Denkmal oder Mahnmal?

Historization and its consequences. Debating the political articulation of a traumatic past.

Jelena Jureša and Aneta Stojnić

This text is based on the conversation between Jelena Jureša and Aneta Stojnić at Künstlerhaus – Halle für Kunst und Medien in Graz on the occasion of Jureša's solo exhibition *Mira, Study for a Portrait* in February 2015. This was the first in a series of public talks that will be developed within the framework of Jureša's research at Ghent University and the research centre S:PAM and KASK – School of Arts, in coproduction with f.act – Forum for Gender Discourse in Art. In her PhD research, Jureša is focusing on interconnections among three specific events of the twentieth century history in the context of Europe: the negation of war crimes after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, with a focus on the Republic of Srpska and Serbia; the construction of a national identity in Austria following the *Anschluss* and its relation to the silence about the Holocaust; and the construction of a Belgian identity in the aftermath of its colonial past.
We used this opportunity to open up a debate on the topics of history, memory, and issues related to narrating difficult historic events on a number of different levels.

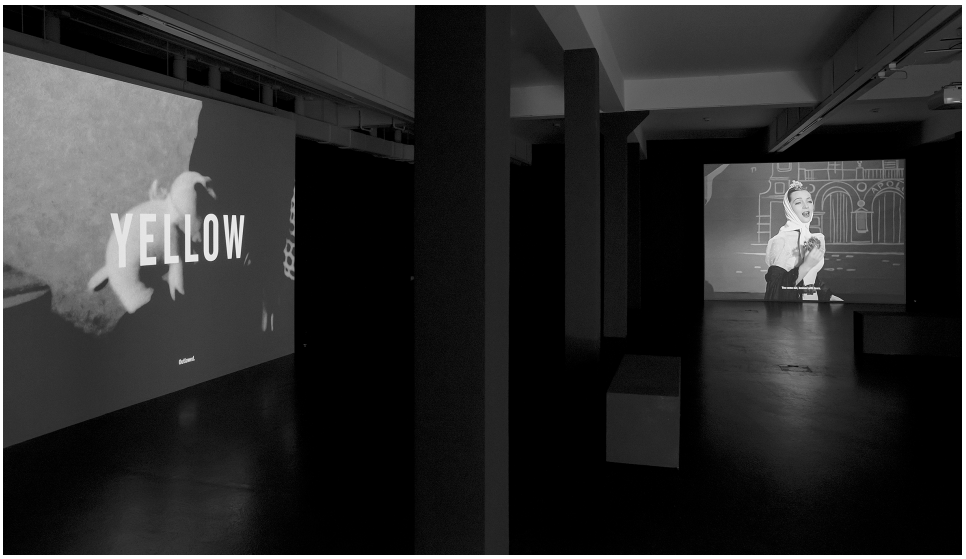
The collision of past and present

Aneta Stojnić: Maybe we can start with the work presented at the exhibition. This is a very complex work you've developed over the course of several years. In your projects you combine photography, film and text. *Mira, Study for a Portrait* (2010–2014) resulted in a video installation consisting of two films, a series of photographs, and a book. One of the things I was very interested in while watching the video installation is the storytelling format, which introduces a narrative that starts at the beginning of the twentieth century and extends till the beginning of the nineties and the breakup of Yugoslavia. In this work, you examined the strategy of multilayer photographic and micro narratives in tracing the complex history of a single Balkan family. According to Branka Benčić, in the text in the catalogue, the work "explores the quest for individual identity and the battle against amnesia among the shreds of memory" (31, 32). It narrates the story of an anonymous woman's life and her family, from the time before her

birth, until her tragic death. You use this story as a framework to address many political questions and to create a particular reflective space. I would like to ask you about your position as the artist in relation to this form of storytelling: what kind of narrative are you offering with this work, or to put it in a different way, what is the hegemonic narrative that you are trying to interfere with and intervene in?

