivity. To ensure critical distance, I strived to engage in self-reflection throughout data-gathering and writing processes.

Before discussing the idea behind the event, I will briefly present the festival. The article is thematically structured to describe the festival organization and financing, the presentation of the team and venue, institutional support, and lack thereof. Finally, the article discusses the festival's reception, including participants' experiences, impressions of the public, and media coverage.

All Girls Graffiti Jam Festival

With the exception of two years marked by COVID-19-related restrictions, the All Girls Graffiti Jam has been taking place annually since 2018 as a three-day-long gathering of female street artists in Belgrade, Serbia. The number of participants has steadily grown from six in 2018 to fourteen in 2023, with at least as many announced for the 2024 edition. While the initial idea was to only involve street artists from the Balkans, already the first edition had a more international profile, including participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, France, Austria, Bulgaria, Russia, and Serbia.

² The festival was initially called All Girls Street Art Jam until 2024.

The focal point of each iteration is street art, with artists either collaboratively or independently painting graffiti and murals at the cultural center Dorćol Platz in Belgrade. Some of the artists participated once (so far), including Alba (CRO), Brün (BG), Chro (BG), Čuša (RS), Helenikus (RS), John (RUS), Milica (RS), Noel (AT), Oh Barbara (RS), Oojomagico (HR), Sunita Fišić (BIH), Tea Yuo (RS), Tijana Tri (RS), and Yo (RS). In contrast, several artists became residents, including Kaldea (FR), Jana Danilović (RS), Nataša Konjović (RS), Zmaja (RS), Chiks (RS), Moverama (BIH), Walls of Nataša (RS), and Marv (RS). Over the years, the painting was accompanied by panel discussions (2018), an exhibition of the participants' other works (2022) and illustrator and graphic novelist Jana Adamović's (RS, 2023) work, concerts by Pretty Loud (RS), an all-girl rap collective and other local musicians and DJs. Each year, the event attracted a number of skaters, break-dancers, and BMX riders who spontaneously joined and showcased their skills for the audience with the backdrop of the invited artists painting murals.³



Figure 1: untitled, Moverama, 2021, Dorćol Platz, photo courtesy of TKV

The festival's aim: claiming space

Before the first edition of the AGGJ, the *Meeting of Styles* and festival *Rekonstrukcija* took place several times regionally and locally in Belgrade. While TKV participated in many of these events, she noticed that the other female artists were often left out of the rosters due to their general invisibility, “unless they were token girl painters.”⁴ In our interview, TKV mentions that this omission was not necessarily discriminatory and ascribes it to the organizers' innocent unawareness of the female artists' works as well as to the lack of community:

*Graffiti festivals are the best way to spend time: you paint with the other artists, meet new people from the community, and the feeling is indescribable. I met Kaldea at the Meeting of Styles in Zagreb, and we clicked immediately. I always dreamed of having a girl crew. The thing is, it can't happen out of the blue, nor can it happen if you push it. No shade for the boys, but we realized that if we don't create space for ourselves, it won't happen. It's not that they don't want to invite us, they are just kind of oblivious.*⁵

³ The artists painted 40 murals during the first four festival editions.

⁴ Koncul, A. (2024) Interview with TKV, personal interview, Belgrade.

⁵ Ibid.

Having already been an established artist at the time, TKV decided to employ her experience to create a regional network of female street artists and an opportunity for them “to get to know each other, to bond, and collaborate.”⁶ By establishing a festival, she also aimed to create a platform for the newly created community that would annually get together, “claim space, pave the path for the others to come, and build legacy.”⁷ Sabina Andron describes tags and other forms of street art expression as “the signifiers of an urban discourse about plurality and participation, about public space as common instead of regulated visual space, about vitality and a right to the city which extends beyond the right to maintain civic order.”⁸ In this sense, AGGJ broadens the traditional understanding of plurality and participation not just within the regional street art community but also in terms of who has access to the public space as well as the right to use it and intervene within it.⁹

The idea behind the festival has not changed since its inception; rather, it evolved. TKV recognizes that, while she and the other artists managed to claim some previously inaccessible space, this will remain the festival’s mission until “female artists are recognized as equal, and their presence is normalized in Serbia and the region.”¹⁰ Female graffiti writers and collectives have been present elsewhere for a long time. Even though they have been stating their presence in Serbia for decades, too, their ownership of public surfaces outside the festival grounds is yet to be recognized as equally valuable and more than incidental. The AGGJ participants’ murals and graffiti preserve a memory of the event and signify their personal and collective identities.¹¹ Hence, the idea behind the festival’s continued efforts can be seen as (re-)claiming not just the walls of the festival’s venue but also the participants’ position within the international street art community.

While the festival was conceived out of somewhat reactionary reasons, the artist emphasizes that “it wasn’t born out of spite for being left out or anything.”¹² Despite its gender-exclusionary name, each festival edition welcomed non-female participants, too. Among them were the aforementioned skaters, BMX riders, caterers, DJs, photographers and videographers, as well as the audience. Some of the festivals’ root values are inclusion and diversity; hence, another aim of the festival is to provide a platform for those who are otherwise commonly left out or excluded, including persons who are marginalized based on their identity or abilities. This commitment is perhaps most evident

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Andron, S. (2024) *Urban Surfaces, Graffiti, and the Right to the City: Space, Materiality and the Normative*, New York: Routledge, p. 67

9 By inviting illustrators and graffiti artists such as Zmaja, Konjo, and Rama to AGGJ, TKV works to engage artists that use different kinds of artistic expressions to get involved in street art.

10 Koncul, op. cit.

11 Daichendt, G. J. (2021) From Graffiti to Gallery. The Street Art Phenomenon, *The Routledge Handbook of Street Culture*, edited by Ross, J. I., New York: Routledge, p. 92.

12 Koncul, op. cit.



Figure 2: Untitled, Kaldea, 2021, Dorćol Platz, photo courtesy of TKV

in the continuing engagement of persons with disabilities in the festival's organization, as well as in the involvement of artists such as the aforementioned Pretty Loud collective, known for its dedication to advocating for women's empowerment in the Romani community. According to the organizers, the upcoming fifth edition of the festival is expected to be the most inclusive so far, with a strong focus on sustainability.

Following Webber's trace, Blanché views street art as a form of self-promotion and artists' endeavor of "creating a name for themselves and their work and making themselves and their work known".¹³ While this is the case for the AGGJ too, the festival aims to go beyond the commitments to promote artists and their personal messages. With murals and other street art as end products, the festival is also committed to providing the local community with public art. I write more about this in the section titled 'The venue' below. The following section describes the festival's organization, including the team, venue, funding and patronage, and institutional support.

Festival organization: The team

The first four iterations of the festivals were self-organized, with TKV acting as a driving force and coordinator rather than a project manager. To build a community of female street artists, TKV harnessed her closest personal community and professional network.

My friends and family helped with everything from tech support, food, transport, and t-shirt production, to the venue and walls. Everyone volunteered, and I'm grateful to them.

¹³ Blanché, U. (2016) *Banksy Urban Art in a Material World*, Marburg: Tecton Verlag, p. 16.

I'm also forever indebted to Vesna,¹⁴ who immediately welcomed the idea of organizing the festival here.¹⁵

As the festival grows, so does the support from friends and acquaintances who volunteer their skills, services, and products. TKV ascribes this willingness to shared values and genuine interest in supporting the festival:

People love the idea and are keen to contribute because they see the festival as something that this city needs. My family brought food for the first edition participants; in 2023, friends who own a catering company offered help. Sure, they raised their own visibility by delivering food, but it is much more important for them—and many others involved—that they are able to contribute to supporting Belgrade's art scene, empowering female artists, and helping liven up the local community.¹⁶

In our interview, TKV talks about the continuous support she receives from everyone involved, including participants who are eager to contribute free of charge “because they see something good in this idea.”¹⁷ The artists who became the festival's residents are also eager to help with the hands-on organizational work, including preparing the walls and setting up the scaffolding.

The nature of TKV's role is equally reflected in her low-intervention curatorial and management strategies. While decisions such as to whom each wall will be assigned and what color palette will be used are made ahead of time, collaborative painting and improvisation are encouraged. In terms of management, the team welcomes input and ad-hoc interventions during all stages of the organization and during the festival.

The upcoming fifth edition of the festival has a more structured approach to planning that allows for more ambitious goals and growth. Together with friends who specialize in project management, fundraising, and branding, TKV aims for the fifth iteration of the festival to be the largest one so far. In addition to supporting female street artists to gain or increase their visibility, the team works to expand the community by becoming more intersectional and interdisciplinary. The mission of the upcoming festival edition is to send a message about the importance of unity, self-confidence, and solidarity among women, inspiring them to boldly express themselves and realize their full potential. The mission also empowers the community in Lower Dorćol to organize as citizen organizations or cooperatives that can influence the district by creating positive cultural and environmental change and development within the district.

The fifth festival edition is themed *Sisterhood*, suggesting that sisterhood in the 21st century encompasses cooperation, empowerment, creativity, and local environmental

¹⁴ Vesna Orović, one of the owners and managers of Dorćol Platz.

¹⁵ Koncul, op. cit.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

influence. The festival will feature not only the main program, which is based on street art creation but also an accompanying program where the audience and visitors will have the opportunity to witness women's creations in action and meaningfully interact with them. The program will showcase various creation methods that programmers, painters, permaculture farmers, musicians, and other culturally and environmentally conscious craftswomen employ.

Five editions and seven years after the festival's inception, the support largely remains informal and from the community. The following section describes the views on and relationships with relevant local institutions.

Institutional support

With community building as one of the festival's main goals, the self-organized ethos remains strongly present year after year. This is primarily reflected in the lack of support from local municipal institutions. In our interview, TKV shares that even though the festival would hypothetically appreciate the support from the city's officials, she aims to safeguard it from the corrupted Serbian government, political influences, endless bureaucracy, and its employment for propaganda purposes. The support is not only lacking because it was never offered but also because it was never asked for. While the festival's most valuable end-product is the participants' increased visibility, empowered newcomers, and strengthened network, there's more to it because:

We don't just do it for ourselves. We also offer public art to everyone who visits or lives in Belgrade. We don't want a corrupt politician to show up and perform support for the media, especially considering the miserable finances they offer for such projects. The saddest thing is that it would be the money that we as citizens anyway put in the city's budget through taxes.¹⁸

The unwillingness to collaborate with institutions is not characteristic of the AGGJ festival only. This is because institutional involvement often requires prioritization of its values or voices, which can affect and even censor the artists' works. According to Daichendt, this doesn't necessarily mean that the artists' works will be compromised, but the overall process may potentially become more complex.¹⁹

However, this complexity is not fully avoided. While support from local institutions was neither asked for nor received, European organizations such as the EU Info Centre in Belgrade (through their program *Europe for Culture*) and the French Institute backed the festival. TKV has a long-standing collaboration with the French Institute and has been granted the award of Knight of the French Order of Arts and Letters (*Ordre des Arts et des Lettres*) for her contribution to the enrichment of the French cultural heritage in 2019. The Institute has supported the festival since its inception by sponsoring

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Daichendt, op. cit, p. 99.

paint and other expenses for the French participants. The collaboration with the EU Info Centre was somewhat more transactional, bureaucratically complicated, and lengthy. In return for financial support, TKV decorated the organization's offices.

Furthermore, the issue of legality remained outside of Serbian institutions' jurisdiction. The choice of venue eliminated the need for institutional approval to use the walls. TKV highlights the apparent lack of clear guidance or legal or bureaucratic organizations that would have such authority and refers to the messy urban planning and the so-called investor urbanism that has been gaining momentum in Belgrade in recent years. The city's landscape is rapidly changing based on private interests and without long-term planning that would prioritize public interests, citizens' actual needs, and usability. "Everything about city planning and development belongs to a shady area where the Institute for Heritage Protection Belgrade provides some, but very unclear and corrupted guidance."²⁰ To her knowledge, the authors who strive for their street art interventions and murals to be legal are required to inform the relevant police department, who:

(...) never confirmed that they had received a written or email request. If you call, nobody will answer, or they will keep putting you through to another and another colleague. Unless it's about Ratko Mladić's mural on Vračar that's guarded by 'the police' (likely just government's thugs), even though the scared building tenants never wanted that intervention there - and usually it's the tenants who you'd ask for a permit to paint on their building.²¹

Besides good relations, shared values, and ease of access, the fact that there was no need to involve the local authorities in order to obtain the permit to paint and organize the festival made Dorćol Platz not only a venue of choice but also a trusted partner and home of the festival for years to come.

The venue: Dorćol Platz

Each iteration of the festival took place at the cultural center Dorćol Platz (formerly Minel), situated in Lower Dorćol, a rapidly gentrified area between Belgrade city center and the banks of the Danube. Together with other waterfront areas along both the Danube and Sava rivers, such as the nearby Savamala and port of Belgrade (Luka Beograd), Lower Dorćol has been undergoing "the process of capitalist restoration."²²

Once a state-owned public transport maintenance company, Minel declared insolvency in the early 2000s. The space was neglected and rapidly ruined for over a decade until it was purchased by its current owners who transformed it into the cultural center Dorćol Platz in 2016. The owners' idea was to contribute to the regeneration of the Lower Dorćol area by creating a platform for various cultural, activist, and (mostly oppositional) political programs. The idea was also to support local artists, and soon

²⁰ Koncul, op. cit.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Vilenica, A. (2021) Radical Housing Art, Struggle, Care, *Theory on Demand* #42, Amsterdam: The Institute of Network Cultures, p. 10.



Figure 3: Untitled, Ćuša, Zmaja, Chiks, 2023, Dorćol Platz,
photo courtesy of TKV

after it was established, TKV was invited to paint a mural. The collaboration turned rather fruitful, as the owners offered her atelier space. Besides TKV's atelier, Dorćol Platz is home to the Reflektor Theatre and O3one gallery, and otherwise hosts exhibitions, performances, and roundtables. It is also used as a venue for corporate events, weddings, courses, markets, and various other events. The courtyard is shared with a craft brewery and a café.

The choice of cultural center Dorćol Platz as the festival's venue was made for several reasons. With a courtyard surrounded by former repair workshops, Dorćol Platz has walls that are large and versatile enough to accommodate a number of murals and other street art. The other reasons include convenience (the proximity to the atelier), the venue's ability to host a large audience, honoring the relationship with the venue owners, as well as the aforementioned shared values. In that sense, the murals not only reflect the owners' personal values but also make them accountable for the murals' content.²³ Most importantly, private ownership of the venue eliminates the need to involve the city authorities in order to obtain painting permission. In other words, it relieves the organization not just of a lengthy bureaucratic process but also of allowing the city authorities to impose their taste or values, or worse, take credit for, for example, empowering female artists. In a country that has witnessed over 300 femicides in the past ten years,²⁴ such support would be nothing but performative.

23 Mendelson-Shwartz, E., & Mualam, N. (2022) Challenges in the creation of murals: A theoretical framework, *Journal of Urban Affairs* Vol. 44 No. 4-5, p. 693.

24 Ćurčić, T., Tomić, J. (2023) Femicide in Serbia: Crime and Lesser Punishments, 03. April 2024, https://www.europeandatajournalism.eu/cp_data_news/femicide-in-serbia-crime-and-lesser-punishments/.

However, the future of Dorćol Platz, both as a host of the festival and in general, is uncertain. It is possible that the entire area will be torn down in the aforementioned process of capitalist restoration and further gentrification of Lower Dorćol and the development of the Belgrade waterfront. The repurposing of abandoned factories and warehouses in otherwise attractive areas in cities worldwide into creative neighborhoods is not a novelty, and neither is their further transformation into privately owned high-end districts for residences and consumerism. This process is instrumental in further privatization of public space and displacement of what Andron refers to as a non-fiscally viable population.²⁵ Street art is commonly used to maintain authenticity and make an artistic contribution to communities either through attempts to preserve existing works or commission new ones.²⁶ In this sense, we could observe a parallel between Dorćol Platz and, for example, London's Leake Street or New York's 5 Pointz as these places contribute to visibilization and normalization of street art, graffiti culture, and new muralism, resulting in artists no longer "living beyond visibility as transgressive actors on the fringe of socially acceptable behavior."²⁷

Patronage

Besides providing the walls and facilities, Dorćol Platz and its affiliates, such as a non-profit youth organization Centar E8 and Belgrade raw and vegan food festival BeGe VeGE also provided sustenance, refreshments, and funds for scaffolding, among other things. Housing and travel expenses were either self-organized and paid by TKV and the artists themselves or covered by other sponsors, such as the Serbian software development company Hoolooovoo. TKV got in touch with the company through an acquaintance knowing that the company values social responsibility and supports art without insisting on foregrounding its branding in return.

"The organization is not intentionally so unstructured and DIY; it's because I couldn't do it better than this. 2024 will be the first year in which we have actual project proposals, budgets, and such," TKV shares in our interview. This also means that neither the organization nor the participants benefited financially from the festival, with the exception of 2022 when a paint retailer sponsored artists with symbolic financial compensation. The other paint producers (HGP) and retailers (Kobra) also supported the festival by providing paint. The former was contacted through TKV's personal network (KC Lab), while the latter takes pride in supporting women as part of its marketing strategy. The following section describes the public reception of the festival, including insights into the participants' experiences and media coverage.

25 Andron, op. cit, p. 74.

26 Daichendt, op. cit, p. 99.

27 McAuliffe, C. (2013) Legal Walls and Professional Paths: The Mobilities of Graffiti Writers in Sydney, *Urban Studies* 50 (3), p. 528.

The Participants' Experiences: Growing Together

The festival's launch in 2018 was the first time in many ways for most of the participants: TKV's first time to organize a festival, Kaldea's first time in Serbia, and for some artists it was the first time to be invited to a festival. However, it seems to have overcome everyone's expectations already during the first edition, according to TKV: "We created a spirit that we always dreamed of, I needed to pinch myself to see if it's really happening. Suddenly everyone was willing to help and contribute to this atmosphere where girls feel accepted, safe, and happy." The disbelief in the fact that the novel space was created for female street artists is reflected in the participants' positive impressions too. Year by year both the festival and the feeling of community grew: "The girls want to be here, they even help me prep the walls, set up scaffolding, and clean up. It's our festival, not mine. I see this as a sign of the festival being on its way to fulfilling its mission."²⁸ Some of the resident participants share their joy in observing the newcomers going through the excitement of the first-time participation and remember feeling similarly, yet for them, this feeling is now normalized and "feel that's how it should be."²⁹ The other artists share feelings of inspiration: Kaldea was inspired to leave her mark in other Serbian (Novi Sad, Niš) and regional cities (Zagreb), Moverama to organize Meraki Mural Fest in Bijeljina (BIH), while Chro expressed a desire to start a street art festival in Bulgaria. The organizer considers the participants' satisfaction as a departing parameter of the festival's success. The following section describes how the public and the media perceived and reported on the festival.

Public reception

Authors have variously described murals as place-makers and community builders,³⁰ which is a valid description of different artistic interventions done as part of the AGGJ festival. Not only is the idea of building a community of female street artists becoming a reality through collaborative mural painting, but so is the community around it: one of street art enthusiasts and people eager to support the work festival's participants. This support is reflected in, for example, sponsors' growing interest in funding the festival's future editions and the participants' financial gains since many of them have sold their paintings or had their work commissioned during or after the festival. The public support goes beyond financial: some of the artists became regulars at other street art festivals (for example, the Rooftop Jam festival organized by graffiti artist Rosh (Uroš Štrboja) in Novi Sad, Serbia). This shows that the artists have indeed gained visibility and their contribution has finally started to become recognized as relevant by a wider street art community.

²⁸ Koncul, op. cit.

²⁹ TKV (2024) Nataša in conversation with TKV, Belgrade.

³⁰ Austin, J. (2010) More to see than a canvas in a white cube: For an art in the streets, *City*, Vol. 14, Nr. 1–2, pp. 33–47; Bengtson, P., & Arvindsson, M. (2014) Spatial justice and street art, *Nordic Journal of Law and Social Research*, Vol. 5 Nr. 5, pp. 117–130; Dovey, K., Wollan, S., & Woodcock, I. (2012) Placing graffiti: Creating and contesting character in inner-city Melbourne, *Journal of Urban Design*, Vol. 17, No. 1 pp. 21–41.

The festival also confirmed the role of murals and street art in general as catalytic tools for urban regeneration: together with Dorćol Platz, the festival significantly contributed to the cultural life of Lower Dorćol.³¹ By offering murals back as a public good, the surrounding residential and commercial establishments became more attractive, thus creating a vibrant atmosphere year-round.³² This success encouraged managers of other nearby venues, such as Silosi, to invite some of the festival's participants (Jana Danilović and TKV, among others) to paint murals on their grounds, too.³³ As a result, social (and economic) development is promoted and urban growth encouraged, hence inadvertently supporting the government's efforts to gentrify river banks along Lower Dorćol, Savamala, and other neighboring areas in Belgrade.³⁴

Media coverage of the festival mostly remained online, including local and lifestyle media outlets dedicated to street art, Vice, BBC Serbia,³⁵ as well as Nova S,³⁶ affiliated to one of the founders of Dorćol Platz, who was also a journalist.

Future commitments: Fostering solidarity and breaking down barriers

From its humble beginnings in 2018 to its upcoming fifth iteration in 2024, the AGGJ has grown steadily, both in terms of participation and impact. By challenging the notion of graffiti culture being a male-dominated field, the festival asserts the importance of representation and visibility for women in the arts. As such, the festival has evolved into a platform that fosters a sense of solidarity and empowerment among its participants.

Despite facing challenges like limited institutional support, the festival remains committed to enriching Belgrade's cultural landscape. As it looks towards the future with plans for increased inclusivity and sustainability, AGGJ continues to make a significant impact, amplifying the voices of female street artists and celebrating creativity and resilience. In a way, the AGGJ festival stands as a testament to the power of grassroots community building, creative expression, and reclaiming public spaces by breaking down barriers.

31 Park, H. and Kovacs, J. F. (2020) Arts-led revitalization, overtourism and community responses: Ihwa Mural Village, Seoul, *Tourism Management Perspectives*, Vol. 36: 1-9; Rosenstein, C. (2011) Cultural development and city neighborhoods, *City, Culture and Society*, Vol. 2 Nr. 1, pp. 9–15; Young, A. (2012) Criminal images: The affective judgment of graffiti and street art, *Crime, Media, Culture: An International Journal*, Vol. 8, Nr. 3, pp. 297–314.

32 Mendelson-Shwartz & Mualam, op. cit, p. 684.

33 Silosi is a cultural center, home of the Gaia movement, a non-profit organization dedicated to community and program development, and focused on sustainability, art, education, and recreation. Housed in former grain silos, together with Dorćol Platz, this brutalist riverside monument aims to regenerate Lower Dorćol and the area around the northern banks of the Danube.

34 Mendelson-Shwartz and Mualam, ibid.

35 Stevanović, K. (2021) Žene i umetnost: Kako je biti žena u strit artu, 22. June 2021, 03. April 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/serbian/lat/srbija-57560719>.

36 Koprivica, J. (2021) All Girls Street Art Jam: Kad devojke „džemuju“, 19. June 2021, 03. April 2024, <https://nova.rs/kultura/foto-all-girls-street-art-jam-kad-devojke-dzemuju/>.



Figure 4: For more images, see the Instagram profile of AGGJ, <https://www.instagram.com/allgirlsgraffiti/>.

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ЗАУЗИМАЊЕ ПРОСТОРА И СТВАРАЊЕ НАСЛЕЂА

СТУДИЈА СЛУЧАЈА *ALL GIRLS STREET ART JAM*

Сажетак: У тексту је представљен фестивал *All Girls Graffiti Jam (AGGJ)*. Истраживана је његова мотивација, раст и допринос регионалној сцени уличне уметности. Покренула га је 2018. године српска улична уметница TKV (*The Kraljica Vila*) и *AGGJ* је започео као grassroots напор усмерен на стварање платформе за оснаживање и промоцију уметница и предузетница. Кроз заједничке уметничке интервенције, панел дискусије, изложбе и перформансе, фестивал је настајао да постане важна регионална платформа посвећена инклузији, изградњи заједнице и одрживости. Развој фестивала је документован кроз интервјуе са TKV, координаторима и учесницама Фестивала. Представљена је организација, финансирање и улога фестивала у локалној изградњи заједнице и испитане шире импликације које *AGGJ* има на урбану регенерацију и женско присуство у уличној уметности.