Jelena Jureša: There are many narratives in the work and many layers in each of them. In *Mira, Study for a Portrait*, I was working with history and with archives, and I was interested in exploring the notion of truth on the verge of representation by combining private memories with artefacts and political and historical narratives. I often referred to the work as to the story of *one woman, one family, one country, and three wars*, even though the geography of time is quite specific in *Mira*. The storytelling begins with the year of 1492, since I was tracing the genealogy of the family, but I also uncovered a history of departure and genocide. It is the year of the expulsion of the Spanish Jews, and the year when Christopher Columbus started his journey in the hope of finding India. Therefore, this time slot is historically poignant; it connects two main trajectories, that of the vast migration of Sephardic Jews interwoven with the many deaths and the long history of persecution and genocide of Native Americans. Having found peace under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, many Jews would for centuries base their new home on the Balkan Peninsula, even though they continued to maintain their Ladino language as a source of comfort. The next fracture in the storytelling trajectory was, inevitably, the Holocaust.

The storytelling in *Mira* is mostly based on the testimonies of the people who are portrayed in the work, or their relatives and friends. It was important to present personal histories that took place within the history of a country and this particular period of time in Yugoslavia. It could be read as a biography of an epoch, but only on the surface. Even though this work is not "autobiographical", to a certain extent it has an autobiographical aspect, as I was reaching for this opportunity to be confronted with Yugoslavia and this period that was always nagging away at me. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, I was trying to grasp the story about my own identity, which was both critical and substantial for all my future work. In order to do the research that I am doing now in the framework of my PhD and to look into the role of Serbia in the last war and its silence over the atrocities, it was important to answer some questions concerning my own identity in relation to my life in Yugoslavia, to look deeply into whether this experience was one that was constructed or one that was actually lived.



Jelena Jureša, *Mira, Study for a Portrait*
Künstlerhaus – Halle für Kunst und Medien, Graz, 2015, Installation view

AS: Even though your video installation does not follow any kind of a linear dramaturgy, but rather a fragmented one, we could say that the first part of *Mira, Study for a Portrait* portrays the history of one Jewish family since World War Two and the experience of the Holocaust, through the antifascist partisan struggles and finally liberation from the Nazi occupation and the formation of the new country, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ). Having grown up in Yugoslavia in the eighties, we remember that this narrative was still very present in our education – it was clearly important in the public discourse to remember these events and this historical period.

JJ: I'm glad that you mentioned the dominant narrative that we grew up with, as it has shaped our perspective of the world, which is something I find truly important. I am aware that artists coming from the region of Yugoslavia are quite used to oral narration, and it is not by chance that through their art practices they search for the heart of the matter. The history that was common and present during our formative years influenced how our identities were shaped. In *Mira, Study for a Portrait*, I wanted to question how it could be possible for a woman to lead a normal life if laden with this horrific baggage shaped by the atrocities of World War Two, in a country whose mantra was "brotherhood and unity".

AS: How do you see the possibilities of an artist toward the processes of history and historicization? I would like to know more about it, as you have a very particular way of working with image, using the language of film and the language of video, archive material, playing with the meaning of interiors and exteriors, experimenting with landscapes that are not neutral, but charged with history. How would you position your visual language, and the dramaturgy that you established between the visual and textual narrative?

JJ: I never take the image for granted. I am interested in inscribing the meaning into the image; I like to play with this relationship, and the interpolation of the seeming neutrality of the image and the narrative, charged with signifiers. As the histories are entangled in the piece, dichotomies prevail: through the transition of interiors and exteriors, sound and silence, private and public. As Branka Benčić says when she tackles this interplay: "Interiors are usually understood as private places of female identity, while public spaces are considered to be realms of male authority." (35) The scenes of nature are filmed mostly in Bosnia, where nature is *brutally beautiful*. My intention was to confront this beauty with the narrative, which is mostly *brutal*. I do think of the image as palimpsest, layered

Jelena Jureša, *Mira, Study for a Portrait*, 2010-2014, video still

with meanings, and that landscape and places can be interpreted (See also Huyssen and Nora). In this connotative hierarchy, the first and most obvious layer would be the name of a place, always layered with different overtones and read through different historical events. For example, Bijeljina is a city in Bosnia, the hometown of the Jewish family portrayed in the work, where Jews were taken from their homes in World War Two and dragged into the death camps. In the nineties, during the war, it became a place where atrocities took place against the Muslim citizens. I am interested in this circle of events, in the mechanisms that are employed before atrocities happen, and those that take place after.

AS: You have worked artistically on related topics in the past, often encompassing issues of personal and social histories that have a pronounced impact on the viewer and demonstrate a strong interest and alliance with historical, social, and theoretical issues, resulting in a solid body of work that focuses on the essence of the lens-based medium. In a way, your work, which is informed by the practices of the artist as historian and the archival artist (Benčić 31), brings innovative solutions to the field of the representation of private memories and artifacts as political and historical narratives. Could you elaborate on the working process, both in terms of artistic practice and in terms of your research motivations?

JJ: The research phase we're discussing is crucial. It is the very beginning of the production of the new work, as was also the case for part of the very thorough preparations for the creation of *Mira*. It took time, not only to collect the stories and memories, but also because every fact that was significant for the work needed to be checked. There is a sentence in the work that I appropriated as a milestone, in order to explain the hardships of the time. It narrates that "partisans required that not even a fallen apple be picked from the ground, for two jars of honey you could be pulled before a firing squad". I discovered the sentence when watching thirteen episodes of a documentary TV series by Lordan Zafranović[1] and going through the testimonies of the people who witnessed the crucial events during Tito's time, the Second World War, and the formation of Yugoslavia. For the part of the work that narrates atrocities, I have studied all the literature I could find on the death camps in Jasenovac, Loborgrad, and Đakovo. The whole process was overwhelming, and I found out that the hardest task for me was to stay "neutral", to keep from being charged with emotions or jumping to conclusions. I had to constantly remind myself about my role – as an artist – in the creation of the piece. I've become sort of an

Jelena Jureša, *Mira, Study for a Portrait*, 2010-2014, video still

indirect witness to these events, through all the testimonies I've lived with over a period of four years. And that is what led me to decide on my next research, and the reasons for that are quite coherent and clear to me now.

AS: Thorough research and an understanding of specific local and historical contexts appear to be among the central motives for your work. In this regard, are there any differences in the way that you present your work in Serbia compared with Austria? Is it important for you to think about whom your work is addressing?

JJ: When I took the chance to develop *Mira, Study for a Portrait* as a multi-narrative piece and embrace the storytelling format, I relied on my relationship with literature. I learned that the more attention that is paid to the particular details in a story, the more agency is invested in transcending the viewer's reflection. I find the communicational aspect of the work very significant, and so I always have a spectator in mind during the production. When I was invited to exhibit at the Künstlerhaus – Halle für Kunst und Medien in Graz, I was curious to learn how the "story" relating the travails of a Jewish family from Bosnia and the Holocaust would be perceived by the public.[2] Nevertheless, while immersed in my current research it was certainly in my mind that the work was going to be shown in a country where the issue of the official state narrative regarding facing the past and Holocaust remembrance was one that had been neglected for decades. From the 1990s onwards, there has been a notable shift in the memory discourse in Austria among many academic studies and official institutions (See for example Uhl), but inevitable questions remain about the consequences that result from the silence on past crimes. Following Veronika Zangl it is essential "to signify the immense gap between institutionalised memory on the one hand and so called para or postnazistic memory figurations on the other" (273) and to take into account that the counter-discourse to official remembrance of National Socialism in Austria is still present in "familial, local and regional memory cultures" (Uhl, as cited in Zangl 273). Furthermore, everyday fascism has transformed into a right-wing populist political programme that is now "part of the Austrian public sphere and no longer a taboo" (Zangl 296). Regarding the question of consensus among a number of scholars and institutions on the importance of digesting and living with the unsavoury past, Oliver Rathkolb concludes that Austria's discourse toward its entanglement with National Socialism is still in motion (2010).