Кључне речи: „*All Girls Graffiti Jam*“, улична уметност, жене у уметности, фестивал, оснаживање, инклузија, развијање заједнице, Београд

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THE CITY AS A STAGE: RUNAWAY INTERNATIONAL STREET ART FESTIVAL

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Abstract: *As the largest man-made artefact, the city has a profound impact on consciousness. We start from the premise that public space serves as a stage within the urban arena where conflicts between different interests and cultures unfold. What transforms the arena into a stage for urban culture are self-aware and liberated individuals who form the backbone of urbanity. This paper aims to show how street art festivals transform the city into a stage. The first part introduces the city as a stage and examines the role of festivals in cultural revitalization. The second part discusses the importance of street art for the city. The third part focuses on a case study of the Runaway International Street Art Festival. Finally, the significance and meaning of public space as a site of socially engaged art is considered from the perspective of both the artists and the local population.*

Keywords: *street art, public space, Runaway International Street Art Festival*

The city as a stage¹

Cities play an important role in shaping social reality. When it comes to the developing potential of a city, visibility certainly plays a role. This important component faces numerous obstacles, and the role of the city in achieving “visual harmony with the environment” becomes a particular challenge for architects, urban and spatial planners involved in planning and designing a particular spatial segment. The aesthetics of space is disturbed for various reasons, summarised under the term “visual pollution”: environmental factors, fuel consumption, the consequences of economic development

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and the construction of high-rise buildings. However, “visual pollution” can encourage individual participation in public life. Public spaces become attractive for use when they are safe, accessible to all and diverse. In addition, it is necessary to constantly develop new strategies and take an active approach to revitalising vitality.² Graffiti culture and street art are working on these strategies without official initiatives, and the consequences of their activities are currently the most discussed topics in the modern city.

Those who choose to actively engage take on the role of gladiators, breathing life into the city, much like in the ancient arena. Individual energy drives the spectacle. The vision of the city as a stage was first taken up by Rousseau in a cosmopolitan and secular society, where the interaction between the masses and the individual is the main driving force of urban theatre. The myth of the city is mediated and created by the need for self-expression in the crowd.³ Street theatre and guerrilla performances use public space to articulate public issues and revive ownership of the space, often based on disobedience. The performance always requires an urban space with visual intensity to emphasise the theatrical experience. The boundaries between audience and performers are blurred.⁴ In this context, graffiti culture and street art created in public spaces without permission can be broadly categorised as performance art.

The city as a stage has been described by many authors. Rousseau believed that cosmopolitan and secular societies are characterised by the theatrical character of the city. Why is a city perceived as a stage? This transformation is made possible by the self-confident, free individual, his inventiveness in public space and critical mass. The stage is thus characterised by social energy and the individual gestures of the citizen described. Richard Sennett identifies three basic elements: the time — the rehearsal, the definition of the audience — the public, and the definition of the goal — the theme. Within these three elements, “actors, expressive emotional actors,” as Sennett calls them, perform within the spatial boundaries of the city as a stage. Interestingly, Bobić writes that the forms of urban theatre are expected above all in mundane places, “on the street, between parked cars... in queues for gasoline or public traffic.”⁵

As Pušić notes, every city is looking for “something”, for places where “something always happens”, and this “something” includes very different and atypical things: historicity, a kind of exoticism, unusual spaces, architecture, customs, urban rhythm, local culture. On the other hand, there are these unloved, unused and neglected spaces. Whether they are so-called living or dead urban spaces does not necessarily depend on whether they are located downtown or on the outskirts of the city. The vitality of certain urban spaces is influenced by numerous factors, first and foremost by the activities within the space. As Jane Jacobs points out, cities need to fulfil a number of factors to be vibrant, such as the type of use, the diversity of motives and the social diversity of peo-

2 Pušić, Lj. (2001) *Održivi grad. Ka jednoj sociologiji okruženja*, Beograd: Srboštampa, pp. 277-282.

3 Bobić, op.cit.

4 Irvin, op.cit., pp. 49, 50, 52, 53.

5 Bobić, op.cit., pp. 17, 18, 19, 22.

ple and groups interacting with the space. This relationship between the people and the space is seen as a prerequisite for liveliness, regardless of whether it is spontaneous or induced. The places where the “engine of social vitality” is created are precisely those that offer, among other things, a wide range of urban activities and the authenticity of urban dynamics. The feeling of urban comfort is the aspiration of a vital city, which is essentially based on people’s cultural needs and the need to make varied use of their time.⁶

During the festivals, the city takes on the character of a stage. The need to create a new urban identity and the growing importance of the “experience economy” have encouraged urban development strategies that draw on their own resources — history, space, creativity, talent.⁷ Festivals transform the city into a stage set and contribute to the processes of revitalization and urban development. By creating a lively atmosphere and urban spirit, they increase the recognition value of a place. The role of events today is no longer just to offer specific content, but culture performs the function of urban revitalization. In addition to the experience economy, festivals also play a role in improving the quality of life in the city, strengthening social inclusion, promoting the development of a new urban identity, creating an urban narrative and promoting the city’s international and local potential at the same time.⁸

Art in Public Space

Art in public space encompasses a wide range of artistic activities, from performative to visual, and by its very nature these artistic practices often intertwine and influence each other. Consequently, there are various research trends in these arts today, some of which aim to unify all these practices, while others strive to distinguish individual artistic expressions.

The urban environment is always a symbolic and spatial manifestation of social relations. In the interaction of space and the environment, street art becomes a product of the current circumstances in the community, the city, the country or the world.⁹ Street art as a broader field of artistic activity is an area where a whole spectrum of perspectives and conflicting interests exist between different parties (local community, artists, city authorities, etc). Within this concept, we can consider street art, a form of visual expression that emerged from graffiti culture, as a highly autonomous and democratic means of communication. Through graffiti, in the broadest sense of the word, and street art, various political messages are often implicitly or explicitly conveyed, which therefore fall within the realm of freedom of expression. The negative perception of street art without permission, which often points to an urban identity crisis, is therefore an

6 Džejkobs, Dž. (2011) *Smrt i život velikih američkih gradova*, Novi Sad: Mediteran Publishing; Pušić, op.cit., pp. 267 -275.

7 Pine, J. and Gilmore, J. (1999) *The experience economy*, Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

8 Ričards, G. i Palmer, R. (2013) *Uzbudljivi gradovi. Kreativni menadžment i revitalizacija grada*, Beograd: Clio, pp. 14, 15, 21, 28, 29, 301.

9 Pogrmić, Z. and Đerčan, B. (2021) The role of street art in urban space recognition, *Researches Reviews of the Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management* 50–2/2021, p. 124.

indication of the lack of the humanistic, emancipatory potential of the space as a space of rebellion. Discussions about street art are therefore always also discussions about the politics of urban space and the control of public space. Debates ranging from different types of graffiti to street art to large-scale mural-like works have addressed the question whether these forms constitute esthetic practice or vandalism. There have been opinions that these forms of artistic expression are acceptable in legally permitted locations (with the owner's consent).¹⁰

As part of the city, street art contributes to its appearance, becoming part of the culture and overall context of the city and its social environment. Street art cannot be considered out of the political, cultural and economic context. Artists create their works in a specific social environment, and it is logical that the themes of art have changed throughout history as society has changed. This often leads to encounters between local and global content. Unauthorised street art poses a moral and symbolic challenge to city authorities, as it represents a conflict over the use of public space and reactivates Lefebvre's concept of the right to the city.¹¹ In the interaction of space and environment, street art becomes a product of the current circumstances in the community, the city, the country or the world.¹²

In addition to structural and spatial characteristics, a place also contains cultural and esthetic forms of expression that play a decisive role in the development of urban identity. Local urban identity plays a special role for street art in the urban landscape. Local urban identity is defined as the identity of small towns or neighbourhoods. Individuals form an image of the local identity of the street, the neighbourhood in which they live, work and move, based on physical and functional characteristics, but also on personal experiences and media images.¹³ Street art develops a sense of place while promoting economic development.¹⁴ Lajak notes that street art is increasingly taking over our cities during festivals. Both the artist and the architect aim to reshape urban space by viewing the city as a "creative object in scenic motion." He defines street art as "a collection of all the lively and brief spectacle that takes place in the public space of the city, insofar as it is inscribed in an urban scenography."¹⁵

10 Pogrmić and Đerčan, op.cit., pp. 122-124; Đukić, N. (2020) Graffiti and Urban Identity: Negative Perception of Graffiti as an Indicator of Urban Identity Crisis, *Post-socialist transformation of the city*, Novi Sad: Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Sociology, pp. 123-135.

11 Gutierrez, J. J. P. and Marcos, L. C. (2020) Drawing on the Walls: Graffiti, Street Art or Walls in Time. Analysis of the Torreveja Experience, *Street Art Drawing on The Walls*, 13 (24), pp. 1-13; Pogrmić and Đerčan, op.cit., pp. 122-125.

12 Pogrmić and Đerčan, op.cit., p. 124.

13 Relph, E. (1976) *'On the Identity of Places' Place and Placelessness*, London: Pion, pp. 44-62; Pogrmić and Đerčan, op.cit., pp. 127-128.

14 Palermo, L. (2014) The role of art in urban gentrification and regeneration: aesthetic, social and economic developments, *Journal of The Section of Cultural Heritage*, 10, pp. 521-545.

15 Lajak, P. (2000) Šalon na ulici, in: *Urbani spektakl*, ed. Dragičević Šešić, M., Beograd: Clio, p. 73.

The presentation of art in public space has changed considerably in recent decades, both in terms of its scope and its practice. The functions of street art are diverse and range from expressing the painterly skills of the creator to political activism, marking territory, expressing identity and creativity. In places with different social, economic and ethnic structures, the integrative function of street art is of great importance.¹⁶ For example, the initiative launched in Belgrade in 1989, when the authorities decided to beautify the urban space with murals, had a significant impact on the history of the city by paving the way for various forms of street art. Professor Čedomir Vasić and other outstanding artists who joined this initiative saw the city as a space for art and dialogue.¹⁷

Today, the energy of unauthorised artistic works within graffiti culture and street art is recognized as a unique expression and illustration of the modern city. This has meant that artists who previously worked without permission now have the opportunity to work legally and receive financial and material support for production. Such works, which we now refer to as new muralism, are created as part of festival productions. Elements of street art contribute to the visual enhancement of grey areas, old buildings and abandoned structures.¹⁸ The creation of an artistic work and the transformation of the urban environment are secondary goals compared to the primary one: to animate people and raise awareness of the need for their involvement in changing the environment they live in.

Runaway International Street Art Festival: A case study

The Runaway Festival builds on the tradition of the Belgrade mural movement of the late 1980s and combines it with the tendencies of the new muralism that emerged from graffiti culture and street art, thus integrating the history and modern life of the city. By taking place in a neighbourhood that, in addition to its unique community and identity, also possesses the necessary characteristics for creating festive spirit, Runaway has created a unique space in Belgrade. In this space, the Runaway Festival works based on grassroots initiatives with the support of local residents to create a neighbourhood in Bežanijska Kosa that stands out on the city map with its unique visual identity.

The festival in Bežanijska Kosa is intended as a successive painting on the facades that will eventually lead to creating a neighbourhood, a part of the city that works as an open-air museum. In 2016, the first facade of around 160 square metres was painted on Vajara Živojina Lukića 3 street. Eight festivals were organised until September 2023, and during this time more than 35 artists visited Bežanijska Kosa and painted around 20 large facades (about 200 m² each). The artists chose their themes themselves. Graffiti artists, street

16 Kujundžić, L. (2006). Graffiti, accessed 23. 08. 2021, http://liduss.blogspot.com/2006/07/graffiti_115343773398615873.html; Pogrmić and Đerčan, op.cit., p. 125.

17 Dragičević Šešić, M. (1992) *Umetnost i alternativa*, Beograd: Institut za pozorište, film, radio i televiziju Fakultet dramskih umetnosti, Clio, p. 54.

18 Poon, T. F. S. (2016) Street Murals as a Unique Tangible Cultural Heritage: A Case Study of Artifact Value Preservation, *International Journal of Cultural and Creative Industries*, 4, 1, pp. 48-61.



Figure 1: Das Drogen, 2022, photo Soulttime media

artists and traditionally trained artists involved in public art took part in the festival and all contributed to the creation of a new mural. In this case study, we will shed light on the organizational and financial challenges faced by the artistic director of the festival, as well as the unique characteristics of Bežanijska Kosa as a venue for the festival, but also as a place for interaction between artists and audience.

Organisational challenges

To understand the context of the Runaway Festival, it is relevant to briefly review the work of the festival's artistic director, Andrej Josifovski, known as Pijanista, who is also one of the authors of this text. Starting in 2012, Pijanista created works several times a



Figure 2: Pijanista, 2020, photo Boris Vatovec

year on facades that already had various interventions that the residents of Bežanijska Kosa did not like. In contrast to the earlier interventions on the buildings, over time the residents took a liking to Pijanista's works, which gave the festival a kind of informal permission to paint the walls. In 2014, the first forms of street art emerged as he began to draw more actively. This year marks the beginning of his active involvement in street art.

A prerequisite for the later successful organisation of the festival was the trust between the artist and the residents of Bežanijska Kosa that was built through these first works. The signature "Pijanista" became a symbol of recognition for the residents, instilling confidence. After two years of painting, the neighbourhood began to recognize and approve the works with this signature. The artist's original motivation was to beautify the neighbourhood in which he lives.

Pijanista used the trust he had gained to launch the Runaway Street Art Festival project. The first organisational steps consisted of developing institutional creative strategies to meet the formal requirements for founding the festival. First, the Runaway Street Artists Association was founded, with Josifovski and his closest family members as its founding members. For the first festival, which was organised within two weeks, the artistic director put together an artistic council based on his vision. This council included artist and architect Professor Milorad Mladenović, painter Mihailo Petković, poet Mića Jakšić, entrepreneur Marko Starović and illustrator Dobrosav Bob Živković, who was also responsible for the logo and visual identity of the festival. The well-known street artist Aleksandra Petković, known as TKV, was also involved in the organisation. Aleksandra Petković and Pijanista worked on two artworks during the first two festivals. After the first festival, the organisation and logistics were entirely based on the personal and voluntary commitment of the artistic director.

Financial challenges

In the eight years that the Runaway Festival has been organised, financial support has been based on informal networks: personal acquaintances of the artistic director, responses from benefactors and informally received material support (scaffolding, paint). Despite the many years and festivals that have passed, no real sponsors have been found. There have been companies that have chosen to collaborate with the Runaway Street Artists Association in a particular year due to their own campaigns or budget activations: The Coca-Cola Company, UNICEF and the Dutch Embassy. The façade painted by Weedzor, entitled "Heart on Hate," was the first façade whose painting was financed by a sponsor. In addition, the murals were transferred to digital form in 2021 with the help of UNICEF as part of the traditional UNICEF greeting card project in the form of NFTs. Sponsors also facilitated the arrival of certain artists at the festival. However, support from sponsors could not provide a long-term funding method to make the event sustainable. Therefore, the artistic director was forced to raise funds in other ways. In 2021, thanks to numerous fundraising activities, the Runaway Foundation was established, whose main objective is to promote culture and art.



Figure 3: Weedzorz, 2019, photo JDL, Soulttime media

One of the fundraising strategies for the festival was a kind of street performance: Pijanista stood alone with a cardboard sign that read: “One dinar for culture and art - Runaway Foundation” and begged at a traffic light. That day marked the beginning of donations from citizens that led to a significant financial influx when he recorded a short video during last year’s festival explaining what had been achieved without support from the city, the state or any cultural institution.¹⁹

International and “exciting” strength of the festival

In 2019, the festival took on an international character when Farid Rueda, one of the world’s best-known street artists from Mexico, was a guest. His arrival was made possible by the “Donji Dorćol” association. The artistic director used two strategies that are considered crucial to the success of a festival in cultural management: the strategy of bringing in “stars” and the creation of an “experience economy” for festival visitors. The strategy of inviting “stars” consists of inviting artists whose “names” are used as a marketing tool to attract a wider audience, the media and public attention.²⁰ In the eight years of the festival, the artistic director has succeeded in inviting numerous nationally and internationally recognized artists (Farid Rueda, Judith de Leeuw, Pablo Astrain and Marija Tiurina).

¹⁹ Due to the turbulent paths of transformation from socialism to market-oriented systems in the countries of Southeast Europe, support policies for the cultural and creative sector have not been a priority on the political agenda. Jocić, N., Budović, A. and Winkler, A. (2017) Dynamics Behind the Rise of a Creative Space? A Creative Quarter Development in Belgrade, *The Impact of Artists on Contemporary Urban Development in Europe*, Berlin: Springer, p. 122.

²⁰ Ričards & Palmer, op. cit., p. 111.



Figure 4: Sobekcis, 2021, photo Sobekcis, Soulttime media

The international potential of the festival is manifold, as the artists not only bring their culture to the city and bring it in colour to the facades of Belgrade, but also take beautiful memories from Belgrade with them, thus contributing to the recognition of the city as a city of culture:

I really love Belgrade. The Serbs have a healthy spirit and a rich and diverse culture. They are very warm-hearted and are not afraid to tell you if they do not like something. That's why Serbia is one of the few countries where I can see people for who they are. It's good that there is this social freedom (Judith de Leeuw, artist from Amsterdam).²¹

In street art, global and local influences often intertwine, the influence of the artist's culture and the local culture. This can be clearly seen in the mural by the famous Mexican muralist Farid Rueda in the Bežanijska Kosa district in Nikole Dobrojevića Street. On the façade is a portrait of a girl with an eagle-like cap. Rueda painted the image of a beautiful girl wearing a cap that is part of the Mexican tradition, but in the shape of an eagle symbolising our country.

In view of the increasing importance of the “experience economy”, the artistic director also wanted to offer visitors a kind of spectacle as expected from the “exciting city” so at the end of the fifth festival, he brought in the chamber orchestra Muzikon as a festive

21 Žujović, S. (2022) “Strit art na Bežanijskoj kosi. Muralima pokriveno više od 3.500 kvadrata fasada”, 15.10. 2022, accessed 25.04.2024., <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/beograd/strit-art-na-bezanijskoj-kosi-muralima-pokriveno-vise-od-3500-kvadrata-fasada/jzz4jct>.

novelty near the painted façades, who played several pieces in front of each façade. This was also an announcement for an open-air concert planned for September from the viewpoint of Bežanijska Kosa neighbourhood, which overlooks the entire city. The golden flower “Catharsis”, a sculpture created by Pijanista in 2020 that symbolises the need for spiritual purification, cultural upliftment and the general elevation of our social consciousness, had previously stood in this place.

It is important to emphasise at this point that the economic element is not present as the main driving force of the festival. The most important aspect of the festival is the artistic transformation of the space, which stems from the vision of the festival director, who is both an architect and a street artist and who, by revitalising a neighbourhood, creates its cultural and social cohesion.

*Local strength of the festival: Local landscape of
Bežanijska Kosa, people, trust, creators*

In addition to the international stars, the festival has played an important role in the individual careers of local artists involved in street art: TKV, Artez, Endo, Sleš, Kori, Brva, Rage, ZEZ lunatic, Đurađ, Piros, Weedzor, Hesoyam crew (Chenipe, Quam, Endo, Kid Leaf, Zvrk, Snout), Stefan Stanojević, Wuper, Sobekcis, Sensi, Atelje Šoln (Marg and Wunste), Das Drogen.



Figure 5: Hesoyam, 2020, photo Boris Vatovec

What is very interesting and important for this story, so that it does not remain just a dead letter or another in a series of designed projects, is that the festival has flourished successfully and beautifully in a specific environment with very different

social profiles. It is about a long-term process of building trust between the artist and the environment in which the artist creates. Ten years ago, this process of building trust was not easy. You had to explain to people what a mural was, why it was necessary to paint a building, and so on. Recently, the tide has turned completely. Initially, it was a long and laborious process to obtain the consent of local residents to paint a façade. Now the neighbours themselves approach the festival and ask when their building will be painted, which has proven to be the best support for the festival. The artistic director of the festival is also a resident of Bežanijska Kosa, and according to his observations, probably the most diverse population in the city lives in just a few square kilometres. Young, old, middle-aged, rich, poor, highly educated and uneducated. Hooligans, pop artists, athletes, doctors, scientists, all have agreed on one thing: this is beautiful! We mention just some of the comments from festival visitors that were shared on social media: “I am lucky to enjoy this and other works every day”, “You are doing something great so that those who will never step into a museum can see some colour”, “It feels like we are abroad, but this is what Serbia should look like”, “I live here on Bežanijska Kosa and had the pleasure and honour of a great artist coming and painting our building (via Farid Rueda).”²² The artistic director of the festival repeatedly received these comments in personal conversations with residents of Bežanijska Kosa. This shows that street art can only be validated through processes of building long-term trust. Trust between residents and artists is the crucial link on the long road from the perception of graffiti culture and street art as vandalism to the recognition of its artistic qualities and finally to its acceptance in the form of a new muralism.

Conclusion

The Runaway Street Art Festival utilised existing spaces in the area and established an active relationship with the vitality of the city. In its initial phase, before it received international artist support and financial help from organisations and donors, it relied solely on the power of one individual — the artistic director — who recognized the Bežanijska Kosa neighbourhood, a “profane place”, as a potential venue on the outskirts of the city. The painted facades offered the “something” that Pusić wrote about: atypical elements such as the unusualness of the space and the distinct local identity of the residents of Bežanijska Kosa. In this way, the festival confirmed the idea that the liveliness or lifelessness of neighbourhoods does not depend on whether they are located in downtown or on the outskirts of the city, but on the activities in the space, how it is used, the invention of the individual in the space and the authentic urban dynamics created by the interaction of space and the residents. Perhaps the most important contribution of the festival taking place on the outskirts is the revitalization of neighbourhoods that are generally

²² Comments personally addressed to the artistic director (by Prof. dr Vladimir Mako, Miroslav Raduljica) and taken from websites: Marka Žvaka (2020), *Pijanista*, accessed 26. 07. 2024., <https://youtu.be/51qrLQeaS7I?si=JLe7snS2ciNOCLCp>; Runaway Street Art Festival, accessed 26. 07. 2024., <https://www.instagram.com/runawayfestival/?hl=en>.

neglected and unrecognised by city authorities in terms of cultural events. Over time, the festival, which was recognized by the Donji Dorćol association, was extended to Dorćol, bringing the stage back to its “old home”, the city centre.

Another feature of the festival is its bottom-up approach. Urban revitalization is usually initiated by the city, but there are also aspects of revitalization that come from citizens or artists. The Runaway Festival in Bežanijska Kosa represents a bottom-up approach to urban regeneration, a grassroots initiative by immediate and potential users, as opposed to the top-down approach that usually prevails in cities and is initiated by cultural politicians²³. In this particular case, it is an independent grassroots initiative realised through the vision of the artistic director of the festival.

The content seen at the Runaway Festival over the past eight years has confirmed the multiple functions of the new muralism: social inclusion, expression of free thought, creativity and, as the artistic director notes, the most important aspect — establishing direct contact with the audience, in this case with the local population of Bežanijska Kosa and Dorćol. Trust between the artists and the public is not achieved through a single mural, graffiti or even a single festival; it is a long-term process of building trust that is essential for street art to be perceived as art and not as something that goes against the visual identity of this part of the city. It can be concluded that street art festivals have a significant local and international potential for the cultural revitalization of the city and the creation of an authentic cityscape. Since street art cannot be separated from the urban context, it truly represents a “window to understanding society”.²⁴ In order to “open” this window and change the environment, the “extra-artistic” social significance of street art, as Dragičević Šešić states, is indispensable: it encourages people to actively engage.²⁵

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²³ Petrović, M. (2004) *Sociologija stanovanja. Stambena politika: izazovi i mogućnosti*, Beograd: ISI FF, p. 70.