The case of the politics of oblivion in Austria cannot be regarded outside of the remembrance politics of other European states and the case of Germany. Tony Judt questions the mythologisation of Europe's recovery since 1945, which mostly prevailed in the period up to 1989 in a "self-congratulatory, even lyrical key" (5). Since 1980, the national historical identities of European Countries marked by their involvement with National Socialism have been negotiated anew. More than 100,000 Jews lived in Austria before the *Anschluss*[3], and 65,000 perished in concentration camps. Not many Jews returned after the war, as the New Republic showed no willingness for their return (Bunzl, 1987). Nevertheless, after World War Two, the Austrian State insisted on claiming the status of being the first victim of Hitler's aggression in order to evade responsibility for the known historical events. A new national identity constructed after World War II relied on the empowerment of the Austrian national unity, while simultaneously denying the bond with the Nazi past and Austria's role in the Holocaust (Wodak & De Cilia, 2007). The prevalent victim theory did not include Jewish victims, and the period between 1938 and 1945 that had been erased from the Austrian official narrative remained unchanged until the end of the 1980s. Jewish voices remained silent, as antisemitism remained unquestioned for almost fifty years[4], a period in which, according to Zangl, "scarcely any efforts were made in order to perceive the Holocaust as an epistemological or ethical problem" (296). "Victim myth" therefore continued to be at the core of Austrian post-war identity right up to the so-called Waldheim Affair in 1986, when the military activity of the former United Nations Secretary General[5] and the future Austrian president Kurt Waldheim[6] was internationally acknowledged (See Wodak et al.). Regarding that the elimination of Jews from society has been "integrally linked with the confiscation of their property" (Silverman 139), the question of the restitution of Jewish possessions remained a stumble block for a definitive "victimhood" paradigm shift in Austria, until the end of the 1990s (Blimlinger).

Despite studying a great deal of literature, my deeper insight into what it meant to be an Austrian in post-war Austria and to be trapped by a palpable silence on the crimes of the past, came through the work of Thomas Bernhard[7]. The distance he feels toward the unspeakable reads as familiar, even precise: I was able to recognise my own feelings of repulsion and inadequacy regarding my own country's political framing of its recent past. Since the dissolution of Yugoslavia, most of my professional experiences have been shaped by an encounter with an historical turmoil that took place during and after the war.

While being persistently active against the regime of Slobodan Milosevic, like many of my peers during the 1990s, I find it important to differentiate between the hegemonic memory shaped by the State politics and the individual memory of the citizens. Our lives under the regime and our confrontation with the politics of war made us sensitive and aware to the fact that dissent is continually present – under *any* regime or State-political opportunism – even though it is not predominantly rendered visible. To resist official narratives might seem in vain, as the aim is rather elusive. It remains a marathon, not a sprint. By joining with voices that are critical towards one's own history, many activists, scholars, thinkers, and artists are able to add additional layers to existing practices of resistance.

According to Berber Bevernage, most perpetrators of injustice would choose the option of advocating in the name "of the future and of national reconciliation" (8). These ideas about the new nation-state raised on the troubled past are mostly visible in public speeches by state representatives, where the new nation-states are referred to as "newborn babies" and words such as “birth”, “rebirth”, and “birth hours” become the key metaphors in commemorative discourse (See also Wodak and De Cilia). This is precisely where my artistic interests lie: Is it possible to ‘decode’ the language of the politics of oblivion? Is there a face to it? And if it does have a face, is it ultimately human?

Genealogy of Amnesia

AS: The question of the personal and the political is an important aspect of your work. It is present in a very subtle way, yet clearly shows how the two become inseparable. Can you elaborate on the place of these aspects – ‘the personal and the political’, or ‘from the personal to the political’ – in your artistic process?

JJ: It is vital for an artist to be attentive, in terms both of research and the conceptualization of the work. For example, my acquaintance with Tanja Marković, a Belgrade activist, theoretician, psychologist, and artist, was very significant for a deeper understanding of my own work, and future research. I was born and raised in Yugoslavia, and when the war started I found myself in high school in Serbia, suffering from anorexia. Because of my inability to perceive the thinness of my body, I asked to be filmed. I hoped that being able to view my body through a mediated image would help me to establish a distance toward my body reflection, despite the altered self-perception. One might say that this clip is my first video. In one of the conversations I had with Tanja, I