²⁴ Zukin, S. (2004) *The Cultures of Cities*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

²⁵ Dragičević Šešić, op. cit., p. 55.

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ГРАД КАО СЦЕНА:

RUNAWAY INTERNATIONAL STREET ART FESTIVAL

Сажетак: Као највећи артефакт начињен људском руком, град има свеобухватан утицај на свест. Полазимо од тезе да јавни простор представља сцену у арени урбаног простора у коме долази до сукоба различитих интереса и културе. Ови сукоби доводе до тензије између човекових личних потреба и друштвене принуде. Ричард Сенет (Richard Sennett), културни антрополог, сматра да традиционални град насељавају „глумци, актери експресивних емоција који снагом симулације прозаичну стварност претварају у духовни и културни чин“. Оно што арену трансформише у позорницу на којој се ствара урбана култура су самосвесни и слободни појединци који чине упоришну тачку сваког урбанитета. Настојали смо да прикажемо на који начин се град трансформише у сцену посредством фестивала уличне уметности. У првом делу рада град је представљен као сцена и истакнута је улога коју фестивали имају у његовој културној ревитализацији. У другом делу рада указано је на значај који улична уметност има за град. Трећи део рада посвећен је студији случаја *Runaway International Street Art Festival*. У закључку су размотрени значај и значење који јавни простор има као простор друштвено-ангажоване уметности из перспективе уметника и перспективе локалног становништва.

Кључне речи: *street art, јавни простор, „Runaway International Street Art Festival“*



ИСТРАЖИВАЊА

Жељка Пјешивац

Нови Сад

ОЧИМА КАМЕРЕ: НУВЕЛОВ ИНСТИТУТ АРАПСКОГ СВЕТА У ПАРИЗУ

DOI 10.5937/kultura2485219P

УДК 72(443.611)»19»

Оригиналан научни рад

Датум пријема: 01. 06. 2023.

Датум прихватања: 06. 05. 2024.

Сажетак: У овом истраживању бавили смо се концептуалним приступом традицији језиком архитектуре на примеру Института арапског света у Паризу Жана Нувела. Креирањем између теорије погледа, студија културе, родних студија, студија културног наслеђа, архитектуре и филма, у нашем истраживању износе се тврдње да Жан Нувел архитектуру Института арапског света заснива на концепту превођења кључних елемената традиционалне арапске архитектуре (машрабија, минарета, унутрашње дворишта, пролаза) на језик модерне архитектуре инспирисане филмском уметношћу. Превођење је представљено као метафорични и метонимијски процес којим се указује да је механизам уобичајеног знања о арапској цивилизацији кинематографске природе, односно да је знање о арапској цивилизацији у контексту дискурса о оријентализму (колонијализму), посредовано репрезентацијама, што јест, конструисано „очима“ Зайада. Кроз концепт превођења, Нувел уједно успоставља сличности и разлике између идеологија кайаилистичког Зайада и традиционалне Исламка, охрабрујући нову постхладноратовску перспективу која привилежује сарадњу и комуникацију између Француске, Европе и арапског света.

Кључне речи: машрабија, оријентализам, превођење, Нувелов Институт арапског света у Паризу

„Институт арапског света“ у Паризу Жана Нувела

Институт арапског света у Паризу један је од пројеката француског председника Франсоа Митерана (François Mitterrand, 1916–1996) покренутих осамдесетих година у периоду завршетка Хладног рата. Институт су наручили представници деветнаест арапских држава у циљу неговања знања о арапској култури на Западу, односно, како Џон Билн (John Blin) наводи, ради проговора „разумевања арапског света од стране Француске, [његовог] језика, цивилизације и динамичног развоја“¹. Мисија Института је да „охрабри културну разме-

1 Blin, J. (De)forming Self and Other: Toward an Ethics of Distance, in: *Postcolonial Space(s)*, eds. Nalbantoglu, G. B. and Wong, C. T. (1997), New York: Princeton Architectural Press, p. 28.

ну, комуникацију и сарадњу између Француске и арапског света, посебно на пољу науке и технологије² као и да одигра „активну улогу у развоју релација између Француске, Европе и арапског света“³. Институт је свечано отворен 1987. године. На идејном решењу пројекта Института радила је група архитеката⁴ и стручњака предвођена архитектором Жаном Нувелом (Jean Nouvelom), рођеним у Француској 1945. године.

Објекат се налази у Петом дистрикту (*arrondissement*) Париза познатом по Латинској четврти у којој су лоцирани бројни универзитети, факултети и престижне школе. Изграђен је на локацији на којој се спајају Булевар Сен-Жермен / *Boulevard Saint-Germain*/, Кеј Сен-Бернард / *Quai Sain-Bernard*/, Кеј Турнел / *Quai de la Torunelle*/, мост Сули / *Pont de Sully*/ преко реке Сене и Улица де Фосе Сен-Бернард / *Rue des Fosses Saint-Bernard*/, односно на локацији за коју могли бисмо рећи повезује традиционално урбано ткиво Париза, Фабург-Сен-Жермен / *Faubourg-Saint-Germain*/, острво Сите / *Île de la Cité*/ и савремени универзитетски комплекс пете четврти Париза. Програм објекта обухвата: библиотеку, документарни центар, музеј арапске уметности и цивилизације, галерију за излагање савремене арапске уметности и заната, аудиторијум, као и бројне канцеларије и просторије за састанке.⁵ У оквиру објекта налазе се такође и кафетерија, ресторан, простор за паркинг и друге помоћне функције.⁶ Објекат има укупно једанаест етажа изнад земље и три испод.

У визуелном контексту, објекат се састоји од две целине, два објекта, једног правоугаоне форме лоциране на југу и другог са закривљеном фасадом лоцираног на северу, који су одвојени уским пролазом са западне стране и повезани унутрашњим двориштем са источне стране. Архитектура овог објекта заснована је на концепту превођења неколико кључних елемената традиционалне, вернакуларне арапске архитектуре: (1) машрабија (*mashrabiya*), (2) минарета (3) унутрашњег дворишта и (4) уског пролаза.

Машрабије – дијафрајме камере

Јужна фасада правоугаоног објекта лоцираног на јужној страни је савремена експресија традиционалног елемента арапске вернакуларне архитектуре – машрабија, док је његова северна фасада буквално „огледало“ западне културе – стаклена зид-завеса емајлирана сликама париског градског пејзажа.⁷

2 Исто.

3 Исто.

4 Архитектонско решење *Института арапског света* је дело Жана Нувела, Гиберта Лезена (Gibert Lèzens), Пјера Сорје (Pierre Soria) и Архитектонског студија.

5 Nouvel, J. and Tonka, H. (1990) *Institut du Monde Arabe Une Architecture de Jean Nouvel, Gilbert Lezens, Pierre Soria, Architecture Studio*, Paris: Editions du Demi-Cerche, p. 58., in: Nalbantoglu, G. B. and Wong, C. T. (eds.), op. cit., p. 28.

6 Исто.

7 Nouvel, J., Arab World Institute, Arab World Institute (AWI) — Ateliers Jean Nouvel.

Машрабија (*mashrabiya*, *mushrabiya*, *mashraba moucharaby*⁸ или *mashrabiyya*⁹) је архитектонски елемент карактеристичан за традиционалну архитектуру у исламском свету и шире. Реч је о дрвеним решеткама којима су се прекривали прозори и балкони.¹⁰ Постоје две теорије које говоре о пореклу његовог имена: једна, чешће у употреби, која је изведена из арапске речи *shariba*¹¹ – у значењу пити, јер је простор коришћен за малу дрвену полицу (ограђену дрветом и смештену на прозору) на којој су се чували лонци са пијаћом водом и друга мање уобичајена теорија јесте да је име првобитно било *mashrafiya* – изведено из глагола *ashrafa*¹² у значењу – предвидети или посматрати.¹³ Током векова, име се полако мењало због промене звучања саме речи и утицаја других језика.¹⁴

Машрабија је позната под различитим називима (и варијантним архитектонским облицима) широм арапског света: у Јемену под називом *takhrima* (она која је испуњена рупама), у Тунису као *barmaqli*, у Ираку као *shanashil* (реферирајући на дрвене кутијасте параване ослоњене на конзоле са избоченим венцем), у Џеди као *rowshin* (који у својој најједноставнијој форми представља оквир са испуном од панела али без гравуре)¹⁵. Постоје и други термини којим се описују варијанте овог архитектонског елемента изван арапског света. У Турској су машрабије познате под називом *şahnişin*, у Грчкој као *sachnisi*¹⁶, а у Бугарској под називом *sacnaşi*¹⁷. На Малти оне су познате под сродним термином *muxrabija*.¹⁸ Слични елементи архитектуре су коришћени и у Јапану у форми ролетни, паравана или

8 Wher, H. (1976) *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, J. Milton Cowan (ed.), New York: Spoken Language Services, Inc., p. 462.

9 Видети: Kenzari, B. and Elsheshtawy, Y. (2003) The Ambiguous Veil: On Transparency, the Mashrabiyya, and Architecture, *Journal of Architectural Education*, May, Vol. 56, No. 4., London: Taylor and Francis, Ltd.

10 Petersen, A. (2002) *Dictionary of Islamic Architecture*, London – New York: Routledge, p. 177.

11 Видети: Wher, H. Варијатни термини за именицу пиће су: *sharba*, *shurba*, *sharab* али и *mashrab* (pl. *mashraba*) који има додатно значење – места за пиће или места за узимање пића. Видети: исто, стр. 462.

12 У речнику Wher, H. (op. cit.), *ashara* – има значење видети (p. 18), међутим у речнику Woodhead, D. R. and Beene, W. ((1967) *A Dictionary of Iraqi Arabic: Arabic-English*, Washington: Georgetown University Press, p. 240) *ashraf* има значење – посматрати, надзирати, надгледати.

13 Видети: Azzopardi, J. (2012) A Survey of the Maltese Muxrabijiet, *Vigilo*, No. 41, Valletta: Din l-Art Helwa, pp. 26–33.

14 Исто.

15 Oliver, P. (1999) *Dwelling: The House Across the World*, Austin: University of Texas Press, in: Kenzari, B. and Elsheshtawy, Y. op. cit., p. 20.

16 Видети: Marinov, T. (2017) The 'Balkan House': Interpretations and Symbolic Appropriations of the Ottoman-Era Vernacular Architecture in the Balkans, in: *Entangled Histories of the Balkans – Volume Four: Concepts, Approaches, and (Self-)Representations*, eds. Daskalov, R. et al. Leiden-Boston: Brill, p. 522.

17 Видети: Исто, p. 460.

18 Azzopardi, J. op. cit.

завеса направљених од хоризонталних летвица од украсног дрвета, бамбуса или другог природног материјала исплетених канапом, концем или другим материјалом под називом *sudare*¹⁹. Ови елементи под утицајем Шпаније и Маварске се могу пронаћи такође и у Јужној Америци. Модернисти попут Ле Корбизјеа (Le Corbusier, 1887–1965) били су одушевљени употребом *brise-soleil-a*, који је у суштини сличан машрабијама, али модификован због другачијих климатских услова и могли бисмо рећи преведен језиком модерне архитектуре.²⁰

Машрабије у арапском свету су традиционално играле две кључне улоге – да заштите жене од погледа мушкараца са једне стране и да климатизују простор са друге стране. Рупичаста форма омогућавала је продор ваздуха са једне стране и спречавање продирања прејаког сунца са друге. Такође, у овом простору често су се остављале тегле и посуде са водом које би испаравањем допринеле већој влажности и бољој климатизацији унутрашњег простора. Полупрозирни заслони играли су важну улогу у одржавању исламске религије, обичаја и уверења. Наиме, традиционално арапско друштво фиксирано је идејом скривања и чувања приватности.²¹ Јавно излагање нечијег гледишта је ограничено, кретање жена у неким моментима и деловима куће забрањено.²² Унутар ових ограничења развијени су различити механизми који омогућавају проређено/ограничено учешће жена у јавном животу и догађајима.²³ Ови механизми пронашли су бројне манифестације²⁴, међу којима су биле и машрабије, дрвени решеткасти застори/заслони. Као симболи сегрегације и искључења, ови елементи архитектуре омогућавали су женама да „у исто време посматрају/виде, а да притом не буду виђене“²⁵ од стране другог.²⁶ Ова логика је пронађена како у религиозним, тако и сакралним просторима, али у различитим облицима и формама. У џамијама на пример, „женска молитвена

19 Видети: Kenzari, B. and Elsheshtawy, Y. op. cit., p. 20.

20 Претпоставља се да је Ле Корбизје био под утицајем машрабија, имајући у виду да је током свог чувеног путовања за Истанбул 1911. године и касније за Северну Африку, почео да прославља суптилност турске и арапске вернакуларне архитектуре и употребу прозора са засторима (види: Kenzari, B. and Elsheshtawy, Y. op. cit., p. 20. Такође више о овој теми се може пронаћи у: Vogt, A. (1998) *Le Corbusier: The Noble Savage: Toward an Archaeology of Modernism*, Cambridge – MA: The MIT Press.)

21 Kenzari, B. and Elsheshtawy, Y. op. cit., p. 17.

22 Исто.

23 Исто.

24 На нивоу социјалне конвенције, један од најприметнијих механизма контролисаног учешћа жена у јавном животу је био вео. Вео је служио као најприметнија кристализација транспарентности. Омогућавао је жени да учествује у јавном животу, али „на дистанци“. Мушкарци нису могли прићи и разговарати са женама које су носиле дуге огртаче и велове на лицу. У ствари, њихов вео учионио их је социјално невидљивим (види: исто, стр. 17)

25 Mahfouz, A. and Serageldin, I. (1990) *Women and Space in Muslim Societies*, in: *Expressions of Islam in Buildings*, ed. Powell, R. Singapore: Concept Media/The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, p. 86, in Kenzari, B. and Elsheshtawy, Y. op. cit., p. 17.

26 Kenzari, B. and Elsheshtawy, Y. op. cit., p. 17.

места нису само одвојена од мушких, него су смештена иза њих или на мезанин или са стране, где нису видљиве. Са ових локација, жена је могла да види мушкарце који су дошли у џамију (а да они њу не виде).²⁷ У резиденцијалној архитектури, прозори, лође и балкони са машрабијама омогућавали су жени да види спољашњи свет, а да у исто време не буде виђена.²⁸

У контексту *Инстѿиѿуѿѿа арайскоѿ свеѿѿа* Жана Нувела, машрабије се појављују у форми серије металних квадратних отвора налик на бленде/дијафрагме камере, распоређених у правилном геометријском растеру (мрежи) иза стакленог зида. Оне, дакле, овде нису израђене на традиционални начин од дрвета, већ од метала, подржавајући геометријске шаре (крugове, квадрате, звезде, шестоуглове), које често проналазимо на предметима исламске уметности, али на сасвим други начин.²⁹ Направљени од метала, ови отвори функционишу попут сочива камере – контролисани су фотоелектричним ћелијама, која их отварају или затварају услед реакције на спољашње сунчево осветљење. Када је напољу на пример сунчан дан, ови отвори или дијафрагме би се затворили, а када је тмуран дан, они би се отворили (на тридесетогодишњицу *Инстѿиѿуѿѿа арайскоѿ свеѿѿа* Нувелове дијафрагме су потпуно реновиране, јер једно време нису радиле. Данас, како се наводи, веома добро раде, али не више уз помоћ сензора – већ се отварају и затварају ручним путем.³⁰) Свеобухватни ефекат је сличан оном који производе традиционалне машрабије – са једне стране допуштају да посматрамо спољашњи приказ изнутра, а да не будемо виђени споља и са друге, омогућавају вентилацију, односно бољу климатизацију простора. Међутим, улога Нувелових дијафрагми иде много даље од ових традиционалних референци/улога машрабија. Преведене језиком нових медија, оне постају архитектонски корелатив статичној камери, попримајући улогу „кинематографског апаратуса“. Но, наспрам јужној фасади компонованој од металних дијафрагми, северна фасада је изведена у форми класичне зид-завесе емајлиране сликама париског градског пејзажа „попут процеса наношења хемикалија на фотографску плочу“³¹ – могли бисмо рећи као вид евокације негатива фотографије. О чему је овде реч?

Реч је о игри између транспарентног и непрозирног или полутранспарентног, статичног и покретног, продорног погледа и летимичног погледа/сагледавања слике света (око нас и у нама). Са северне стране имамо транспарентно стакло које елиминише сенку, и са јужне стакло прекривено делимично прозирним или у неким моментима (када се отвори дијафрагми затворе) непрозирним металним засторима. Код транспарентног стакла, подупрта челична структура постаје превише асертивна, док фасада компонована од металних дијафрагми раствара простор архитектуре и на изванредан начин настоји да га дематеријализује. Северна фасада

27 Исто.

28 Исто.

29 #MardiMusée | La visite architecturale - YouTube.

30 Видети: Исто.

31 Nouvel J., Arab World Institute, Arab World Institute (AWI) — Ateliers Jean Nouvel.

инспирирана је естетиком модерне архитектуре и уметности, а јужна естетиком импресионистичког сликарства. Прва привилегује, терминима Нормана Брајсона (Norman Bryson, 1949) чист, продоран поглед (*gaze*), док друга легитимичан, темпорализовани поглед (*glance*)³² – онај који задржава извесну свесност телесности ситуиране у квалитету погледа. Импресионисти су веровали да боје не би требало да буду помешане на палети уметника, него на ретини ока посматрача.³³ „Када су боје помешане на палети, постоји одузимајући процес – боје теже да постану црне. Што неко више меша пигменте у настојању да креира неку суптилну боју, она постаје тамнија и тежа. Импресионисти су настојали да ово избегну наношењем чистих боја директно на платна у распршеним тачкама. Помешане на ретини ока посматрача, ове тачке креирале би фине нијансе и сенке.“³⁴ Жан Нувел управо бира неутралне боје за ентеријер објекта (белу и сиву), како би се поигравао бојама и интензитетима, могли бисмо рећи тачкастог (поинтилистичког) осветљења на површини архитектуре и последично ангажовао телесну – тактилну димензију погледа. Бели ентеријери у Нувеловој архитектури као да постају (сликарско) платно на којем се мешају интензитети сунчеве светлости изазивајући у посматрачу различите перцепције и доживљаје простора. На овај начин свевидећа статична позиција посматрача бива разорена увођењем интеракције са окружењем, односно релативног карактера простора. Док северна фасада нуди апсолутност у карактеру (где би се под апсолутним мислило на непроменљивост), јужна нуди релативни карактер – онај чији изглед зависи од његове релације са субјектом и спољашњим контекстом. Први нуди могућност линеарног сагледавања призора, а други фрагментарно сагледавање и повезивање призора спољашњег окружења. Први нуди могућност сагледавања окружења у покрету (аналогно идеји покретне камере), а други, сагледавање окружења кроз фиксирани оквир заузимањем статичне позиције посматрача (аналогно идеји статичне камере).

Минарејџ – архитџекџонска џроменада

Други елемент арапске културе доминантан у архитектури *Инсџиџиуџи арапској свеџи* јесте *Кула од књиџе* – део библиотеке овог института који се налази у западном делу правоугаоног објекта. Кула се простире целом висином овог објекта и референца је на традиционални елемент арапске архитектуре – минарет који се налази у граду Самари, стотинак километара северно од Багдада.³⁵ Реч је о најстаријем спиралном пужоликом минарету изграђеном у 9. веку – купи која је висока 52 m и широка 33 m, окруженој спиралном спољашњом рампом. Нувел управо у *Кули од књиџе* репродукује идеју овог минарета³⁶, односно идеју кружног,

32 Видети: Bryson, N. (1983) *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

33 Kuma, K. (2008) *Anti-Object: The Dissolution and Disintegration of Architecture*, trans. Hiroshi Watanabe, London: Architectural Association Publications, p. 99.

34 Исто, стр. 99–100.

35 #MardiMusée | La visite architecturale - YouTube.

36 Исто.

спиралног кретања уз помоћ рампе која нам омогућава да се попнемо на различите етажне библиотеке и до самог врха зграде. У овој кули чувају се књиге које припадају арапској култури.³⁷

Кула од књије није изведена на традиционални начин – вернакуларним језиком арапске архитектуре, већ је преведена на језик модерне архитектуре. Наиме, рампа ове куле евокација је беле спиралне рампе атријумског простора *Гујенхајмовој музеја (Guggenheim Museum)* у Њујорку, архитекте Френка Лојда Врјта (Frank Lloyd Wright, 1867–1959), односно Ле Корбизјеове идеје архитектонске променаде, прожете у овом случају још једним елементом инспирисаним модерном архитектуром Ле Корбизјеа – хоризонталним издуженим прозором. Наиме, док класични вертикални прозор (*la porte-fenêtre*) „репродукује импресију комплетног простора“, омогућавајући сагледавање на пример улице, зграде/баште и неба, хоризонтални издужени прозор (*la fenêtre en longueur*) умањује перцепцију стављајући акценат на пејзаж³⁸, у овом случају градски пејзаж. Оно што хоризонтални прозор сече из „пирамидалног призора“, у којем посматрач има доминирајућу улогу над спољашњим простором јесу трака неба и трака тла (који одражавају илузију перспективне дубине)³⁹, формализујући и чинећи хоризонт видљивим и тако дефинише сваки простор у терминима његове релације ка хоризонту. Док класични вертикални прозор истиче перспективно сагледавање простора постављајући посматрача у статичну, свевидећу, централну позицију, хоризонтални Корбизјеовски прозор усмерава поглед ка хоризонту и наводи нас на сагледавање простора кроз покрет, односно у покрету. Архитектонска променада *Куле од књије*, прожета хоризонталним издуженим прозором целом дужином архитектонски је корелат простору покретне камере нудећи секвенцијално одмотавање слика испред очију посматрача како се он постепено креће кроз структуру простора, паралелно губећи доминирајућу, свевидећу улогу над спољашњим простором. Дакле, не попут статичног погледа уоквиреног фиксном камером, хоризонтални прозор ове архитектонске променаде нуди оквир који позива на кретање и сагледавање спољашњег простора кроз покрет.

Но, на последњем спрату ове куле налази се просторија која се некада звала Соба за пушење, а данас Ротонда.⁴⁰ Данас, она је „свечана просторија која се користи посебно за време отварања изложби *Инститиуија арапској светиа* и која се наставља уједно на велику просторију – просторију *Високој светиа* у којој се традиционално састаје Управни одбор Института и који окупља руководство Института и амбасаде 22 земље Арапске лиге“.⁴¹ Ова просторија омогућава поглед на Париз скоро под углом од 360 степени. Практично са овог места, врха *Куле од књије*,

37 Исто.

38 Colomina, B. (1992) *The Split Wall: Domestic Voyeurism*, in: *Sexuality & Space*, ed. Colomina B. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, p. 112.

39 Исто.

40 #MardiMusée | La visite architecturale - YouTube.

41 Исто.

пружа се поглед скоро у једној кружној путањи на четврт Париза на левој обали Сене Монпарнас/*Montparnasse*, Ајфелову кулу/*la Tour Eiffel*, модерну финансијску четврт Дефанс/*La Defense*, катедралу Нотр Дам/*Notre Dame* и Трг Бастиље/*Place de La Bastille* са десне стране Сене⁴², евоцирајући идеју панорамског сагледавања пејзажа – односно панорамске фотографије или панорамског призора филмске камере или идеју Дагерове (Louis Daguerre, 1787–1851) диораме.