mentioned that I had found this footage. At that time, I was spending a lot of time in Bosnia, filming my other work, while struggling with persistent feelings of shame toward the war and its aftermath. Tanja was sure that there was a link between my anorexia and the war, and encouraged me to discuss my urge for going back to Bosnia. During one of our discussions, I had an outburst in which I said how ashamed I feel every time I visit Sarajevo, because at the time when I was anorexic and spending time being hungry in the hospital in Belgrade, the people of Sarajevo were starving because of the war and the siege. We were hungry and undernourished at the same time, only for very different reasons. Even though we shouldn't think of anorexia as a matter of personal choice, the feeling of shame still prevailed: a shame of one's own image and a shame of the actions and decisions that led to atrocities being carried out in one's name. I am aware that shame is commonly considered very unproductive, but for me the shame was a trigger for understanding that something has to be changed.

When I decided to develop research on the enduring silence in Republika Srpska and in Serbia over the atrocities of the wars in the 90s, this new commitment was both relieving and demanding. The number of victims is known, their bodies are still being searched for, and from time to time mass graves are found, but the state narrative towards the crimes that happened remains the same.

AS: We might say that historicization and practices of memory played an important role in this regard. I would like you to make a kind of connection or a parallel between the *Mira, Study for a Portrait* work and the project you are currently developing as your PhD in the arts in Belgium. Historically, *Mira* ends in 1990 – a year before the start of the war in Yugoslavia – and the research in your PhD project connects the official state politics of memory and oblivion regarding the Holocaust in Austria and the interpretation of the Austrian role in World War II with the politics of oblivion in Republika Srpska and Serbia in relation to the wars of the 90s. The connection you are trying to see makes me think of "turbo-fascism", a term coined by the late feminist Žarana Papić in 2000, in order to explain the violent discriminatory processes of the hegemonic and separatist nationalism during the Balkan wars of the 1990s, and specifically the Serbian militaristic reality in the 1990s. The turbo-fascism (as first stated by Žarana Papić, and elaborated by Gržinić in terms of turbo-capitalism) took place with the dismantling of Yugoslavia. The prefix "turbo" refers to the specific mixture of cultural and political references, "but the fascism exists in its proper sense" (Gržinić). As Papić wrote: "It is, of course, known that Fascism is a

Jelena Jureša, *Mira, Study for a Portrait*
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historical term; that the history of Nazi Germany is not the same as that of Milošević's Serbia. However, in post-modernist and feminist theory we speak of shifting concepts, when a new epoch inherits with some additions concepts belonging to an earlier one, like, for instance the feminist notion of shifting patriarchy. In my view, we should not fear the use of big terms if they accurately describe certain political realities." (198) Do you indirectly anticipate the turbo-fascism of the nineties in *Mira, Study for a Portrait*, even though it does not directly relate to this period?

JJ: The notion of time as distinct memory vacuum is very present in *Mira*. Even though the work doesn't narrate the events of the upcoming war, the war is palpable, as the storytelling ends in 1990 with an individual tragedy that was deployed to announce a horrific future. The end is rather personal, as it is not just a cry for those who have been lost, for the country that no longer exists, or the way that the peace has been ripped to shreds, but for the inevitability of the horror of future events.

In the period prior to 1995[8], atrocities were committed in Croatia and Bosnia by all of the groups engaged in the war. In my current research, turbo-fascism has an important role, as the latent phase of the conflict, mostly implemented by the media, was the phase during which the public was prepared for the war, meaning that by defining "the Other" as the object of hatred and fear, the public was anaesthetized, in order to legitimize the future crimes. Since the beginning of the "Milošević era", Serbian propaganda, especially television, had been demonizing "the enemy" long before genocide in Srebrenica was even possible. According to Papić, just like historical fascism, turbo-fascism "includes and celebrates a pejorative renaming, alienation, and finally removal, of the other", while it requires and relies on a culture in which the normality of fascism is structurally constituted in the society. These "turbo-fascist" revisions of history have been produced since the nineties, disallowing us from thinking publicly about the antifascist past, or from openly criticizing the problematic fascistic collaboration of World War II in the region of Yugoslavia (the Chetniks and the Ustashe, for example). Furthermore, this bizarre practice in proclaiming the Nazi collaborationists as heroes was part of the new nationalistic discourse, which was something of a soundtrack to the atrocities that were carried out in the 90s.