Док смо код хоризонталног прозора рампе *Куле од књије* имали приказ који сече траку неба и траку земље и усмерава поглед ка хоризонту, Ротонда нуди панорамско сагледавање пејзажа. Панорама је фундаментално дефинисана као „мурал осликан на кружном простору око централне платформе на којој се налазе посматрачи и којима се нуди могућност да посматрају у свим правцима и виде сцену као да су усред ње“⁴³. Реч је о другачијој концепцији погледа која „хвата окружење под знаком ефемерних и замагљених сензација ухваћених субјектом у покрету“⁴⁴, односно о идеји која омогућава урањање у простор. Овде више не радимо са репрезентацијама ограниченим у датом формату попут ренесансног ракурса/перспективе, него са аутентичним „акумулатором сензација“⁴⁵. Другим речима, посматрач овде више није једноставно окренут према „позорници“, бивајући у вези са удаљеном и ограниченом сценом призора, него је сада зароњен у „халуцинаторни универзум“ који нуди висок степен реалности.⁴⁶ Посматрач се више не налази „испред“ већ унутар сценског призора, унутар дијегетског и сензорно визуелног простора. Посетилац Ротонде *Инсјийиуија арайској свети*, добија могућност да буде окружен сценом – приказом градског пејзажа Париза скоро под углом од 360 степени, односно да буде тотално уроњен у градски пејзаж окружујућег призора.

Унутрашње двориште – Бела кућија

Но, како би се спојиле ове две целине – објекат са фасадом окренутом на север према старом Паризу који симболизује Запад и објекат са фасадом окренутом на југ према модерном Паризу, који симболизује Оријент, Жан Нувел је направио неколико пасарела на 9, 8. и 4. спрату и још један занимљиви елемент инспирисан традиционалном арапском архитектуром, а то је унутрашње двориште окружено машрабијама.⁴⁷

Наиме, арапске куће биле су затворене према улици са једне стране, односно усмерене према унутрашњем дворишту са друге. Машрабије се нису налазиле само на прозорима, лођама и балконима усмереним према улици, већ и у унутрашњем делу објекта, односно према дворишту такође, задржавајући своју улогу одвајања простора намењеног мушкарцима од простора намењеног женама. Двориште

42 Исто.

43 Marzo, J. L., The Panorama, Microsoft Word - Panorama-english.doc (soymenos.net) , р. 1.

44 Исто, стр. 3.

45 Исто, стр. 6.

46 Исто, стр. 7.

47 Видети: #MardiMusée | La visite architecturale - YouTube.

је био јавни простор у коме су се често одвијали пословни састанци и као такав у традиционалном исламском свету припадао је мушкарцима, док су породични унутрашњи простори куће припадали женама.⁴⁸ Жена је тако могла да буде присутна у оквиру дворишта, али само на индиректан начин посредством машрабија. „Машрабије су [тако] омогућавале да жена посматра [мушки свет], али да не буде посматрана и да упозоре мушкарце на потенцијално присуство жена којима није било омогућено да буду виђене. [...] жена је могла да добије приступ мушком простору задржавајући норму родне сегрегације, [док са друге стране] нису постојали архитектонски елементи или неки други, који би дозволили мушкарцу да продре у женски простор.“⁴⁹ На овај начин су заправо удате жене биле заштићене од оних мушкараца са којима нису биле у родном сродству.⁵⁰ У контексту *Инстийиуџа арайској светиа*, унутрашње просторије са терасама које гледају ка дворишту прекривене су машрабијама, али изведене овде на другачији начин – језиком модерне архитектуре. У питању су једноставни квадрати од белог мермера, који нас помало подсећају на алабастер (врсту меког и прозачног белог мермера) који су Арапи врло радо користили у античком периоду.⁵¹ Унутрашње двориште, формирано од серије квадрата истих величина од белог мермера, које повремено служи као изложбени простор, евокација је *беле куџије/коцке* – западног концепта изложбеног простора – амблема алијенације уметности и уметника од друштва. *Бела куџија* – замишљена је као квадратни или правоугаони простор лишен прозора, зидова обојених у бело, у којем таваница постаје једини извор светлости.⁵² Она је „гето простор, једињење за преживљавање, протомузеј са директним усмерењем ка безвременом, сет услова, став, место лишено локације, рефлекс огољене зид-завесе, магична комора, концентрација мисли, можда и грешка.“⁵³ Како Мишко Шуваковић наводи: „Модел *беле коцке* није трансисторијски, трансгеографски и аполитички конструкт рада у безинтересном и аутономном свету уметности. Напротив, естетски идеалитет *беле коцке* је специфична макрополитичка и микрополитичка конструкција аутономије уметности, уметничког дела и излагања уметничког дела“⁵⁴ и изложбеног галеријског простора који је „својствен за друштво високог модернизма“. Односно, уметничка дела/изложбе се овде предстаљају и посматрају као неутралне и чисте, недодирнуте са временом и својим променама, тајновите, скривене од очију јавности, односно недодирнуте спољашњим дискурсима, а сам изложбени простор као идеализовани естетски простор за презентацију и комуникацију.

48 Kenzari, B. and Elsheshtawy, Y. op. cit., p. 21.

49 Исто.

50 Исто.

51 #MardiMusée | La visite architecturale - YouTube.

52 O’Doherty, B. (1999) *Inside the White Cube – The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, Santa Monica – San Francisco: The Lapis Press, p. 7.

53 Исто, стр. 80.

54 Šuvaković, M. (2006) *Diskurzivna analiza*, Beograd: Univerzitet umetnosti u Beogradu, str. 391.

Бели зидови унутрашњег дворишта, креирани серијом белих квадрата распоређених у правилној геометријској мрежи, скривају поглед посетилаца који се налазе унутар Института. Оно што се налази унутар њега, није могуће видети из унутрашњих просторија Института телом у покрету, већ заустављањем тела и прецизним усмеравањем ока између прореда квадрата.

Серија квадрата распоређених у правилној геометријској мрежи је евокација још једног елемента модерног доба – серијалног облика продукције каснокапиталистичког конзумерског друштва, омогућене између осталог појавом камере. Једина разлика међу белим квадратима од мермера је у интензитету осветљености њихових површина током дана (као и у интензитету осветљености „одсутне мреже“ у којој су ови квадрати распоређени). Реч је о бескрајној репетицији есенцијално идентичних објеката који конституишу фасаду унутрашњег дворишта, а која нас наводи да разлику доживимо као исто, односно реч је о артифицијелној креацији разлике. Контрадикција између разлике и репетиције је својствена серијалном облику продукције – облику који произлази, али није идентичан са масовном продукцијом робе: „Док масовна продукција ради да елиминише разлике, серијална продукција уводи ограничени опсег разлика у масовно продуктовани објекат.“⁵⁵ Како Жан Бодријар (Jean Baudrillard, 1929–2007) примећује у књизи *Системи објеката* (*Le Système des objets*, 1948), „ниједан објекат се не појављује на тржишту данас у једном типу, већ са опсегом строго маргиналних разлика – боје, додатака, детаља – које рекреирају илузију избора. Последишно, оно што конзумирамо није објекат у својој материјалности, него у својој разлици – објекат као знак. Тако, разлика сама постаје објекат конзумације, а агенда серијалне продукције постаје очигледна: пажљива производња и контрола продукције разлика у [...] друштву.“⁵⁶ Сваки квадрат је овде огледало које рефлектује све друге и истовремено сваки је рефлексција свих других. Док репетиција инаугурише бескрајну игру замена, класификација, преокрета и пронављања, ова игра суспендује било коју референцу изван саме серије, пажљиво се поигравајући са игром производње и контроле продукције разлика. Референца на серијалну продукцију присутна је и у игри са металним блендама/дијафрагмама распоређеним у регуларном геометријском растеру јужне фасаде.

Пролаз – иерсијективна насипрам илошности

Најзад, још један елемент арапске архитектуре који Жан Нувел уводи јесте пролаз имеђу два дела објекта који нам омогућава да са спољашње стране приступимо дворишту (уколико су врата овог пролаза отворена). У визуелном контексту, овај пролаз повезује средњовековну католичку цркву Нотр Дам – симбол хришћанства (али и града Париза и француске нације) и Меморијал жртвама депортације за време Другог светског рата (*Mémorial des Martyrs de la Déportation*, посвећен

55 Owens, C. (1992) *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture*, eds. S. Bryson et al., Berkeley – Los Angeles – Oxford: University of California Press, p. 118.

56 Исто.

Јеврејима и лоциран иза Нотр Дама на Острву града/*Ile de la Cite*/).⁵⁷ Тако у једном потезу имамо истовремено везу на симболичком нивоу између хришћанства, јудаизма и ислама.⁵⁸ Посматрано из унутрашњег дворишта, са једне стране суочавамо се са погледом који истиче (ренесансну) перспективу и референцијално сагледавање пејзажа, и са друге, са усмереношћу погледа на беле плошне зидове лишене перспективе (перспективног сагледавања градског пејзажа) или терминима филма, суочавамо се са игром погледа у даљину и погледа (камере) из близине.

Нувелов Инстѿиѿуѿи арайскоѿ светѿа у Паризу: око камере – око Заѿада

Игра између удаљеног погледа и погледа из близине, перспективног и плошног погледа; уоквирених погледа која нуде фрагментарно сагледавање призора и погледа лишеног оквира; сагледавања призора из статичне позиције и сагледавања призора кроз кретање тела; перспективног погледа усмереног ка хоризонту и погледа од 360 степени, те увођење металних покретних дијафрагми које ступају на место традиционалних статичних арапских геометријских отвора и архитектонске променаде са хоризонталним издуженим прозорима, референце су на кинематографско сагледавање и корак даље, кинематографско разумевање простора, окружења, односно света око нас и у нама.

Другим речима, оно што Нувел овде нуди није нека „истина“ о арапском свету (како то Билн уочава⁵⁹), већ чињеница да је знање (у овом случају) о арапском свету *кинематографске ѿприроде*, односно посредовано „репрезентацијама“, то јест конструисано очима Запада. Како Едвард Сад (Edward Said, 1935–2003) наводи: „Оријент, [...], који се појављује у оријентализму, [...] јесте систем репрезентација које су створили читави низови сила, захваљујући којима је Оријент ушао у западну науку, западну свест и касније, у западну империју.“⁶⁰ Објективна открића Оријента – дела бројних научника о Оријенту – условљена су чињеницом да су њихове истине, „као и све друге истине које се преносе језиком, отеловљене у језику, а истина језика је, како је Ниче рекао, ‘мобилна војска метафора, метонимија и антропоморфизама – укратко, збир људских односа, који су поетички и реторички увећани, транспоновани и улепшани и који, после дуготрајне употребе, изгледају људима чврсти, канонски и обавезни; истине су илузије за које је човек заборавио да су оно што су’⁶¹.“ Вредност Оријента у начелу је била дефинисана „европским појмовима, а посебно појмовима који су означавали да је баш Европа – европска наука, академске дисциплине, европско схватање и управа – заслужна што је Оријент претворен у оно што је био сада“.

57 #MardiMusée | La visite architecturale - YouTube.

58 Видети: Исто.

59 Biln, J. op. cit., pp. 25-37.

60 Said, E. (2003) *Orientalism*, 5th ed., London: Penguin Books, p. 203.

61 Nietzsche, F. On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense, in: *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Kaufmann, W. (1954), New York: Viking Press, pp. 46-47; in Said, E. op. cit., p. 203.

„Око камере“ Нувеловог архитектонског простора *Инстѿиѿуѿѿа арајскоѿ свеѿѿа* у Паризу, метафора је за „око Запада“ или терминима Мишела Фукоа (Michel Foucault, 1926–1984) „апаратуса моћи“ који хвата, оријентише, детерминише, обликује, контролише или обезбеђује гестове, понашања, мишљења или дискурсе о арапском свету. Елементи традиционалне вернакуларне арапске архитектуре (пре свега: машрабије, минарет, унутрашње двориште и пролаз) преведени су дакле на примеру *Инстѿиѿуѿѿа арајскоѿ свеѿѿа* језиком модерне архитектуре инспирисане уметношћу филма, прилагођене као „компоненте“ строго западног објекта, креирајући арапске референце као рефлексије Запада пре него као истине Истока.

Међутим, није реч овде само о дискурсу оријентализма, нити о једноставној игри међу бинарним паровима, посебно између Запада и Истока. Увођењем централног дворишта којим се повезују северна и јужна страна, Нувел уводи снажну паралелу између идеологија капиталистичког Запада и традиционалног Истока. Томас Меквилеј (Thomas McEvilley) наводи: „У потрази за значајем овог облика изложбе [*беле куѿије*], морамо се окренути ка другим облицима комора које су биле конструисане на сличним принципима. Корене ове коморе вечног приказа треба пронаћи не толико у историји уметности колико у религији. [...] Египатске гробнице на пример, [...] биле су дизајниране да елиминишу свесност спољашњег света“⁶² и пролазност времена. У религиозном свету, чување тела фараона, односно „живота“ фараона кроз вечност обезбеђивало је очување државе за коју се он залагао. Слично, у реалном, неритуалном свету, конструисање „непроменљивог простора“ или простора у којем су ефекти промена скривени или прерушени, покушај је очувања стања непроменљивости (*status quo*) у терминима социјалних вредности или у уметничкој инстанци, уметничких вредности.

Слично у контексту Нувеловог *Инстѿиѿуѿѿа арајскоѿ свеѿѿа* у Паризу, превођење арапског дворишта окруженог машрабијама кроз Нувелов концепт *беле куѿије* чији су зидови обликовани серијом квадрата у правилном геометријском растеру, изгледа као подвлачење паралеле између (репресивних) идеологија капитализма Запада и традиционалне арапске културе Истока. Оба су била дизајнирана да елиминишу свесност спољашњег контекста и очувају илузију непроменљивости и вечног присуства. Међутим, Нувел иде корак даље и овде уводи снажан потез, источну страну куѿије отвара пролазом који разара затворени концепт *беле куѿије*, односно арапског дворишта окруженог машрабијама. Плошном погледу тако нуди нову перспективу (не ону која је усмерена ка небу), већ ка Паризу, односно катедрали Нотр Дам и Меморијалу жртвама депортације за време Другог светског рата, на симболички начин повезујући хришћанство, јудаизам и ислам, у чему се огледа политичко дејство, снага и моћ овог објекта.

Нувелов *Инстѿиѿуѿѿ аријскоѿ свеѿѿа* у Паризу, парадигматски је пример пост-модерне архитектуре. Како је реч о замени једног означитеља (нпр. машрабија) другим (металним сензорним дијафрагмама или пак квадратним белим мермер-

⁶² McEvilley, T. (1999) Introduction, in: *Inside the White Cube—The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, O’Doherty, B. Santa Monica – San Francisco: The Lapis Press, p. 8.

ним засторима) – што је својствено метафори, те о постављању једног концепта уз други (нпр. фасаде од металних *машрабија*/дијафрагми наспрам стаклене зид-завесе) – што је својствено метонимији, превођење је овде виђено као метафорични и метонимијски процес. Процеси превођења засновани на метафори и метонимији овде немају за циљ само да укажу да је знање о арапском свету у контексту дискурса о оријентализму посредовано репрезентацијама, то јест конструисано очима Запада, већ у контексту постхладноратовског дискурса о новом хуманизму, да успоставе паралелу између идеологија капиталистичког Запада и традиционалног Истока, да увиде сличности и разлике ових идеологија и охрабре перспективу промовисања и јачања сарадње и комуникације између Француске, Европе и арапског света.

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*THROUGH THE CAMERA EYE:
JEAN NOUVEL’S ARAB WORLD INSTITUTE IN PARIS*

Abstract: The study explores a conceptual approach to tradition/cultural heritage using the language of architecture on the example of Jean Nouvel’s Arab World Institute in Paris. Moving between theory of perception and culture studies, gender studies, culture heritage studies, architecture and film, it is argued that Jean Nouvel bases the architecture of the Arab World Institute on the concept of translating key elements of the traditional, vernacular Arab architecture (mashrabiya, minaret, inner courtyard, passage) using the language of modern architecture inspired by film art. Here, translation is seen as a metaphorical and metonymic process, indicating that the mechanism of common knowledge about Arab civilization is cinematic in nature; that is, that the knowledge about Arab civilization in the context of discourse on Orienta-

lism (colonialism) is mediated by representations i.e. constructed through the “eyes“ of the West. Through the concept of translation, Nouvel simultaneously determines similarities and differences between the ideologies of the capitalist West and the traditional East, encouraging a new post-Cold War perspective that privileges cooperation and communication between France, Europe and the Arab world. In what way are the traditional elements of vernacular Arab architecture present in Nouvel’s architecture of the Arab World Institute? Why are they translated in the language of modern Western architecture? Why were film art elements used in the aesthetics of the architecture of this Institute? In what way is the parallel between East and West established, and what is the political effect of the aesthetics of the architecture of this Institute?

Key words: *mashrabiya, apparatus, Orientalism, translation, Jean Nouvel’s Arab World Institute*

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ЗНАЧАЈ И СПЕЦИФИЧНОСТИ ВИСОКОГ ОБРАЗОВАЊА У ОБЛАСТИ СПОРТСКОГ НОВИНАРСТВА

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Сажетак: Намера аутора овој шекстиа јесте да представе актуелни контекст образовања новинара у Србији, потребне моделе настава и укључени значај њихове академске едукације на високообразовним установама. Аутори су фокусирани примарно на поље српског новинарства, с обзиром на популарност овог поља (српска) и ове области новинарства (српско), али и покушаје његове маргинализације. С циљем да укажемо на специфичност тренутка у којем читава новинарска професија данас егзистира и њене изазове и одговорности с једне стране, односно везе српска и новинарства (медија) и академску едукацију у домену српског новинарства у Србији с друге, реализовано је и конкретни испитивање уједно међу студентима српског новинарства, међу којима је и велики број оних који су већ ангажовани у новинарским редакцијама. Посебан семенит испитивања посвећен је значају адекватне едукације српских новинара на високообразовним установама и дејално је приказан кроз добијене резултате. Они би требало да прикажу постојећи пресек стања у овом контексту, као и пратеће парадоксе и могуће развојне перспективе, као и важности унапређења овог односа по свету новинарства и медија у целини, али читаво друштво у којем они имају и те како важну улогу.

Кључне речи: високообразовне установе, формално образовање, настава новинарства, новинарство, српски, српско новинарство

Уводне напомене¹

С уочена већ дуго с глобалном кризом медија и бројним проблемима у својој пословној свакодневици, новинарска професија је и пред изазовом адекватне анализе различитих суштински важних тема које значајно могу одредити њену даљу судбину. Једна од њих јесте значај формалне едукације (образовања) новинара на високошколским установама у актуелном контексту света новинарства и медија. Важност ове теме и њено парадоксално гурање на маргину већ деценијама левитирају у вакуму несагласја медијске теорије и праксе, између тврдње да је новинарство искључиво занат, која редовно провејава у медијским редакцијама и једнако депласираних образовних теорија из академских лабораторија, самоизолованих од свакодневне медијске и новинарске реалности.

У пресеку ових неразумевања сместиле су и многе заблуде које прате тумачење појединачних новинарских модела и области, попут спортског новинарства. Оно се, примера ради, неоправдано сматра мање вредним, премда је, сходно динамици и формату дешавања која су у фокусу ове врсте новинарских професионалаца (спорт), несумњиво најбољи полигон за њихово сазревање и усавршавање. С друге стране, глобална популарност и ширина значаја спортских дешавања уједно нуде и велике могућности за теоријско сагледавање изазова који прате новинарство и медије.

Тумачи медијско-новинарске стварности област спортског новинарства су на тај начин прилично маргинализовали, па се и анализа њене праксе сасвим повиновала лаичкој интерпретацији у којој се и важност формалне едукације новинара за рад у овој друштвеној сфери представља неважном. Последица свега тога јесте и дефицит адекватних високообразовних установа које се баве едукацијом спортских новинара. Факултет за спорт Универзитета „Унион – Никола Тесла” више од деценије је посвећен овој сфери едукације (спортско новинарство), што га чини репрезентативном средином за анализу ове теме. Студенти овог факултета су оправдано изабрани као репрезентативан узорак за овако усмерено истраживање.

Едукација спортских новинара у високообразовном систему је, самим тим, изабрана као тема релеватна за анализу, док је у истраживачко-методолошком погледу њен фокус био усмерен управо ка студентима спортског новинарства поменутог факултета, који представљају јединствен узорак за тумачење специфичности ове теме из ширег друштвеног ракурса. Они су, наиме, били испитаници у оквиру ширег истраживања које је током 2023. и 2024. спроведено у оквиру Факултета

¹ Овај текст представља део ширег истраживања које је у оквиру Факултета за спорт (Универзитет „Унион – Никола Тесла”, Београд, Србија) реализовано током 2023. и 2024. године, с циљем испитивања образовања и укупног стања у пољу спортског новинарства у Србији из угла студената спортског новинарства, тј. оних који се за тај позив школују (или су већ дипломирали) на овој високообразовној установи. Наведено истраживање и овај рад су уједно и део пројекта „Спорт, медији и новинарство – перцепција садашњости и будућности” Факултета за спорт Универзитета „Унион – Никола Тесла”.

за спорт, са намером да се анализира актуелно стање у спортском новинарству и његове развојне перспективе у савременим медијима. Један од кључних углова ове анализе била је тема формалног образовања спортских новинара у Србији на високообразовним установама, али и анализа њихових професионалних мотива и очекивања, која су у директној вези са потребом и важношћу ове врсте њихове едукације.

Спорти и новинарство, новинарство и спорти

Актуелна позиција и функције спорта и новинарства, а самим тим и њихов однос уоквирени су савременим глобализацијским процесима, који представљају континуирани историјски ток корених промена читавог система у један нови систем који упоредо постаје међузависан, али на један другачији начин. Он се одржава и као „медијска, тј. комуникацијска промена с једне стране, али и као промена у култури и друштву с друге”², па и у домену спорта. Улогу новинара и медија у пољу спорта је, стога, данас потребно тумачити у контексту „комуникационе конструкције социокултурне реалности”³. Анализирајући однос спорта и новинарства (медија) и принцип повратне спреге који у том погледу од почетка делује, потребно је најпре имати у виду да су спорт и медији, а самим тим и новинарство, нераскидиво повезани, од тзв. малих такмичења до Олимпијских игара. С једне стране, морамо бити свесни да „спорт није само један сегмент друштва, већ нешто што, кроз идентификацију са успесима и неуспесима, масовном повезаношћу и, самим тим, лакшом проходношћу разних порука, значајно доприноси обликовању јавног мњења”⁴. Тако многи спортски догађаји привлаче и разнолике друштвене актере који желе да употребе или злоупотребе међународну позорницу за слање разних порука, док је „богатство медијских платформи на којима то може да се учини последњих година већи него икада досада”⁵. Такође, „масовни медији имају важну улогу и у креирању слике о спортским херојима и антихеројима, победницима и губитницима, постављају рам њиховог портрета, како за актуелне, тако и за будуће генерације”⁶. Због свега тога, постаје сасвим јасна и оправдана и акту-

2 Nepp, A. (2013) *Cultures of mediatization*, Cambridge: Polity, p. 31.

3 Nepp, A. and Krotz, F. (2014) *Mediatized worlds*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 3.

4 Бајић, П. и Петровић, Р. Таблоидни ритам спортског извештавања у дневној штампи Србије, у: *Спорти, здравље, животино средина* (зборник радова са међународне научне конференције), И. Гајић (главни уредник) (2019), Београд: Факултет за спорт, Универзитет „Унион – Никола Тесла”, стр. 30.

5 Бајић, П. (2015) Поглед кроз олимпијске кругове: Игре као платформа за јачање меке моћи и ширење порука у међународним односима, у: *Друштво и простор. Епистемологија простора. Друштвени простор и културно-историјска значења: зборник радова*, Pavle Milenković, Snežana Stojšin и Ana Pajvančić-Cizelj (ur.) Београд: Српско социолошко друштво; Београд: Институт за упоредно право; Нови Сад: Филозофски факултет Универзитета у Новом Саду, стр. 290.

6 Бајић, П. са студентима Факултета за спорт (2021) *Бијели четврти: шампиони без олимпијске медаље*. Београд: Факултет за спорт Универзитета „Унион – Никола Тесла”, стр. 18.

елна глобално присутна оцена да је у 21. веку потребна нова врста образовања и обуке новинара⁷.

С обзиром на тему истраживања овог рада, наведене чињенице које указују на снагу везе спорта и новинарства, као и оне које говоре о значају адекватне едукације новинара данас, могу се укрстити и са актуелним контекстом генералног односа према младима и њиховој едукацији у нашем друштву. Наиме, у државама као што је наша, тј. оним са „мањком демократског капацитета, кризом вредности и проблемом у систему образовања, потребно је идентификовати младе који критички промишљају стварност и стоички се носе са недаћама које реалност доноси”⁸, будући да у Србији „не постоји заокружен институционални оквир за деловање младих у друштву, који је нужан за успостављање квалитетног медијског простора”⁹. Ова, свакако прилично уопштена перспектива, посредно добија свој пуни смисао и значај у контексту наше анализе уколико у фокус сместимо чињеницу да је значај адекватне базичне едукације посебно важан с обзиром на утицај и одговорност медија и новинара, јер се тек тада може подразумевати и „индивидуална одговорност за изречено и учињено”, а што би „у даљим корацима довело до личних одлука и избора функционалних по цело друштво”¹⁰.

Генеза важности академског образовања новинара

Када говоримо о почецима формалног образовања новинара (уопште, не посебно спортских) на овим просторима, морамо се осврнути на формирање Журналистичког смера на Факултету политичких наука Универзитета у Београду 1968. године, ангажманом пре свега Сергија Лукача, легендарног новинара и уредника НИИ-а. Његова наследница на овој Катедри, проф. др Неда Тодоровић стога оправдано подсећа на то да је баш Лукач, као „један од оних који су поставили темеље академског образовања новинара, уз наду да се не претерује ако се каже – први међу једнаким”, за подстицај и амбицију имао четири основне компоненте у формирању новинара: „идејно-политичко опредељење, интелектуално-образовну компоненту, професионално умеће и људске карактеристике”, те да је на тим постулатима и „утемељен Новинарски смер (тада је формално носио назив Журналистички смер) на Факултету политичких наука 1968. године, десетак и курс година пре него што ће и један од његових оснивача – Сергије Лукач – докторирати”¹¹.

7 Детаљније видети: Gade, P. J. (2004) Newspapers and organisational development: Management and journalist perceptions of newsroom cultural change. In: *Journalism Communication Monographs*. 6(1): 3–55, Spring.

8 Vitković, B. (2024) Učešće mladih u medijima i analiza prelivanja informacija o njima od jedne ka drugoj vrsti medija. *CM: Communication and Media*, XVIII(2), str. 305–336, DOI: 10.5937/cm18-43849.

9 Исто, стр. 309.

10 Исто, стр. 332.

11 Према: Петровић, Р. и Пенезић, С. (2023) Сергије Лукач – прометеј новинарства, Београд: Факултет за спорт Универзитета „Унион – Никола Тесла” и *Службени гласник РС*, стр. 109.

Сам Лукач је већ тада увиђао значај формалног образовања новинара и њихове припреме за праксу, имајући у виду и бројне сложене изазове које ће ову професију задесити деценијама касније. Неда Тодоровић, иначе и сама студенткиња професора Лукача, напомиње да је он својим студентима истицао „важност универзитетског образовања новинара чији ће значај расти с развојем науке у новом миленијуму” и говорио да „необразован новинар не познаје методологију новинарског истраживања, а није ни довољно информисани зналац о подручју за које је задужен у редакцији”, па и његово извештавање остаје штуро, односно „његова информација остаје, нужно дводимензионална, површна, без дубљег објашњења”¹². Тодоровић такође подсећа и на то да је новинарска професија, нажалост, касно и „готово невољно прихватала захтев за посебним, универзитетским журналистичким образовањем”¹³.

Релативно новији увид у закључке у вези са овом темом има Дубравка Валић Недељковић, која је испитивала образовање новинара у нашој земљи. Она је приметила да је „понуда акредитираних и неакредитираних програма у образовном саставу Србије изразито велика”, што „одражава сву сложеност медијског сектора”, али уочава и да „медијска индустрија још није препознала дипломиране новинаре као врсне стручњаке нити је рангирала високошколске установе у односу према учинку својих новозапослених новинара”. Она је, стога, такође констатовала да су медији „увијек били врло привлачан студиј и за многе факултете само један од лукративних смјерова без праве жеље да се подигне професионални стандард у медијском сектору”, а што постаје додатно сложеније ако томе додамо „тешку ситуацију у привреди погођеној економском кризом”. Ова ситуација води томе да се „новинари све чешће отпуштају, а мало запошљавају”, али и да „политика медије све више ограничава, а новинарске удруге немају јасну стратегију нити моћ да своје чланове заштите” – све то, према мишљењу ове ауторке, за крајњи резултат има то да је сад сасвим јасно да „формула добро и стручно основно образовање плус заштићене медијске и личне новинарске слободе и права једнако добро информисано и одговорно грађанство у Србији неће још дуго почети дјеловати”¹⁴.

Уколико даље посегнемо и за упоредном перспективом, као још једним корисним углом анализе, можемо се осврнути и на истраживање реализовано прошле године у Хрватској, посебно креирано у светлу нових изазова које новинарству доноси вештачка интелигенција. Резултати истраживања су показали да је тамошње студијске програме новинарства „потребно иновирати у односу на технолошке трендове који обликују медијску и креативну индустрију те да би законски

12 Исто, стр. 109.

13 Према: Петровић, Р. и Пенезић, С. (2023) *Серџије Лукач – њрометиј новинарстџива*, Београд: Факултет за спорт Универзитета „Унион – Никола Тесла” и *Службени гласник РС*, стр. 130.

14 Детаљније видети: Nedeljković Valić, D. (2010) *Образовање новинара у Србији*, *MediAnali: међународни знанствени часопис за питања медија, новинарства, масовног комуницирања и односа с јавношћима*, 4 (7), стр. 91–106.

оквир по том питању требао пружити ажурнију подршку свеучилиштима и факултетима”. Интервјуи обављени за потребе тог истраживања посебно указују на потребу критичког праћења техничко-технолошких промена у тим образовним програмима и то „посебно у подручју развоја генеративне умјетне интелигенције, али и других трендова попут партиципативног новинарства”, који би се морали „уврстити у свој курикул и на теоријској и на практичној разини“.¹⁵ Ово истраживање је корисно и занимљиво и у значајно ширем контексту, јер доноси и тезу да ће и поред бројних песимистичних предвиђања о утицају технолошких промена на тржиште рада, различите секторе и струке „управо стратешки планирани и обликовани студијски програми образовати професионалне новинаре који ће, не успркос, већ захваљујући технологији оптимизирати свој посао, унаприједити струку и потврдити своју улогу аутора чију додану вриједност никада неће замијенити рачунални програм”¹⁶.

Ако одемо и даље од нашег региона, корисни су нам и налази и последична упутства релевантних тумача новинарске и медијске јавности широм света, попут Питера Гејда (*Peter Gade*) из САД, који истиче да „медији данас имају потребу за новинарима различитих вештина, који морају поседовати и врхунску техничку писменост”¹⁷. Гејд, посматрајући свакодневну улогу новинара и генерално функционисање редакција дневних новина, анализира пожељни профил новинара у 21. веку и притом истиче да медијска предузећа данас имају потребу за новинарима различитих особина и вештина, спремним да буду део тима¹⁸.

Ако се из суме укратко наведених резултата истраживања и упутстава даље загледамо у развојне перспективе новинарства и медија, можемо се осврнути и на подсећање Милана Милошевића, чувеног новинара и уредника недељника *НИН* и *Време*, који је, пишући о свом професору и уреднику Сергију Лукачу напомињао да је преко хоризонта он давно видео и бољу страну долазећег доба: „Новинар ће извештавати брзином светлости, а у торби ће носити електронске меморије о свему и свачему. Биће то доба жестоке конкуренције. (...) Двадесет први век донеће масу образованих, самим тим радозналијих конзумента медија. Ваљаће тој образовној публици дати одговор зашто се нешто догодило и шта ће се догађати даље. (...) Професионалци знају да управо та два питања повлаче границу између знати и не знати, између бити и не бити потпуно обавештен.” Није имао илузија: „Новинаре у XXI веку ће дочекати још жешћи притисци политичко-привредних сил-

15 Детаљније видети: Uldrijan, I., Perša Ciboci, L. i Labaš, D. (2023) Novinar u doba umjetne inteligencije – može li chatbot postati autor u medijima? *Anafora: časopis za znanost o književnosti*, 10 (2), str. 199–222.

16 Исто.

17 Пенезић, С. (2023) *Савремени изазови ујрављања медијима*. Београд: Факултет за спорт, стр. 68.

18 Детаљније видети: Gade, P. J. (2004) Newspapers and organisational development: Management and journalist perceptions of newsroom cultural change, *Journalism Communication Monographs*. 6(1), pp. 3–55.

ника... А све ће то зависити од новинара. И, као у свим професијама, биће и овде новинара – мајстора и пацера које ће бирати зрели или недорасли конзументи информација”¹⁹.

Овако описани изазови који су данас несумњиво дочекали новинаре и новинарство посредно је и сасвим довољан аргумент за анализу значаја формалног образовања за ову професију генерално гледано. Чак и за априорно потврдно одређење према дилеми да ли то данас представља и један од нужних предуслова за њено професионално и одговорно обављање. Иста оцена се, самим тим, може применити и на домен спортског новинарства. Она је у том сектору можда и израженија, с обзиром на глобални значај и популарност овог друштвеног сегмента.

Неојходности синергије теорије и праксе у настави новинарства

Важност интегрисаног приступа у анализи тема из области студија медија и новинарства уједно нам директно указује и на неопходност једнаког третмана теорије и праксе у овој области. Имајући у виду облике комуникације и изазове који стоје пред медијским делатницима, сасвим је очигледна и важност таквог приступа у настави и едукацији спортских новинара у оквиру установа које то имају у опису својих одговорности. На тај начин долазимо и до разумевања значаја генералног односа теоријске и практичне перспективе у науци и образовном систему у целини.

Наиме, колико је битан однос теорије и праксе и њихов адекватан третман у настави, као и да само разумевање праксе није искључиво алат за примену теорије, већ „теорија у покрету“, указује нам и то што су се овом темом, често заузимајући и прилично критичку позицију, бавили и експерти у области наставе – дидактичари. Вера Радовић²⁰ подсећа на то да је настава уједно прихватљив аргумент о значајном односу теорије и праксе, поготово уколико се образовању младих људи приступа истраживачки. Дакле, теорија би требало да „формулише проблеме са којима се пракса сусреће, а потом и да научним путем испита и обради одређене феномене“²¹. На тај начин, и у случају новинарства, пракса заправо генерише прихватљиве теоријске претпоставке и закључке, постајући њена верна рефлексивна, а стога и неопходна помоћ у сусрету са свакодневним професионалним (практичним) задацима.

Модел наставе на студијама новинарства омогућава студентима реалан увид у стварност која их даље очекује у професији за коју се припремају. Наиме, полазе-

19 Према: Петровић, Р. и Пенезић, С. (2023) *Сертије Лукач – њрометије новинарства*, Београд: Факултет за спорт Универзитета „Унион – Никола Тесла” и *Службени гласник РС*, стр. 223.

20 Радовић, Ж. В. (2021) *Дидактика расуђивања 1: о њемељним њојмовима и њредметиу њрочивања*, Београд: Учитељски факултет, стр. 68.

21 Исто, стр. 68.

ћи од претпоставке да је „теорија важан извор истраживачких хипотеза“²², односно основ за било какво научно предвиђање, фокус је на новим наставним методама, плановима и идејама са циљем да образоване институције раде за будућност (Клафки, 2007) То би требало да буде својеврстан „путоказ“, о којем је писала и Вера Радовић (Радовић, 2015) и који се огледа у томе да је представљање било каквих теоријских промишљања исправно уколико се укршта са искуствима из праксе. У складу с тим, отварају се нове сумње и дилеме у приступима наставника, научно засноване због анализирања и доношења закључака на основу претходних дидактичких знања изведених из теорије. Другим речима, када наставници формулишу нову методу у настави, барем посматрајући је само у теорији, неопходно је и да је примене у пракси. У новинарству је то уједно и најбоља (и најједноставнија) провера њене утемељености. Овакав приступ је, како смо видели из претходних сегмената²³, посебно важан управо када говоримо о сектору новинарства и медијске индустрије (образовању новинара), јер указује на нужност професионалног сазревања у самој пракси (медијским редакцијама), али и на важност формалног образовања.

Србија – актуелно стање

У Србији су у минуле две деценије спроведена поједина истраживања на тему значаја и анализе постојећих модалитета образовања новинара. Оно што чуди јесте дефицит таквих студија и анализа у последњој деценији, када су можда и најпотребније, с обзиром на изазове с којима се ова професија сусреће. Такве студије би биле од значаја за многе заинтересоване актере, а пре свега оне примарно важне за ову професију, попут универзитета, истраживачких организација и новинарских удружења. Ранија истраживања су, пак, махом била фокусирана на процену утицаја формалног новинарског образовања на професионални развој новинара и квалитет новинарског извештавања, а за своје примарно усмерење и циљ углавном су имала неколико аспеката:

- идентификацију области у којима новинари примећују недостатак знања или вештина, као и процену ефикасности постојећих облика формалног новинарског образовања у том погледу;
- процену постојања разлика у квалитету новинарског извештавања између новинара са формалним новинарским образовањем и оних који то немају;
- анализу ставова јавности о значају формалног образовања у новинарству и утицају образовања на кредибилитет новинара и поверење јавности у медије;
- испитивање значаја формалног новинарског образовања у свакодневној пракси новинара из перспективе примене стечених вештина и знања у практичном новинарском окружењу;
- вредновање постојећих програма новинарског образовања на универзитети-

22 Вилотијевић, М. (2000) *Дидактика 2 – дидактичке теорије и теорије учења*, Београд: Учитељски факултет, Научна књига, стр. 16.

23 Детаљније видети: Расел, Б. (2015) *О образовању у васпитању*, Београд: Мандала, стр. 192.

ма у Србији како би се идентификовале предности и недостаци тих и предложиле препоруке за унапређење квалитета образовања новинара²⁴.

Резултати ових истраживања указали су на неспоран значај високошколског образовања новинара у Србији за њихов каснији стручнији рад у новом контексту функционисања у оквиру посебно захтевног медијског окружења 21. века. У том погледу, може се приметити неколико кључних сегмената у којима се уочени бенефити огледају:

- ефикаснија професионализација саме новинарске струке;
- веће разумевање значаја и примене етичких и професионалних стандарда;
- конкретније разумевање значаја праћења и само умеће анализе шире друштвених процеса;
- увиђање важности и веће могућности адаптације на промене у медијима;
- ефикаснији развој професионалне мреже унутар новинарског еснафа.

Позитиван искорак у овим сегментима посредно несумњиво доприноси и већем квалитету новинарског извештавања и интегритету читаве медијске индустрије. На тај начин има и конкретан значај за саму новинарску професију и медије, али и за друштво у целини, те изненађује мањак истраживања о значају образовања спортских новинара у Србији, и те како популарне области унутар ове професије. Таква истраживања су посебно корисна за разумевање улоге формалног образовања у једној прилично специфичној новинарској професији и уочавање оних сегмената у којима је потребно извршити корекције и унапређења како би се осигурала висока стручност и професионалност овог дела новинарске заједнице.

Из такве перспективе, са жељом да се конкретније усмеримо ка за нас примарном простору (Србији) и теми (едукацији спортских новинара), фокусираћемо се на резултате једног ранијег, али и даље прилично актуелног истраживања реализованог међу студентима Факултета за спорт Универзитета „Унион – Никола Тесла” и Факултета политичких наука (ФПН) Универзитета у Београду, у коме су испитанике чинили студенти ових факултета²⁵.

Били су сагласни да је навећа мана професије мала зарада и недостатак слободног времена због обима посла. Мишљења им се делимично разликују у тврдњи да је положај спортских новинара у Србији лош. Занимљиво је да два студента ФЗС уопште нису сагласна по том питању, док је на ФПН већина студената изабрала одговор да се делимично слаже. С друге стране, они нису примећивали

24 Поједине такве студије и радови су: Valić Nedeljković, D., Pralica, D. (2007) *O novinarstvu i novinarima*, Novi Sad: Filozofski fakultet; Матић, Ј. (уред) (2008) *Univerzitetsko obrazovanje novinara u Srbiji*, Beograd: Centar za profesionalizaciju medija, Institut društvenih nauka i Fond za otvoreno društvo; Radojković, M. (2011) *Образовање новинара или медијска писменост? у: Rade Veljanovski (ured), Verodostojnost medija: Dometi medijske tranzicije, zbornik radova*. Beograd: *Ћigoja štampa* i FPN UB.

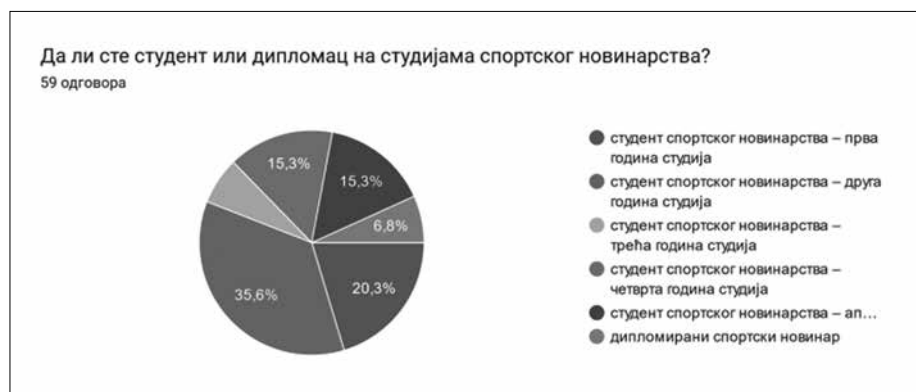
25 Укључено је било укупно више од 40 испитаника, од прве до четврте године основних академских студија спортског новинарства и новинарства, а само истраживање је спроведено у периоду од марта до маја 2021. године.

велике разлике по питању утицаја спортских новинара на друштво, притисака интересних група и тога да је професија спортског новинара стресно занимање. Ипак, мишљења им се конкретније разликују у вези са тврдњом о сукобу интереса спортских новинара у обављању посла. Испитаници са ФПН у већини нису сагласни (15), за разлику од испитаника ФЗС, који у већини сматрају да постоји сукоб интереса (11)²⁶.

Ови укратко представљени сегменти поменутог истраживања уједно су и користан увод у оно које ће у овом тексту бити конкретније представљено, будући да нам нуде потребну хронолошку перспективу и могућност праћења евентуалног развоја (континуитета) описаног стања.

Визура ситуденаиџа сџорџискоџ новинарстџва

У нашем истраживању је учествовало 59 студената Факултета за спорт са различитих година студија, међу којима је највише студената друге (35,6%) и прве године (20,3%), а има и оних који су већ дипломирали на овом факулету (6,8%). Међу испитаницима различитих година и нивоа студија присутан је и значајан број оних који већ раде за различите медијске компаније, што додатно утиче на њихов угао посматрања и вредносне судове за које су се определили²⁷.



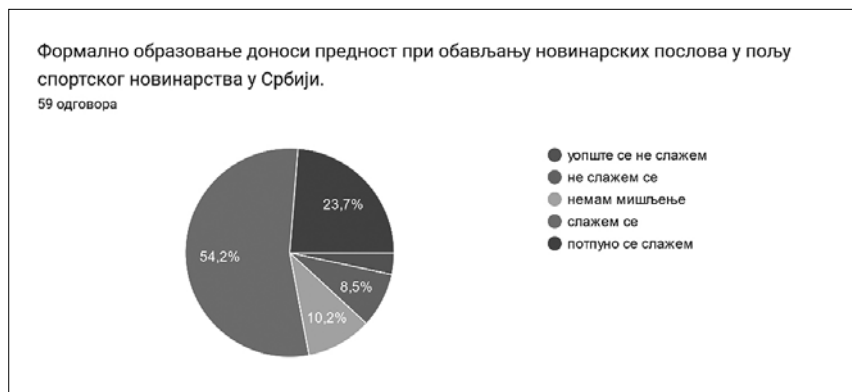
Графикон 1: Структура испитаника у оквиру истраживања

Главна намера у истраживању је указивање на важност формалног образовања новинара у области спортског новинарства, али и шире. Већина испитаника потврђује важност формалног образовања у овом погледу, њих 54,2% се слаже с том констатацијом, а скоро четвртина (23,7%) се слаже у потпуности, што у куп-

²⁶ Детаљнији налази овог истраживања могу се видети у: Selenić, U. i Vulinović, J. (2021) Sportsko novinarstvo kao profesija kroz percepciju studenata žurnalistike, *Sport i biznis*, 7 (1), str. 58–63.

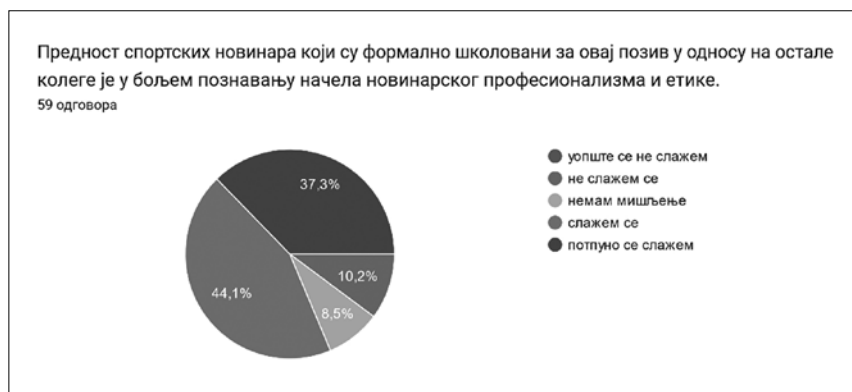
²⁷ Реч је о сегменту ширег истраживања у оквиру смера за спортско новинарство које је детаљније објашњено у *фусноји 1*, а које је у оквиру Факултета за спорт реализовано током 2023. и 2024. године.

ном збиру чини око 80% који овај предуслов виде важним за реализацију новинарских задатака у свакодневној пракси.



Графикон 2: Оцена важности академског образовања спортских новинара за новинарску праксу

Са тврдњом да се предност спортских новинара који су формално школовани за свој позив у односу на остале колеге огледа и у бољем познавању начела новинарског професионализма и етике сложило се 37,3% испитаника у потпуности, док је њих 44,1% само сагласно. Укупно је 10% оних са супротним ставом, а има и оних који немају мишљење о овом питању.



Графикон 3: Значај академског образовања спортских новинара по новинарску етику

Даље се, поново очекивано, предност спортских новинара формално школованих за овај позив у односу на остале колеге види кроз боље познавање нужних новинарских правила и вештина, које се огледају и у сегменту бољег познавања новинарских жанрова и стилова. И овде је око 80% оних који деле тај суд (45,8% сагласно, док је 33,9% испитаника у потпуности сагласно са овом оценом). Овај пут је још мање оних који не деле такав став, док је нешто више оних који немају мишљење о овој теми (6,8%).



Графикон 4: Значај академског образовања спортских новинара за познавање новинарских жанрова и стилова

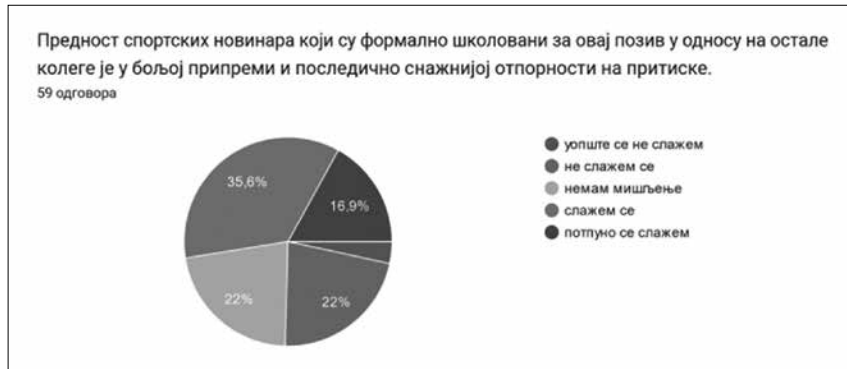
Још једна предност спортских новинара, формално едукованих за овај позив јесте и у бољем познавању специфичности рада у различитим врстама медијских кућа (и на различитим платформама), што је у актуелном медијском еко-систему посебно важан аспект. У том домену је и више од 80 % одговора који потврђују корелацију ова два фактора (23,7 % потпуно сагласних и 49,2% сагласних), док тек нешто више од десет процената испитаника не види везу између ова два сегмента. У овом аспекту је и значајно већи број оних који немају одређено мишљење о овој теми (питању) – њих чак 16,9 %.



Графикон 5: Утицај академског образовања спортских новинара на познавање рада у различитим медијским предузећима и околностима.

Према проценама учесника у овом истраживању, предност се види и у бољој припреми и последично снажнијој отпорности на бројне актуелне изазове који владају у области медија и новинарства (на притиске различите врсте, посебно из поља политике и домена финансирања медија). Истини за вољу, значајно је мањи број оних који виде важност овог предуслова у наведеном аспекту, будући да је

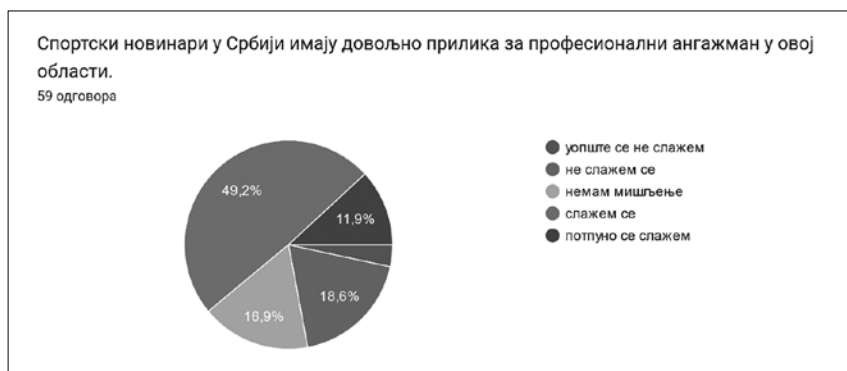
укупно тек нешто више од 50 % оних који то сматрају посебно важним. На то утиче и прилично велики број оних који немају мишљење о овом питању (или бар не желе да га изразе) – њих чак 22 %, док је око четвртина оних који нису сагласни са овом претпоставком.



Графикон 6: Утицај академског образовања спортских новинара у борби против екстерних утицаја и притисака

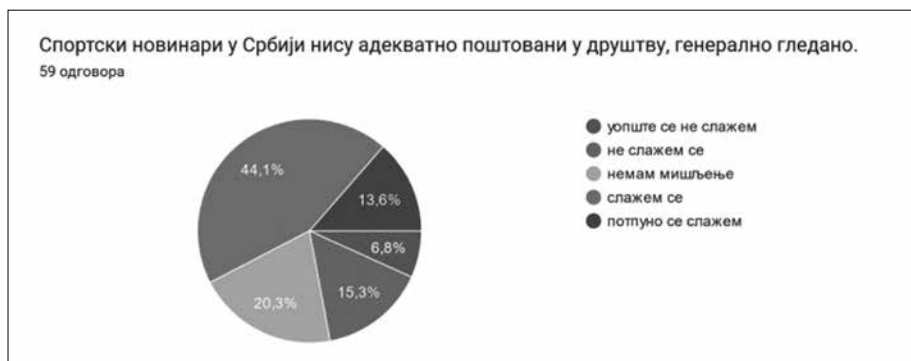
У даљој анализи је било посебно важно усмерити се ка њиховом актуелном доживљају професије и индустрије, чији део би требало да постану у професионалном погледу. С тим мотивом, настојао се сагледати и њихов угао гледања на актуелно стање у свету медија и новинарства. Из те перспективе су анализирали и њихови ставови о очекивањима и амбицијама које имају у професионалном погледу.

Већина њих оптимистично гледа на могућности професионалног ангажмана у перспективи, с обзиром на то да у великом броју потврђују да спортски новинари у Србији имају довољно прилика за професионални ангажман у овој области: 49,2% је сагласно с таквом проценом, док се око 12% њих у потпуности слаже.



Графикон 7: Оцена актуелних прилика за професионални ангажман и запослење

Они су, међутим, прилични песимисти када гледају на постојећи статус спортских новинара у друштву, што је повезано са појединим оценама и заблудама наведеним у уводним деловима овог текста. Наиме, скоро 60% испитаника сматра да спортски новинари у Србији нису адекватно поштовани у друштву. И у овом аспекту је, међутим, прилично симптоматичан и донекле забрињавајући проценат оних који немају мишљење о овој теми или бар не желе да га изразе, којих је више од 20 %.



Графикон 8: Оцена актуелног статуса и поштовања које спортски новинари имају у нашем друштву

Из одговора на претходно питање може се разумети и довести у везу и проценат одговора на следеће, које је фокусирано на материјалну компензацију спортских новинара у Србији, у смислу њихове плате током професионалног ангажмана. Наиме, више од 85% испитаника је сагласно с тим да спортски новинари у Србији нису адекватно плаћени за свој рад (40,7% је потпуно сагласно, док је њих 45,8% само сагласно). Из таквог односа и оцена може се анализирати и претходна процена статуса и третмана који спортски новинари имају у нашем друштву, праћеног кроз тако усмерено питање.



Графикон 9: Оцена актуелне новчане надокнаде (плате, зарада) спортских новинара у нашем друштву

Имајући у виду раније наведене оцене и налазе истраживања, и те како је важно и корисно представити и конкретније мотиве испитаника за сам одабир професије спортског новинара. Њима је понуђена могућност да сами наведу своје разлоге, а међу њима доминира љубав према спорту и новинарству.

Већина испитаника тако истиче да воли спорт и редовно прати збивања у овој области, па прилику да професионално прате иста и извештавају са њих виде и као свој основни мотив за одабир ове професије („одувек ме је спорт највише занимао”, „љубав према спорту”, „љубав према спорту и писаној речи”, „спој две љубави, спорта и новинарства”, „афинитети према спорту и новинарству”, „извештавање са највећих спортских догађаја”, „рад у професији коју волим, контакт са спортистима, у неку руку идолима из детињства и свакако допринос друштву који долази уз ову професију”, „дуго праћење спорта, разумевање коментара различитих мечева, као и описивање истих на врло високом нивоу, тренирање спорта и познавање спорта од почетака до данас”...).

Међу њима има и оних који су планирали професионалну каријеру у спорту, па им је спортско новинарство уједно и одређена врста супституције за то, те су након одустајања од првобитних планова желели „на неки начин да остану у спорту” (нпр. „желео сам да останем у спорту којим сам се бавио од детињства” и „жеља да останем део спорта, када већ нисам професионални спортиста”).

Многи посебно наглашавају жељу да „раде оно што воле”, а кроз новинарство виде и прилику да путују, задовоље своју радозналост и авантуристички дух. Поједини зато именују и „изазовност и занимљивост новинарске професије” и „динамичност професије”. Испитаници имају и конкретно профилисане амбиције, па већ сад имају и директније планове у вези са одређеним спортовима или спортским организацијама, које би волели да прате и популаризују.

Један део испитаника има жељу за јавним изражавањем и промоцијом и самог спорта у „у светлу у којем га прави љубитељи доживљавају”. Међу студентима ФЗС има и оних који су прагматично проценили да ће „лако пронаћи посао са завршеним студијама спортског новинарства”. Посебно је интересантно и важно то што многи од њих већ сад као мотив имају могућност да унапреде постојеће стање у новинарству и медијима. Поједини, наиме, наводе и жељу „за успостављањем независног новинарства у Србији”, затим „да својим квалитетом направе нешто ново у спортском новинарству”, сматрају „да и те како има ствари које се могу променити, а на које можемо да утичемо”, као и то да „верују у слободу и моћ појединца” и „борбу за истину”.

С друге стране, с обзиром на њихов прилично песимистичан однос према третману ове професије, једнако је значајно и занимљиво видети и шта би их мотивисало да дугорочно остану у спортском новинарству, будући да није мали број оних који већ током студија одустану од те идеје, али и од новинарства уопште. Основни мотив за останак у овој професији је љубав према спорту, самој професији спортског новинара, односно жеља да се ради оно што се воли или оно „за шта су рођени” и то што „себе не виде ни у једној другој професији”.

Многи мотив виде у томе што ће им посао бити „адреналински”, док други од њега очекују да ће бити „опуштен, занимљив и пружити много прилика за нова пријатељства и путовања”, затим што ће радити „у здравом окружењу” или „у пријатној атмосфери, уз пристојну плату”. Њихови професионални циљеви и амбиције су пак „присуство и сведочење великим спортским догађајима”, односно „занимљиви догађаји, радовање спортским успесима (заједно са колегама), путовања, али и сам рад на истраживању и писању текстова или раду преноса” и „извештавање на прави, објективан начин”. Ту су и лични мотиви за „напредовањем у послу”, „учењем заната” и мотив да кроз дугорочни рад покушају да пруже „свој лични допринос у медијској популаризацији мање популарних спортова”. И овај пут има оних који имају сасвим конкретне планове и жеље, попут „коментарисања фудбалских утакмица” и „извештавања са утакмица КК *Црвена звезда*”.

Има и оних који признају да ће у новинарству остати ако дођу „до позиције коју желе, нпр. коментатора или нешто везано за телевизијско новинарство”, али и оних који као кључни услов виде новац. Њих би за останак у овој професији мотивисала „висока примања”, односно „боља финансијска ситуација”, док с друге стране има и оних који признају да су свесни одређених околности, па кажу да им „новац сигурно није мотив”.

Постоје и они испитаници за које би се могло рећи да имају више циљеве, јер истичу да им је „кључни мотив да пробају да окрену слику спортског новинарства у земљи”, жеља да се „помогне унапређењу професије”, односно „праћење развоја новинарства из правог угла” и „могућност изражавања објективности у спортском новинарству, јер новинарство у овој земљи мора да буде објективно”. Има и оних који већ сад (многи и пре прилике да иоле искусе посао) истичу да „неће остати” и да већ сад не виде „мотив да дугорочно остану у новинарству”.

Закључна разматрања

Имајући у виду резултате нашег истраживања, можемо се усмерити на неколико кључних тачки, које могу бити теме за даљу анализу. С обзиром на њихову усмереност и контекст, сама тема формалног образовања спортских новинара на високошколским установама добија на важности. Наиме, однос испитаника према значају формалног образовања спортских новинара је несумњиво позитиван, тј. они га потврђују, уједно потврђујући и важност тог аспекта у каснијој новинарској пракси, попут већег познавања и примена етичких принципа професије, али и практичних вештина – посебно оних који одувек чине разлику у овом послу (познавање специфичности различитих жанрова и стилова у новинарству или рада у медијским предузећима различитих карактеристика), али и оних новијег датума, неопходних за рад у овој области у 21. веку.

Њихови циљеви и амбиције у погледу бављења овом професијом махом потичу од љубави према спорту. То би могао бити и довољан аргумент за примену претходно наведених вештина у пракси, али и за њихово дугорочније пословно битисање у оквиру ове професије. С друге стране и те како брине чињеница да је и

приличан број оних који су већ одустали од таквог плана. То се може разумети из већинског става према питањима статуса ове професије (професионалаца) у друштву и материјалној сатисфакцији (платама) које се могу очекивати, а који је прилично негативан. Овај својеврсни парадокс на једној страни има искрену љубав према спорту и новинарству и потврду да је за њу потребно стећи специфична знања и вештине на факултету, а на другој песимизам и превремено одустајање због недовољног поштовања, лоших услова за рад и плата. Самим тим је огледало ширег стања у друштву и односа према овој професији (новинарству и медијима генерално).

Након свега, закључак је да квалитетно образовање спортских новинара у Србији на високошколским установама може имати велику, чак и суштински важну улогу у формирању професионалаца способних да у актуелном добу прате широк спектар спортских догађаја на адекватан начин. Овај процес, стога, такође мора бити свеобухватан, пружајући студентима не само теоријско знање већ и практичне вештине неопходне за успех у актуелном, и те како динамичном и захтевном пољу сусрета спорта и медија (новинарства). У случају образовања спортских новинара, примарни фокус мора бити на важности темељних принципа новинарске етике и професионализма. Они, наиме, морају разумети важност објективности и интегритета у извештавању о спортским догађајима и развити способност критичког размишљања и анализе. Образовање спортских новинара у Србији треба да тежи стварању новинара не само стручних у својој области, већ комплетно оспособљених за рад у различитим видовима новинарства, са даљом специјализацијом у области спорта. Такође, међу кључним сегментима увек мора да буде приврженост етици и интегритету у извештавању, што даље доприноси и развоју квалитетног спортског новинарства, као и функционисању спорта у ширем оквиру.

Уз теоријско знање, важан део треба да чини и практични рад још током самог студирања. То подразумева и могућности за стицање искуства путем праксе у новинарским редакцијама, медијима специјализованим за спорт и кроз присуство самим спортским догађајима. Ово омогућава студентима да касније лакше могу применити своје вештине у стварним ситуацијама и развијати свој специфичан новинарски стил. Такође, потребно је да се посебна пажња посвети раду у новом, дигиталном окружењу, тј. тзв. дигиталним медијима и новим технологијама. У данашњем, дигиталном добу спортски новинари морају бити посебно стручни и вешти у раду на различитим платформама како би ефикасно допрли до своје публике. Напредне вештине као што су истраживачко новинарство и мултимедијално извештавање такође треба да буду део образовања спортских новинара, како би се студентима пружио целовит увид у праксу и могућности свеобухватног стицања знања и изградње вештина потребних за професионалан и успешан рад у савременом новинарском окружењу. Самим тим, важан је интердисциплинарни приступ образовању спортских новинара. Он укључује и разумевање важности спортске психологије, социологије спорта, спортске медицине, самог функциони-

сања спортских организација и индустрије спорта и других области које могу обогатити новинарски рад и омогућити боље разумевање контекста у којем се данас спорт одвија. Унапређења овог односа и самог сектора образовања новинара могу имати важан позитиван утицај на развој новинарске професије, начин рада медија и информисања јавности, али и друштво у целини. Адекватно функционисање овог односа одувек је и те како зависило од ових димензија и улоге коју имају запослени у области новинарства, а тај утицај је само додатно изражен у актуелном добу, чији токови су уоквирени савременим информацијско-комуникацијским трансверзалама.

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THE IMPORTANCE AND SPECIFICITIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE FIELD OF SPORTS JOURNALISM

Abstract: The purpose of this text is to present the current context of journalist education in Serbia, the necessary teaching models and the overall importance of their academic education at higher education institutions. It is primarily focused on the field of sports journalism, considering the popularity of this field (sports) and this area of journalism (sports), as well as some attempts to unjustifiably marginalize it. Aimed at highlighting the specificity of the moment in which the entire journalistic profession operates today, its challenges and responsibilities on the one hand, and connections between sports and journalism (media) and academic education in the domain of sports journalism in Serbia on the other, a specific research was conducted among sports journalism students, many of whom are already engaged in journalist newsrooms. Therefore, a special segment of this research is dedicated to the importance of adequate education of sports journalists (but also beyond this field) at higher education institutions, and it is detailed in this text through obtained results and findings.

These should depict the current state in this context, as well as the accompanying paradoxes and possible development perspectives. Indirectly, they should also emphasize the importance of improving this relationship for the world of journalism and the media as a whole, as well as the entire society in which they play a very important role.

Key words: *higher education institutions, formal education, journalism classes, journalism, sports, sports journalism*

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Народна библиотека *Стеван Раичковић*, Кучево

АКТИВНОСТИ БИБЛИОТЕКЕ У КУЧЕВУ – КЊИЖЕВНОСТ НА ПРВОМ МЕСТУ

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Сажетак: У раду је даић ирећлед најзначајнијих акћивности Народне библиотеке „Сћеван Раичковић“ из Кучева. Предсћављени су Библиосалон, часопис Максим, ироћрам за иредшколице Књишко мољче, наћрада „Сћеван Раичковић“ и наћрада „Злаћни сћих“. Показано је како кроз иоменуће акћивности библиотека остћварује своје циљеве: нећовање чийћалаца и иублике на локалном нивоу, давање иодришке завичајном сћваралашћиву, заћим акћивно учесћивовање у књижевном животоу и креирање књижевноћ животоа на националном нивоу, иће иосћављање на књижевну маћу Србије и рећона. Оћисани су начини на које се корисће иредности бесћлајноћ дићићалноћ маркећинћа, ири чему се увек води рачуна о квалитетноћ садржаја који се иредсћавља. Исћакнуће су иринцићи на којима иочива свака од иредсћављених акћивности, ири чему је најважнић иринцић – сћављање књижевности и највиших есћетћских вредности на ирво месћо.

Кључне речи: Кучево, Библиосалон, Максим, Књишко мољче, наћрада „Сћеван Раичковић“, наћрада „Злаћни сћих“.

Народна библиотека „Стеван Раичковић“ из Кучева наследница је читаонице основане на Светог Саву 1873. године у Горњој Крушевици, како се тада звало Кучево.¹ Отада је радила са прекидима, често мењајући локацију. Од 1983. године ради у саставу Центра за културу, у чијој згради је добила простор који користи и данас, а од 1996. постоји као самостална установа. Библиотека је носила име Николе Сикимића Максима од 1987. године на предлог СУБНОР-а, на основу тога што се његов легат налази у библиотеци, све до марта 2024. године, када је понела име Стевана Раичковића. Последњих неколико година библиотека у Кучеву својим активностима привукла је велику пажњу књижевне јавности и постала значајно место на књижевној мапи Србије.

1 Стаматовић, Д. (2011) *Чийћалишћића у Србији у XIX веку*, Панчево: Градска библиотека, стр. 238.

Премда је у библиотеци свакако било богатог књижевног живота деценијама уназад, био је претежно локално оријентисан, слабо видљив и мало препознат у јавности. За другачијим приступом није ни постојала потреба све док се није догодило оно што погађа све библиотеке у мањим срединама: смањење броја корисника, као последица смањења броја становника.² Док библиотекарска професија захтева сувопарне и беживотне статистичке извештаје о раду, које веће библиотеке могу попунити и већим бројкама, библиотекари у мањим срединама боре се за сваког читаоца. Гледајући статистику, те библиотеке имају слабе резултате и њихов значај се може видети тек из наративних извештаја, из садржаја и циљева њихових активности. Два су основна циља активности библиотеке у Кучеву: први – неговање читалаца и публике на локалном нивоу, као и подршка завичајном стваралаштву; други – активно учествовање у књижевном животу и креирање књижевног живота на националном нивоу, те постављање на књижевну мапу Србије и региона.

С разлогом се овде говори о *књижевној*, а не *културној* мапи. Премда многе мање библиотеке истовремено обављају послове и центара за културу, било због тога што та културна установа у општини не постоји или из неког разлога не обавља свој посао, библиотека у Кучеву нема потребе за таквим искорацима, будући да Центар за културу „Драган Кецман“ из Кучева свој посао обавља добро. Поред тога, запослени у библиотеци у Кучеву става су да се библиотеке баве књигама и књижевношћу и да је посезање за другим, публици примамљивијим културним садржајима (филм, позориште, музика и слично) не као пратећег, већ као централног програма, знак одустајања од књиге и борбе за књигу и читаоце. Овај став може звучати конзервативно у светлу све присутнијег тренда да се библиотеке све више баве и културним туризмом или на друге начине проширују област свог деловања у заједници. Међутим, тај конзервативни став, да су књига и књижевност почетна идеја, садржај и крајњи циљ свих активности, библиотека у Кучеву спроводи и оправдава осавременењеним приступом и пажљивим и промишљеним планирањем.

Најпре је било неопходно помирити се са чињеницом да масовна публика за културне, па самим тим и књижевне садржаје више не постоји. Услед презасићења културним садржајима, публика нема капацитета да те садржаје испрати и често се чак и у срединама у којима културни догађаји нису бројни, публика, а нарочито она млађа, окреће садржајима на интернету. Као последица дигиталне револуције дешава се расипање публике на мноштво понуда и долази до феномена фраг-

² Важно је напоменути да је једна од сваке похвале вредних активности била дугогодишња сарадња са Установом за одрасле и старије „Кучево“. Корисници ове установе редовно су посећивали библиотеку, а и библиотекари су често приређивали књижевне сусрете у њеним просторијама. Један део библиотечког фонда налази се тамо, како би корисници имали стални приступ књигама. Нажалост, пандемија је онемогућила посете библиотекара овој установи и прекинула редовни контакт са корисницима. Сусрети се одржавају спорадично, када то здравствена ситуација корисника дозволи.

ментације публице.³ Ово је и у књижевности евидентно присутно. Услед толико помињане хиперпродукције у књижевности, у којој се издавачи боре за тржиште, публика се не дели само по жанровском опредељењу, већ и по издавачким кућама, па и личним односима са ауторима, различитим идеологијама и разним другим ванкњижевним разлозима.

Ипак, неборива је чињеница да је један од најважних фактора у одабиру културних садржаја – њихова промоција. Присуство на различитим интернет платформама, естетски примамљиви визуали и коришћење предности бесплатног дигиталног маркетинга само су алати који доприносе томе да активности у библиотеци буду видљивије. Другим речима, представљају њихову маркетиншку форму. Треба имати на уму да је крајњи циљ промоције да се јавност информише о могућностима и активностима које библиотека предузима ради усклађивања и ефикасног задовољавања корисничких потреба,⁴ али и да је једна од основних одговорности библиотека да изграђују читалачки укус својих корисника. Дакле, треба промовисати садржаје не би ли привукли пажњу јавности и публице, али ти садржаји морају бити квалитетни. Зато је важно да и библиотеке, уколико желе да буду активни учесници, а не пасивни посматрачи књижевног живота, буду видљиве и на дигиталним платформама и да својом појавношћу привуку пажњу публице, али да истовремено строго воде рачуна о естетским вредностима које промовишу. Установе културе често упадају у замку повлађивања публици зарад бројности публице на догађајима, што је краткотрајна корист, ако користи ту уопште и има. Библиотеке нису комерцијалне установе да би морале пратити и поштовати захтеве тржишта, те је њихова дужност да се том тржишту, које неретко фаворизује дела ниске или никакве естетске вредности, супротстављају давањем свог простора највишим уметничким вредностима, стручности и професионалном поштењу. На који начин је све претходно речено примењено у раду Народне библиотеке „Стеван Раичковић“ из Кучева може се видети на примерима пет различитих активности, које ће бити представљене хронолошки, односно редом којим су настајале.

Библиосалон

Осмишљен као серија разговора у библиотеци на различите теме, овај ауторски програм започет је када је пандемија вируса корона и даље трајала. У тренутку када је одлучено да се у оквиру *Библиосалона* углавном воде разговори о књижевности, није било дозвољено присуство публице (април 2021. године), те је разговор са писцем Филипом Ђрбићем снимљен професионалном опремом и постављен на Јутјуб канал. На тај начин *Библиосалон* је добио свој коначни облик, али и ширу публику. Касније се кучевска публика вратила у библиотеку, али се наставило са

3 Trobozić, M. (2023) *Umetnost je naš posao: mediji, kultura, umetnost: uputstvo za upotrebu*, Beograd: Vulkan izdavaštvo, str. 117.

4 Вукић, М. (2019) *Писмо и књижа на тилу Србије као културолошки феномен: од рукописа до електронских издања*, Београд: Центар функционалне писмености „Апостроф“, стр. 245.

снимањем разговора, при чему су саговорници били писци, песници, књижевни преводиоци, али и књижевни историчари и критичари, као и универзитетски професори.⁵ Једини *Библиосалон* који није снимљен одржан је у новембру 2022. године, када је гост био Горан Петровић. Међутим, његово гостовање остало је забележено на још вреднији и лепши начин – у књижевности, из пера самог Горана Петровића, који је о својој посети Кучеву и пећини Равништарки писао у својој путописној причи под насловом „Пећина“.⁶

Како се догодило да је у времену експанзије подкаста са различитим, знатно шаренијим темама и популарнијим гостима *Библиосалон* постао програм у који људи из књижевног света радо долазе, иако се одржава у малој библиотеци, у малом граду, до кога није једноставно доћи јавним превозом? Две су стране те медаље. Лице је оно што се може видети и послушати док траје *Библиосалон* (уживо или на снимку): речити гости, добро вођени разговори, у којима је лако приметно да и гости и домаћини не само да поштују тему о којој говоре, већ и да је одлично познају, али и да према њој гаје ону врсту љубави која је неопходна да би се надахнуто говорило о уметности. Наличје је оно што се дешава пре и после *Библиосалона*, а то је добро старо гостопримство, на које су мала места увек посебно поносна. У долазак једног јединог госта, осим запослених у библиотеци, своје време и ресурсе улажу и Туристичка организација Кучево (ако гост жели да види пећину), Основна школа „Угрин Бранковић“ (уколико гост жели да посети место рођења Стевана Раичковића), а једном се чак укључио и Центар за социјални рад, уступивши свој службени аутомобил, како би се гост превезао где је потребно. Подршка Општине Кучево (оснивача библиотеке) подразумева се у сваком смислу. Према томе, као што се често, нажалост, заборавља на фигуру библиотекара и на важност његове личности, интересовања и знања за свакодневни контакт са корисницима и за врсту и квалитет активности које се у библиотеци одржавају, заборавља се и на важност грађења међуљудских односа. *Библиосалон* је пример шта се догоди ако се не заборави ни једно ни друго. А пример је добар, јер је *Библиосалон* прва активност библиотеке која је привукла пажњу шире јавности и отворила врата другим, на дуже стазе много важнијим пројектима у библиотеци у Кучеву.

„Максим“, часопис за књижевности, уметности и културу

Библиосалон не прати нужно актуелности књижевне сцене, али прати књижевни живот⁷, видљиве и мање видљиве, али вредне књижевне појаве. У разговорима

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7izf0fmDtw&list=PLFrV6LT9cX99VKkcUYEzvlon4NJ6QQHmr&index=1>

⁶ Петровић, Г. (2023) „Пећина“. *Недељник*. Бр. 588. 44–45.

⁷ Између ова два израза постоји важна разлика. Премда се понекад и избегава израз *књижевна сцена*, због њеног могућег пејоративног значења, не може се порећи да, у смислу

естраде и привлачења пажње публике различитим средствима, при чему се спектар тих средстава последњих година проширује и на средства жуте штампе и скандал-медија,

са различитим представницима књижевног живота промишља се и конструктивно расправља.

Пројекат *Максим* започет је у лето 2021. године, када су се у библиотеци окупили кучевски песници, писци и љубитељи писане речи (први број је објављен идуће године крајем јуна). Тада је закључено да је потребан простор за афирмацију локалних аутора, место на коме би мање познати или непознати писци и песници могли да стану раме уз раме са већ афирмисанима, али само уколико њихови прилози задовољавају највише естетске стандарде. На овај начин „није учињена грешка типична за изразито локално оријентисане периодичне публикације, које, фаворизујући искључиво најуже схваћено *домаће* ствараоце, раде против онога што је једна од основних намјера овог часописа – да своју средину упише на националну књижевну мапу без погубног осјећања одсјечености, односно инфериорности у односу на веће културне и књижевне центре“.⁸ Другим речима, постигнуто је да један локални часопис захваљујући високим стандардима одабира прилога активно учествује у националном књижевном животу и тако отвори врата млађим, мање познатим и завичајним ствараоцима.

Часописи и иначе имају могућност и да већ поменути фрагментовану публику колико-толико уједине окупљањем више различитих аутора на једном месту, у оквиру истих корица, и тако потенцијално формира читаоце и актуелних и будућих бројева.⁹ И овај циљ је у кучевском часопису успешно постигнут:

„Часопис, дакле, даје пример складног повезивања илити грађења венаца од речи, који ништи било какве могуће антагонизме. Премошћен је јаз између старих и младих, академских и уметничких кругова, поетичких неистомишљеника и слично“.¹⁰

За прилоге за часопис једном годишње расписује се конкурс. Од пристиглих прилога уредништво прави селекцију за број. Читав процес: расписивање конкурса, одабир прилога, објављивање часописа и представљања часописа (у Кучеву, Београду, Новом Саду, одакле су актуелни уредници), све бива помно испраћено на дигиталним платформама и у медијима.¹¹ Заступљеношћу великог броја млађих

управо таква сцена ипак постоји. Књижевна сцена је оно што је у првом плану, истакнуто, и као таква неизоставни је део књижевног живота, који обухвата и оно иза сцене и оно што јој није ни близу.

8 Бајчета, В. (2023) *Максим*, Краљево: Повеља, број 3, год. LIII, стр. 131–132.

9 Дишић, Ј. (2023) *Максим*, часопис за књижевност, уметност и културу, у: *Националне професионалне и књижевне најраде у библиотекарству Србије и издавачка делатност библиотеке*, Краљево: Народна библиотека „Стефан Првовенчани“, стр. 282-283.

10 Марићевић Балаћ, Ј. (2023) *Максим* часописа *Максим*, у: *Максим, часопис за књижевност, уметност и културу*, Кучево: Библиотека „Никола Сикимић Максим“, год. 2, број 2, стр. 164.

11 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BI-NM72eHu0&list=PLFrV6LT9cX98EjhAx3nzXQml2JDfmldLz> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_aMiwh9vWM&t=10s

аутора постиже се и већа видљивост на друштвеним мрежама.¹² Да је овако осмишљен промотивни концепт делотворан, може се доказати упоређивањем сегмента поезије у другом и трећем броју. Други број донео је поетички сродне прилоге, те читав сегмент, иако квалитетан у уметничком смислу, не приказује праву слику поезије која се ствара у савременом тренутку на српском језику. Према томе, конкурс није стигао до довољног броја људи, већ до једне нише стваралаца. Већ трећи број, иако тематски, иако је задата тематско-мотивска доминанта, доноси знатно већу разноликост поетика и вернија је слика савремене поезије.

Досад су изашла три броја часописа, с тим да је трећи број темат, посвећен Стевану Раичковићу, усклађен са скорашњом променом имена библиотеке и другим пројектима, о којима ће тек бити речи. *Максим* је доказ да је начин на који се приступа активностима у библиотеци добар: свестрана промоција, али и високе естетске вредности и књижевност увек на првом месту. И форма и садржина.

Књишко мољче

У лето 2023. године осмишљено је *Моје лејто*, заједнички пројекат Општине Кучево, Туристичке организације Кучево, Центра за културу „Драган Кеџман“ из Кучева, Спортског савеза Кучево и библиотеке. Био је посвећен деци различитог узраста. Библиотека је организовала и бројне радионице за основце, али највише пажње је привукао програм за предшколце. *Књишко мољче* родило се из спознаје да се читалачка публика и база корисника морају гајити и неговати од самог почетка. Идеја је била једноставна: читати деци најмлађег узраста, а затим их подстаћи да сами листају књиге, причају приче, илуструју приче које су чули или једноставно уживају у библиотеци.

Библиотека у Кучеву има евидентни проблем са мањком простора. Једини простор за кориснике је не тако велика читаоница у којој се налази и већина фонда. Један део читаонице опремљен је намештајем за децу и ту се налази и дечји фонд. Библиотекари се зато свакодневно сналазе са организацијом. У истом простору се организују и књижевне вечери и активности за децу. Премештање, окретање намештаја, изношење и враћање столова – то је саставни део припрема за сваки догађај. Међутим, оно што се из очигледних разлога може сматрати хендикепом, може се посматрати и као предност. Наиме, није строго подељено где бораве деца, а где одрасли, и деца се од најмлађег доба налазе у контакту са свим књигама. Није редак приказ да деца која још не умеју да читају узму у руке неку „озбиљнију“ књигу и листају је правећи се да је читају. Једног дана ће је можда и прочитати. Такође, на овај начин омогућено је и родитељима да задовоље своје читалачке потребе не бринући се да ће децу изгубити из вида. Све ово доприноси топлој и „домаћој“ атмосфери, па се малишани осећају пријатно и слободно, што је и нај-

¹² Више о овоме у: Дишић, Ј. (2023) *Максим*, часопис за књижевност, уметност и културу у: *Националне професионалне и књижевне напоре у библиотекарству Србије и издавачка делатности библиотека*

важније. Циљ је да библиотеку осећају као безбедан и забаван простор. Притом се, важно је нагласити, чак ни тој најшармантнијој публици не повлађује. Свако *Књишко мољче* има пажљиво осмишљену тему¹³.

Након завршетка пројекта *Моје лејто* настављено је са одржавањем програма *Књишко мољче* једном месечно током целе године, углавном првог уторка у месецу. Малишани га и даље врло радо посећују, а број деце се стално повећава. На овај начин библиотека васпитава своју публику, садашњу и будућу. Мора се још једном подвући колико је за успех и овог програма важан људски фактор и воља свих запослених (и не само запослених, јер га углавном воде суграђани-волонтери). Без напора свих тих људи, најмлађи корисници се не би тако радо враћали.

Награда „Стеван Раичковић“

Књижевне награде вазда су биле најосетљивији и за расправе и расколе најплоднији сегмент књижевног живота у Срба. Међу силним поделама које у савременој књижевности постоје, постоје и оне по ставу који се заузима према наградама, одређеним или уопштено гледано. Општепозната је ствар да књижевних награда у Србији има мноштво. Исто тако, општепозната је и често истицана чињеница да су многе од њих изгубиле (или никад нису ни имале) легитимитет и праву сврху, па их и даље нема довољно. Не треба се чудити што се сваке године у Србији оснива по неколико нових признања, јер то представља покушај да се вратимо на почетак и подсетимо се чему она уопште треба да служе. Књижевне награде и признања јесу и треба да буду важан део књижевног живота, али пре свега као крунски начин стручног вредновања нечијег дела (и појединачних дела и целокупног нечијег дела). Зато је од пресудне важности ко седе и одлучује у жиријима награда, и у смислу образовања, али и у смислу професионалног интегритета. То би требало и морало да се подразумева. Оно што се не подразумева и о чему треба промишљати при оснивању награда јесте њихов концепт.

Значај Стевана Раичковића за српску поезију превазилази оквире и тему овог текста, те о томе неће бити речи. Ипак, треба приметити да је досадашње непостојање песничке награде са његовим именом не тако мали пропуст целокупне српске културе и да је необично то што се чекало на кучевску библиотеку да тај пропуст исправи. Стеван Раичковић је рођен у Нересници надомак Кучева 5. јула 1928. године, пошто су у то време у селу његови родитељи Живка и Милан Раичковић службовали као учитељи. Ту је провео две године. У Нересницу се вратио неколико пута, као већ познати песник. Једна од тих посета одиграла се 5. јуна 1994. године, када је званично отворио школску и сеоску библиотеку, која и данас носи име Живке и Милана Раичковића. У својој мемоарској прози *Један мојући животи* Стеван Раичковић помиње Нересницу на више места, у сетном тону, те она за песника добија значај митског завичаја (Дишић, 2024: 7). Дуго већ постоји жеља

13 Више о овоме може се сазнати на сајту кучевске библиотеке: <https://bibliotekakucevo.rs/?s=%D0%BC%D0%BE%D1%99%D1%87%D0%B5>

локалне заједнице да се велики песник чвршће веже за место у коме је рођен. Ове године учињене су три ствари: промењено је име библиотеке, трећи број часописа посвећен је Раичковићу и основана је нова песничка награда са његовим именом.

Институционални носилац награде је Народна библиотека „Стеван Раичковић“ Кучево, а основана је и додељена у сарадњи са локалном самоуправом, Министарством културе Републике Србије и Српском књижевном задругом. Састоји се из три дела: повеље, новчаног дела и објављивања књиге у Српској књижевној задрузи, а покровитељ тог издања је пунионица воде *Роса Хомоље* из Нереснице. Награда „Стеван Раичковић“ додељује се за најбољу оригиналну књигу поезије објављену на српском језику у претходној години. Одлука да се награда додељује за појединачно, у претходној години објављено дело, а не за целокупан песнички опус није донета олако и помно је била разматрана. Док награде за целокупно дело не дају много простора за грешке и изненађења, оне за појединачно дело су динамичне и значе активно учешће у књижевном животу, али и креирање тог књижевног живота на националном нивоу, а то је, подсетимо се, један од главних циљева свих активности библиотеке у Кучеву.

Први добитник награде „Стеван Раичковић“ је Слободан Јовић, за књигу *У костирети* (Чигоја штампа, 2023). Стручни жири¹⁴ је најпре издвојио шири, те ужи избор, што је све пропраћено у медијима и на друштвеним мрежама. Уручење награде уприличено је у Кучеву, у библиотеци са новим именом, уз присуство чланова жирија, аутора *Максима*, завичајних песника, представника локалне самоуправе и других гостију.¹⁵ Нова књига Слободана Јовића, у суиздаваштву Српске књижевне задруге и Народне библиотеке „Стеван Раичковић“ Кучево, појавиће се већ на јесен. Сарадња једне дуговечне библиотеке и најстарије издавачке куће у Србији сведочи о поштовању традиције, али и лика и дела Стевана Раичковића, будући да је Српска књижевна задруга била и остала један од најзначајнијих његових издавача.

Овако конципирана и спроведена награда библиотеци и свим установама и појединцима са којима сарађује иде на част, али намеће и огромну одговорност, које су сви учесници и те како свесни. Награда „Стеван Раичковић“ несумњиво јесте допринела да библиотека у Кучеву учврсти своје место на националној књижевној мапи, али она је учинила и више за савремену српску књижевност – часно је додељена доброј књизи. Тиме и само тиме испунила је своју сврху и оправдала своје оснивање. Остаје да тако буде и у годинама које следе.

Награда „Злајни стих“

Кучевска библиотека током свог дугог постојања имала је врло скромну издавачку делатност. Пре часописа *Максим* објављена су свега три издања, од којих је само једно самостално. Часопис је затим отворио врата ауторима различитих гене-

14 Жири је радио у саставу: Владан Бајчета, Марија Радић, Растко Лончар, Никола Маринковић и Јована Дишић.

15 <https://bibliotekakucevo.rs/?p=1056>

рација и поетика, а замисао је да у том смеру иду и будући издавачки подухвати. Због тога је убрзо након уручења награде „Стеван Раичковић“, док је пажња још била помно усмерена на библиотеку, расписан конкурс за још једну награду. Овога пута је у питању награда за најбољи необјављени оригинални песнички рукопис на српском језику. Награда се састоји из три дела: повеље, објављивања рукописа у издању библиотеке и 30 примерака књиге. Алудирајући на златоносну реку, али и на поједине познате мотиве и наслове из Раичковићеве поезије, награда је поне-ла име „Златни стих“, конкурс се довршава у *касно лето*, док је уручење награде у *септембру*. Изостављањем ограничења конкурса, као што су старост аутора или услов да је у питању први рукопис, дата је прилика свим ауторима и једини услов за одабир је књижевна вредност рукописа. На овај начин задатак постављен пред жири¹⁶ јесте захтевнији, али је и већа вероватноћа да ће стићи већи избор квалитетних рукописа.

Правилником ове награде прописано је и пуно право жирија да не додели награду уколико ниједан рукопис не задовољава критеријуме добре песничке књиге. Одлука да се објави било који рукопис значи да је тај рукопис био нешто бољи од осталих или је више погодовао укусу већине чланова жирија. Одлука да се не објави ниједан значи да ни један једини није ни ваљао. Ова ставка није уобичајена у сличним конкурсима и може деловати исувише грубо према ауторима, али време је да се и у овом случају вратимо на почетак. Конкурси ове врсте првенствено постоје да би се дала шансе мање афирмисаним или потпуно непознатим ауторима, оним ауторима који трагају за могућношћу за објављивање. Стручни жири је ту да препозна вредност неког рукописа, ако је има. Ако је нема, том истом жирију треба оставити простор да и у томе буде непоколебљив и да остане веран свом професионалном интегритету. Поштеније је бити оштар него правити погодбе са лошом поезијом, јер то може ићи само на штету књижевности.

Прва награда „Златни стих“, ипак, биће додељена. На конкурс је пристигло 167 пријава, у избор за награду ушло је пет рукописа. У тренутку када овај текст буде објављен, добитник награде биће увелико познат јавности, а до краја текуће године биће објављена и награђена књига. Представљање књиге биће организовано под покровитељством кучевске библиотеке у неколико градова, уз медијску покривеност и покривеност на друштвеним мрежама. На овај начин библиотека ће утврдити свој углед некомерцијалног издавача на националном нивоу, а то је значајно и за завичајне ауторе, иако се можда тако на први поглед не чини.

У плану је да издавачка делатност у наредном периоду обухвати и завичајно стваралаштво. Премда је оно већ у одређеној мери заступљено у часопису *Максим*, од 2013. библиотека није објавила ниједну монографску публикацију неког завичајног аутора. Претходних година је, захваљујући буџету знатно већем од оног који има библиотека, Центар за културу „Драган Кеџман“ из Кучева објављивао завичајна дела, те она нису били сасвим запостављена. Ипак, обавеза је

16 Жири ради у саставу: Милица Ђуковић, Марко Ђорђевић и Јована Дишић.

сваке библиотеке да негује завичајно стваралаштво, а то јесте и један од постављених циљева кучевске библиотеке. Проблем са таквом издавачком делатношћу представља локална оријентисаност, па завичајне књиге обогате завичајну збирку, али готово никад не изађу из оквира простора на коме су настале, без обзира на свој квалитет. Народна библиотека „Стеван Раичковић“ успешно делује ван тих оквира и подиже лествицу естетских вредности за све, па и за завичајне ауторе. Тако ће наредна објављена књига завичајног аутора добити пажњу коју заслужује, захваљујући свим представљеним активностима и њихове видљивости, али пре свега захваљујући својој естетској вредности. Ни дела завичајних аутора не треба објављивати реда ради, већ само ако су у питању добра књижевна дела.

Иако су установе културе приморане да се прилагођавају савременом дигиталном добу, то не треба да чине по сваку цену, нити то прилагођавање треба да буде испразно и кратког даха. Народна библиотека „Стеван Раичковић“ из Кучева показала је на свом примеру да дигитални алати могу послужити како би се једна установа поставила на књижевну (и културну) мапу Србије, али и да такав приступ мора бити поткрепљен квалитетним садржајима, поштовањем високих естетских вредности, поверењем у струку, као и помним планирањем. Захваљујући *Библиосалону*, часопису *Максим* и двома књижевним наградама, библиотека је за непуне четири године привукла завидну пажњу шире јавности. Са друге стране, у оквиру програма *Књишко мољче*, ради се на стварању и неговању локалне читалачке публике, али се све време размишља и о завичајним писцима и њиховој широј афирмацији. Наизглед компликована спрега међусобног утицаја свих представљених активности заснива се на једноставном начелу и непоколебљивом ставу: у средишту пажње увек морају бити највише естетске вредности. Другим речима, на првом месту мора бити – књижевност.

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Jovana D. Dišić

National Library *Stevan Raičković*, Kučevo

ACTIVITIES OF THE LIBRARY OF KUČEVO – LITERATURE COMES FIRST

Abstract: This paper presents an overview of the most important activities of the National Library “Stevan Raičković” in Kučevo. The studied activities are the library discussion programme *Bibliosalon*, the literary magazine *Maksim*, the preschool program *Knjiško moljče*, the “Stevan Raičković” Award, and the “Golden Verse” Award. The findings show how the library has used these activities to achieve its goals, such as nurturing readers and audiences at the local level, supporting local creativity, actively participating in the literary life, shaping the literary scene at the national level, and establishing its place on the literary map of Serbia and the region. The paper describes the ways of using benefits of free digital marketing, with constant attention to the quality of the presented content. The principles underlying each of the presented activities are highlighted, with the most important principle being the prioritization of literature and the highest aesthetic values. In this way, the library wins attention of both the literary community and the broader public, justifying that attention by providing space for literature, expertise, and professional integrity.

Key words: *Kučevo, Bibliosalon, Maksim, Knjiško moljče, Stevan Raičković Award, Golden Verse Award*



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АНАТОМИЈА АНТИХУМАНИЗМА И ВИТАЛНОСТ ХУМАНИСТИЧКЕ АЛТЕРНАТИВЕ

СЛОБОДАН ВЛАДУШИЋ: ЗАВЕТ И МЕГАЛОПОЛИС,
НОВИ САД: БИТИЈЕ, 2023.

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Стваралачки низ започет књигама теоријске прозе *Црњански*, *Мејалололис* (2011) и *Књижевности и коментари* (2017), чије средиште чини фигура Мегалополиса поиманог не само као огроман град, него и као антихуманистички концепт света, Слободан Владушић наставља и богати последњом књигом *Завет и Мејалололис*. Премда је књига структурирана у пет поглавља, њена смисаона равна, онако како се ствара у свести читаоца, реализује се у три целине. Оне обухватају централни, есејистичко-публицистички корпус текстова, али и пролог и епилог који се, у значењском смислу, по сучељености дозивају на оно на шта упућује семантика њихових наслова. Наиме „Пролог: Мегалополис протумачен деци“, осим што алудира на наслов књиге *Посмодерна њрошумачена деци* Ж. Ф. Лиотара, упућује на Мегалополис као први кључни појам ове Владушићево књиге и на стваралачку намеру аутора и стилске карактеристике његовог рукописа. Промишљајући о антихуманистичким, антидемократским, антихришћанским и спрам суверене државе дехомогенизујућим стратегијама Мегалополиса, аутор настоји да их, како наслов пролога истиче, *њрошумачи деци*, што се може разумети фигуративно, као писање упућено садашњем и будућем читалачком нараштају, чиме се ово Владушићево дело потврђује као парадигматичан пример тестаментарног писања. На ову интенцију упућује и аутор када бележи да је *Завет и Мејалололис* „дебело писмо“ слободним људима, личностима које још увек умеју да конотативно, симболички, критички и аутономно мисле. Истовремено перфидни и манипулативни механизми Мегалополиса херменеутички се расветљавају темељно, прегледно, пријемчивим и јасним језичким изразом, на начин на који мудар и вешт тумач уме да дечијем уму објасни сложеност света тако да он, у лакоћи аргументацијске сукцесивности, напрасно постане очевидан, дефинисан и експлицитан. Ништа мањом семантичком снагом одликује се и наслов епилога –

„Епилог или почетак“, којим се уводи Косовски завет као друга кључна одредница Владушићевих промишљања, схваћен као феномен глобалне вредности и „велики допринос српске културе и историје светско-историјској драми коју ова књига описује“. Уколико се има на уму свевременост Косовског завета и његова моћ да кроз пораз досегнуту духовну, етичку и идентитетску потврду и победу трансцендира историју, онда постаје јасна привидна контрадикторност наслова „Епилог или почетак“ – Косовски завет заиста јесте и епилог и почетак. Централни део књиге пак окупља најблиставије и најпопуларније Владушићеве текстове о савременим феноменима Мегалополиса, првобитно објављене у часописима *Печат* и *Недељник*, односно на сајтовима *РТ Балкан* и *РТС Око*, а у овој књизи груписане у поглавља „Дресирање“, „Нишћење“ и „Отпори“ у којима се анализира начин на који Мегалополис дресира људе, укида људски и божански свет, али и начин на који појединци успевају да му се одупру.

Поглавље „Пролог: Мегалополис протумачен деци“ настоји да сагледа рађање те велике дезоријентације, како аутор именује Мегалополис, и значајну улогу коју у том погледу поседује најпре заснивање велеградске нарави човека и њему блиских својстава у која се, према Георгу Зимелу, убрајају рационалност, калкулативно-новчана усмереност и блазираност, а потом и јачање типа карактера којег Дејвид Рисман означава карактером усмереног другима, а који испољава равнодушност према континуитету препознајући као једине смернице савременике, вршњаке и медије. Превласт ових двеју појава у друштву, њиховим одвајањем као посебног идентитета (чиме је подривена моћ државе да различите идентитете обједини у јединствени национални идентитет), а потом и преображавањем у транснационални и субнационални идентитет директно супротстављен појединцима који себе још увек дефинишу преко националног идентитета и карактера усмереног изнутра, уз јачање олигархије и неолибералног економског модела, доводи до промене концепта човека и пројекта који се на тој промени заснива – пројекта Мегалополис, који постаје све очитији слабљењем СССР-а и падом Берлинског зида. У овом поглављу Владушић указује и на одлике Мегалополиса, његов неофеудални карактер, тираноидну и демонизујућу владавину олигархије која укида национални и класни идентитет, те „некадашњи народ, сада претворен у бесловесну међусобно посвађану већину, третира као грађу или материјал који користи за остварење сопствених, олигархијских циљева“. За Мегалополис је, како аутор наводи, својствено и инсистирање, под маском бриге о правима, на причи о заједници као махом месту насиља (породично, вршњачко и расно насиље, али и вештачки индуковано и суштински научно осећање жена о полној угрожености и перцепцији мушкараца искључиво као узурпатора и непријатеља). Мегалополис укида и појам човека – што Владушић као основни постулат препознаје у књигама-манифестима *Крај историје и последњи човек* (1992) Френсиса Фукујаме и *Ното деус* (2015) Јувала Ноа Харарија – те „почиње да дресира људе да реч хуманизам прихвате као нешто застарело и превазиђено и да се уместо те речи, користе појмови као што су трансхуманизам и постхуманизам“. Тиме се постулира биолошки став

према животу и свету који се темељи на ослобађању нагона и свођењу човекове временски тродимензионалне егзистенције на садашњост, тј. на брисање заједничке прошлости чиме се човек удаљава од ближњих.

Имајући на уму тезу о нацистичкој Немачкој као првој политичкој конкретизацији Мегалополиса будући да се у њој суспендује хуманистички концепт човека у корист расне хијерархије, Владушић констатује да је победом над нацистичком Немачком означен крај само једне варијанте политичког Мегалополиса, али не и његовог начелног принципа супериорне мањине која ликвидира инфериорну већину. Паралелним критичким читањем постхуманистичке филозофије Мишела Фукоа, односно, његове концепције биовласти, и Хараријеве замисли о човекобогу и суперчовеку, који није ништа друго до прешминкани Ничеов појам натчовека, аутор запажа да Харари одлази корак даље у односу на Фукоа пропагандно спинујући поставке француског филозофа. Фуко наима сматра да биополитичка власт (власт регулације) подразумева давање живота и пуштања других да умру, „ту још увек изгледа да ти други умиру природном смрћу, тј. да биовласт не узрокује смрти других. У *Homo deus*-у се приповеда како ће се у будућности они којима је дат (вечни) живот – човекобогови – истребљивати људе (човекоживотиње) на исти онај начин на који су људи истребљивали животиње. Истребити баш није исто што и пустити друге да умру.“ У темељу Мегалополиса почива отуда идеја опште редукције: симболички свет човека се редукује на нагоне, симболички свет спорта на функције и новац, уметност се редукује на забаву, уметничко дело на конвенционалну причу и специјалне ефекте, док олигархија слику света редукује на економске односе и вечну срећу човекобога која се, у Хараријевој књизи, своди на хемијски произведен пријатни телесни надражај.

Отварајући питање борбе против поменутих „вредности“ Мегалополиса, у поглављу „Епilog или почетак“ истиче се да различити народи и културе ово питање могу да поставе повезујући га са сопственом филозофском традицијом или историјом, али да је у оквиру српске културе, историје и духовности једини могући одговор садржан у Косовском боју и Косовском завету. Ослањајући се на увиде Владимира Ћоровића и Димитрија Богдановића који Завет тумаче у духу његове етичке компоненте, као тријумф опредељења за вечни живот, Владушић указује и на Данила Бањског (Млађег) и реченицу из његовог *Слова о свештом кнезу Лазару* коју говори управо кнез: „Боља нам је смрт у подвигу, него ли живот са стидом.“ У овој мисли Владушић назире не само могућност опредељења између борбе и предаје, подвига и стида, него и моћ Завета да превазиђе конкретну историјску димензију и докаже „чудесну актуелност у суочавању са Мегалополисом“. Ова актуелност испољава се кроз шансу да појединац и у данашњем тренутку може да бира између заветне (хумане, духовне, етичке) лествице вредности и биолошке (нагонске, исплативе, комформистичке) аксиолошке алтернативе, да бира заправо пут опирања (империјалној) сили Мегалополиса или приклањање њеним начелима марећи једино за властиту сигурност. Владушић стога закључује да се Косовски завет не одликује анахроношћу и неспојивошћу са модерним светом (у

то тежи да увери управо Мегалополис којем смета сваки колективни идентитет, па и српски), већ да се, управо супротно, одликује трансисторијским капацитетом по којем свет препознаје Србе и прихвата га као заветни народ. Када овакве мисли бележи, аутор има на уму Семјуела Хантингтона и књигу *Амерички идентитети* у којој се Косово наводи као један од примера повезивања националног идентитета и светог места.

Есејистичко-публицистички корпус текстова књиге *Завети и Мегалополис* обухвата најпре поглавље „Дресирање“, које тежи да укаже на разнолике феномене Мегалополиса и разобличи начине на који се ти феномени у свакодневици манифестују. Отвара се тема корпоративног човека заинтересованог само за своју каријеру, сигурност и упражњавање личних уживања, као и питање образовања, односно, нужности усвајања вредности попут истине, правде и значаја ближњих (текст „Чија су наша деца?“). О опседнутости траумом и насиљем, о нивоима на којима они дејствују, као и о тренду медијског застрашивања с намером да се становништво пороби. Владушић пише у тексту „Филомена и траума“, док политичку и идеолошку репресију репрезентата моћи (Мегалополиса) анализира на случају професора Милоша Ковића и тежњи да се он из политичких разлога протера са факултета. Текст „Ликвидирати човека књижевности“ указује на још један облик супресије и/или присиле који Мегалополис спроводи, овога пута над свима који читање и књижевност опажају као повлашћене факте људског трајања. Управо отуда што располаже вештином тумачења, оном врстом „тајног знања“ које једино књижевност нуди и захваљујући којем унутрашњи и спољашњи свет постаје отпорнији на манипулације потрошачког друштва, човек књижевности, сматра Владушић, постаје прворазредни непријатељ Мегалополиса.

Поглавље „Чишћење“ отвара се текстом „Европа без Божића“ који апострофира Мегалополис као „доба свесног укидања хришћанства“, пропагирања институционалне дехристијанизације европског друштва и његових темеља, али и истиче супротне примере из српске културе, личности Ивана В. Лалића и Борислава Пекића, њихово хришћанство и традиционални хуманизам као „једини могући оквир у коме људска способност стварања има смисла и вредности“. Текст „Расизам и антирасизам“ сагледава пак антирасистичке демонстрације у америчким и европским мегалополисима у светлу Хантингтоновог става о америчком идентитету који је доведен у питање, јер су посебни расни, етнички, родни и други субнационални идентитети издигнути спрам заједничког, националног идентитета, што није спонтан процес, него се подржава и убрзава политичким одлукама америчке администрације. На још један пример расизма – зелени расизам – и фигуру Грете Тунберг као његовог пропагандног постера задуженог за промоцију једне верзије еколошке свести упућује Владушићев текст „Зелени расизам“. Овај се термин одређује као „осећање панике и страха од пропасти света услед еколошке катастрофе која наводно само што се није догодила, а која може да се реши само радикалним мерама које искључују хуманистички обзир према другим живим бићима“. О „случају Хуавеји“ као једном од фронтова америчког-кинеског суоча-

вања и показатеља да се специфичним начелом функционисања може спречити продирање глобалног капитала у управљачку структуру компаније сведочи текст „Хуавеји – убити птицу ругалицу“. Исту непоткупљивост, истрајност и храброст да се, играјући по правилима Мегалополиса, процес глобализације преокрене у своју корист, Владушић запажа, у домену спорта, у фигури Новака Ђоковића који је (како о томе казују текстови „Ђоковић и Мегалополис“ и „Ђоковић је Хуавеји“), играјући према правилима Мегалополиса, руинирао федереровско-надаловски монопол на титулу *Најбољеј играча свих времена*. У овом поглављу аутор такође отвара тему симболичке вредности српске кошарке и њене кризе која је више знак промене свести, губљења националног идентитета и јачања НБА концепта кошарке, него што је криза талената (текст „Српска кошарка мора да умре“), али и тему регионализације НИН-ове награде (текст „Нинова награда више не постоји“).

Наредно поглавље „Отпори“ тематизује кошмарне ефекте *кенсел културе*, брисања европске хуманистичке традиције у корист појмова постхуманизма или трансхуманизма (текст „Размишљања над Украјином“), али и примере из српске књижевности и популарне културе који властитим интегритетом и свешћу о националном идентитету учвршћују спознају да је мирее различитости изводљиво. Ауторова проницљива анализа одломка из *Хазарској речника*, тј. „Казивања о Адаму, брату Христовом“ као политичке параболе доказује Павићеву замисао добре државе као додиривања универзалног и партикуларног, мушког и женског (текст „Павић или добра држава“). Управо због оваквог обједињујућег квалитета који се одупире Мегалополису и његовом разарању непосредног додира међу људима, Павићева књига се означава као „политички најнекоректнија књига која се данас може замислити“. Духу Мегалополиса супротставља се и личност Борислава Пекића која се у тексту „Зашто баш Пекић?“ наводи као изванредан пример „просвећеног грађанског патриотизма“ и доказ да је укореееност у властитом наслеђу (које подразумева, према Пекићу, историју Балкана и византијски културни круг) предуслов за зрело и самостално посматрање и сазнавање света. Пекић нам стога показује, поентира Владушић, „да је могуће нешто, што нас све време уче да је немогуће: да будемо истовремено ‘модерни’ и ‘конзервативни’, да не морамо ничега да се одрекнемо да бисмо нешто добили или стекли, да можемо да будемо поносни што живимо на Балкану и што пишемо и читамо на српском језику“. Непростајање на антинационалне стратегије олигархије Мегалополиса у домену музике исказује група „Београдски синдикат“, јер се управо захваљујући њиховом реповању из позиције народа који је показатељ истинског бунта, они препознају као „један од најбољих примера српске културне гериле“ (текст „Београдски синдикат и културна герила“).

Пишући о Мегалополису и Завету као његовој вредносној, идејно-филозофској и емпиријској опозицији, Владушић остварује и значајне екскурсе, попут оног који се тиче језика Мегалополиса, његових напада на суверенитет као вредност, превазиђености појма Запад (јер након укидања америчког и европског националног идентитета, не може више бити речи о постојању заједничког цивилиза-

цијског идентитета Запада), значаја доколице као времена „мисаоне експанзије“ који духу Мегалополиса не одговара, али и разликовања роба (Мегалополисовом интервенцијом створеног једнодимензионалног идентитета што је заокупљен профитабилношћу) и личности (коју одликује „усађени склоп различитих компонентни идентитета“ и категорије искуства, животне приче и воље за тоталитетом). Владушићево писање одликује се упечатљивим примерима који фигурирају или као повод за аналитичке осврте или пак као експликација одређеног феномена (рецимо текстуални пасаж о штрајку рудара у Британији 1984-1985. године као парагон двоструке, и класне и породично-осећајне блискости жена и мушкараца чиме се оснажује заједничко одупирање олигархији). Изузетној ауторској упућености у област политике, политичке економије, социологије, историје и филозофије придружује се минуциозна и надахнута херменеутичка вештина евидентна у оним деловима књиге који тумаче епску песму *Бановић Сврахиња* и истоимену Михизову драму, односно, држање логораша Вукашина Мандрапе у заветној ситуацији суочавања са људском/политичком вољом за моћ отелотвореној у лику усташе Фригановића. У деликатном иронијско-полемичком тону разоткривајући генезу, особине и намере Мегалополиса с једне стране и императив очувања хуманистичких (односно хришћанских, етичких, духовних) позиција и вредности с друге стране, књига *Завет и Мегалополис* не само да се перцепира као позив на одбрану заветног аксиолошког склопа, него и као – како јасновидно у рецензији бележи Зоран Чворовић – „практични приручник за герилску борбу“.

**СПИСАК РЕЦЕНЗЕНАТА ЗА НАУЧНИ ЧАСОПИС
КУЛТУРА 2024. ГОДИНЕ**

	Име и презиме	Титула	Афилијација	Звање
1.	Свенка Савић	доктор наука	Универзитет у Новом Саду, Филозофски факултет	професор емеритус
2.	Светозар Рапајић	доктор наука	Универзитет уметности у Београду, Факултет драмских уметности	професор емеритус
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6.	Весна Крчмар	доктор наука	Академија уметности у Новом Саду	редовни професор
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13.	Далибор Петровић	доктор наука	Универзитет у Београду, Филозофски факултет	редовни професор
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15.	Милош Стојановић	доктор наука	Академија техничко-васпитачких струковних студија у Нишу	ванредни професор

	Име и презиме	Титула	Афилијација	Звање
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17.	Весна Ђукић	доктор наука	Универзитет уметности у Београду, Факултет драмских уметности	редовни професор
18.	Александра Ђукић	доктор наука	Универзитет у Београду, Архитектонски факултет	редовни професор
19.	Предраг Крстић	доктор наука	Универзитет у Београду, Институт за филозофију и друштвену теорију	истраживач сарадник
20.	Александар Ђаковац	доктор наука	Универзитет у Београду, Православни богословски факултет	ванредни професор
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22.	Драган Ђаловић	доктор наука	Факултет савремених уметности	редовни професор
23.	Ирена Кулетин Ђулафић	доктор наука	Универзитет у Београду, Архитектонски факултет	доцент
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26.	Недељка Перишић Бјелановић	доктор наука	Институт за књижевност и уметност, Београд	научни сарадник

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Риге од Фере 4, 11000 Београд
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ОБРАЗАЦ ЗА РЕЦЕНЗЕНТЕ

- Молим Вас да:
- приложени текст критички прочитате, категоризујете и (одговарајући на понуђена питања) предложите да ли може бити прихваћен за објављивање у часопису;
 - опширније коментаре (напомене, предлоге или примедбе) изнесите на крају овог обрасца, као и у самом тексту који рецензирате;
 - попуњени образац вратите електронском поштом најкасније 14 дана после пријема, укључујући текст са Вашим интервенцијама.
- Рецензија и текст са коментарима биће послати аутору/ауторима анонимно.

Наслов текста: _____

Категорија: Оригиналан научни рад Прегледни рад
 Кратко или претходно саопштење Стручни рад

		ДА	НЕ
1.	Да ли је наслов текста у складу са садржајем?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Да ли су резиме и кључне речи довољно информативни?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Да ли је текст методолошки коректно заснован?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Да ли предлагате одређене допуне текста?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Да ли предлагате брисање појединих делова или скраћивање текста?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Да ли су табеле (графикони, шеме) у тексту неопходне и адекватне?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Да ли су фусноте (ендноте) потребне и одговарајуће?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Да ли је цитирање или парафразирање коректно?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Да ли су литература и други извори у потпуности и коректно наведени?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Да ли текст може бити објављен у часопису?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(а)	у непромењеној форми?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(б)	са одређеним исправкама?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Да ли текст желите да прочитате после дораде?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Име и презиме рецензента: _____

Београд _____ Датум: _____

РАДОВИ ЗА ЧАСОПИС КУЛТУРА

УПУТСТВО

Култура је научни часопис који је на предлог Матичног научног одбора категоризован од стране Министарства просвете, науке и технолошког развоја Републике Србије као водећи национални часопис са ознаком М 51.

1. Рад се предаје у следећем облику:

1.1. путем УСБ уређаја; слањем на *e-mail* адресу: kultura@zaprokul.org.rs

2. Сваки текст треба да садржи:

2.1. *Word* документ са основним текстом, напоменама, кључним речима (од четири до седам речи на српском и од четири до седам речи на енглеском језику) и сажетком на српском језику (до 150 речи).

2.2. *Word* документ са насловом текста, резимеом и кључним речима на енглеском језику (до 300 речи).

2.3. *Word* документ са списком илустрација (ако их има) и с јасно назначеним местима на којима би требало да буду илустрације. Примају се само црно-беле илустрације или које су препознатљиве када се одштапају у црно-белом формату (до седам). Фотографије морају бити у *Grayscale* колорном моду, у резолуцији 300 пиксела. Цртежи морају бити у *Bitmap* (црно-белом) колорном моду у резолуцији 600 пиксела. Обавезно навести порекло илустрација тј. извор. Уредништво задржава право да неквалитетне и непотпуне ликовне прилоге одбаци.

2.4. Податке о аутору текста. Име и презиме аутора, година рођења (потребно ради увида у научни рад одређеног аутора у централној бази података Народне библиотеке Србије и у складу с тим одређивања УДК броја чланка у часопису), поштанска адреса, број мобилног телефона, *e-mail* адреса, афилијација (наводи се пун, званични назив и седиште установе у којој је аутор запослен или назив установе у којој је аутор обавио истраживање. У сложеним организацијама наводи се укупна хијерархија; на пример: Универзитет у Београду, Филозофски факултет – Одељење за социологију, Београд).

3. Опште одреднице

3.1. Текст чланка са списком литературе не треба да прелази обим од десет до највише 15 описаних компјутерских страница, укључујући графиконе и илустрације.

3.2. Текст приказа не треба да прелази обим од пет описаних страница.

3.3. Текст научне полемике треба да буде опремљен као и остали чланци у часопису и не може прелазити њихов обим. Он треба да буде ослобођен напада на личност опонента и да се фокусира на саму аргументацију.

- 3.4. Текстови који се достављају часопису треба да буду ослобођени словних грешака насталих током куцања текста, у складу с правописом, граматички, језички и стилски доследни.
- 3.5. Текстови који се достављају на објављивање часопису *Култура* подлежу антиплагијат контроли коју врши Центар за евалуацију у образовању и науци – ЦЕОН. Поред тога, од аутора се тражи дигитализована изјава с потписом којом гарантује да је текст који је доставио оригиналан.

4. Техничка упутства:

- 4.1. Текст писан ћирилицом се предаје у *doc* формату програма *Microsoft Word* програмског пакета 97 или новијег. Фонт треба да буде *Times New Roman*, величине 12, проредка *Single*.
- 4.2. На средини ставити наслов, потом сажетак на српском и кључне речи на српском.
- 4.3. Уколико постоји институционална финансијска помоћ при писању рада, у првој фусноти треба навести назив и број пројекта, односно назив програма, у оквиру којег је чланак настао, као и назив институције која је финансирала пројекат или програм.
- 4.4. Када се први пут наводи страном име у тексту у загради треба да се стави име исписано у оригиналу; када се следећи пут помиње исто име у наставку текста треба да буде доследно, истоветно транскрибовано без помињања оригинала.
- 4.5. Библиографске референце у фуснотама и литератури наводе се без транскрибовања у оригиналном писму. Ако је литература која се цитира штампана ћирилицом и референце у напоменама и списку литературе треба да буду наведене ћирилицом, ако су штампане латиницом, онда треба да буду наведене латиницом. Цитати и позивање на литературу у фуснотама треба да потпуно одговарају списку литературе на крају текста.

5. Напомене

Напомене (фусноте) се дају на дну сваке стране. Нумерација континуирано иде арапским бројевима од 1 па надаље и иде иза знака интерпункције. Напомене треба да се користе мање за коментаре, а више за навођење литературе; најобимнија напомена (фуснота) не би требало да буде дужа од 100 речи.

Систем навођења:

5.1. Монографије:

Презиме, Иницијал имена. (година издања) *Назив монографије* (курзив), Место издања: Назив издавача, страна.

Пример: Адорно, Т. (1968) *Филозофија нове музике*, Београд: Нолит, стр. 45.

5.2 Периодика:

Презиме, Иницијал имена. (година издања) Наслов чланка, *Назив часописа* (курзив) број часописа, Место издања: Назив издавача, страна.

Пример: Бугарски, Р. (1973) Семиотички приступ музици, *Култура* бр. 23, Београд: Завод за проучавање културног развитка, стр. 146.

5.3. Зборници, акта са конгреса, лексикони, речници и слично:

Презиме, Иницијал. Наслов чланка, у: *Наслов* (курзив), приредио-ла-ли Презиме, Иницијал имена. (година издања), Место издања: Назив издавача, страна.

Пример: Парк, Р. Е. Град: предлози за истраживање људског понашања у градској средини, у: *Социологија града*, приредио Вујовић, С. (1988), Београд: Завод за уџбенике и наставна средства, стр. 150.

5.4. У случају издања на страним језицима:

Уместо везника „и” користи се енглески термин *and*, уместо предлога „у” користи се енглески термин *in*, уместо глагола „приредио-ла-ли” користе се енглески термини *ed.* или *eds.* (од *editor-s*) ако је више приређивача, уместо скраћенице „стр.” користи се енглески термин *p.*

Пример: Brunet, R. and Ferras, R. Identité, in: *Les mots de la géographie. Dictionnaire critique*, eds. Brunet, R. Ferras, R. and Théry, H. (1992) Paris: Montpellier, p. 30.

5.5. Неодјављене магистарске тезе и докторске дисертације: Презиме, Иницијал имена. (година на насловној страни тезе или дисертације) Назив тезе или дисертације (курзив), врста рада (магистарска теза или докторска дисертација), назив факултета где је одбрањена, назив одговарајућег универзитета, Место издања, страна.

Пример: Црнобрња, А. Н. (2005) *Лух репертуа – светиљосћ и светиљке у кулџовима на џросџорима Горње Мезије*, магистарски рад, Филозофски факултет, Универзитет у Београду, Београд, стр. 120.

5.6. Текстови из дневних листова:

Презиме, Иницијал имена. (датум издања) Наслов текста, Назив дневног листа (курзив), страна. Пример: Татић, Д. (18. јул 1998) Истина о неимарима, *Полиџиџка*, стр. 15.

*Ако је аутор текста непознат ставити аноним. Пример: Аноним, (13. IX 1938) Шта мисле наши архитекти о савременој архитектури, *Време*.

5.7. Исти се рад у поновном непосредном цитирању скрађује српском речи Исто.

Пример: ³³Бугарски, Р. (1973) Семиотички приступ музици, *Кулџура* бр. 23, Београд: Завод за проучавање културног развитка, стр. 147.

³⁴Исто, стр. 148.

5.8. Исти рад се у поновном цитирању на неком другом месту у тексту (до две стране удаљеном од претходне фусноте) скрађује са нав. дело.

Пример: ⁴⁰Бугарски, Р. нав. дело, стр. 149.

5.9. Интернет издања цитирати на следећи начин: аутор текста на горе описан начин (ако је наведен), назив интернет издања, датум постављања или последње измене (*update*) сајта (ако је наведен), датум коришћења сајта, пуна путања до цитираних стране.

Пример: Rose, M. More on Bosnian „Pyramids”, 27. june 2004, 18. july 2006, <http://www.archaeology.org/online/features/osmanagic/update.html>

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- 1968, бр. 1- . - Београд : Завод за проучавање
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