The core of my research is to look into historically and geographically distant exemplars of state identity building, based on the silence regarding past crimes, and in order to see how the mechanisms by which this is achieved work in

practice. Thus, by linking seemingly distant historical events through the research and production of an artwork, I intend to create a reflective space in which the question on the production of politics of memory and oblivion can be raised. I am currently focusing on three episodes from Europe's recent past: the negation of war crimes after the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the Republic of Srpska and Serbia; the construction of a national identity in Austria following the *Anschluss* and its relation to the silence on the Holocaust; and the construction of a Belgian identity in the aftermath of its colonial past.

AS: Without intending to make a comparison between several different historical events, when we first started to talk about these topics and the subjects of your latest research, we initially talked about the mechanisms that enabled these events and the role of historicization in the production of those mechanisms. From these discussions the idea emerged for a new project, *Genealogy of Amnesia*[9], where we propose to address the State mechanisms that produce the "collective amnesia" that means that the political past of a certain group (be it national, racial, ethical, or economic) is systematically changed and altered by the dominant State structures of power and knowledge. More precisely, this means that specific historical events and/or periods are erased from the public discourse and are, as such, forgotten – pushed into the realm of collective amnesia.

We proposed to trace, detect and connect *Genealogy of Amnesia* through the genealogy of racism, or more precisely, through an elaboration of racism that we connect with its roots in the European colonial past. The case of Belgium is representative in terms of the absence of reflection on the nation's colonial past in the contemporary public discourse. Despite the work of many historians on the topic of Belgian involvement in Congo, this narrative was rarely produced outside of closed academic circles, and remained on the margins of the official narrative of European modern history. Our analysis shows that the Congo presents the most obvious example of this process. Congo was a private "gift" to King Leopold II of Belgium and as such the issue of independence for Congo presents a brutal case of an imperial power preventing the independence of a colony. One of the central points and consequences of such politics is a persistent racism. You have been researching the problematic basis for the construction of national identity in Austria after the *Anschluss* and in Serbia and the Republika Srpska, following the dissolution of Yugoslavia. What connects these three seemingly disparate and chronologically distant events?

JJ: We need to point out that taking such a broad approach by no means implies a homogenization of the experiences of the Congolese, the Bosnian Muslims, and the Jews during the Holocaust. What connects these three events is not that they are all crimes that occurred within the span of a hundred years, but the state mechanisms of dehumanization and stigmatization. If we look at the history of Europe through the anatomy of the politics of oblivion, we could trace it trough the history of racism. Hence, we need to rethink the constitution of European history and memory in the context of the prevailing discourses of discrimination and differentiation, of which racism and anti-Semitism are two of the most evident and most palpable. In the European context, European colonialism and imperialism are often regarded as distant, both historically and culturally, as if invisible, or laid down in shadow.

AS: If we consider Merleau-Ponty's claim that the artist sees what the public doesn't notice, than art research could be defined as a search for the understanding of our existential condition. Artistic research does not aspire toward the generalization and quantification of omitted knowledge, but rather reflects on singularity, through which it poses general questions about painful topics. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to understand how the processes of empowerment can be addressed, initiated and facilitated through artistic practices and research. What does it mean for you to approach these topics through artistic research? What are the main references that influence your current work?

JJ: It is important to say that artistic research gives me an opportunity to position different contexts and events into dialectical relation, in order to create a space for ambiguity. As an artist I find the critical stance of Berber Bevernage toward the anatomy of concepts of time quite reasoned, as he proposes that "the concepts of time traditionally used by historians are structurally more compatible with the perpetrators' than the victims' point of view, and that breaking with this structural bias demands a fundamental rethinking of the dominant modern notions of history and historical time." (ix)

Two books have influenced my decision to work on this project, and to develop it into an artwork. The first book is Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem – a Report on the Banality of Evil*, a book that opened numerous debates[10] on the issue of genocide and the responsibility of the individual. The second book by

Slavenka Drakulić came as a result of transferring the most dramatic moments observed during the trial in The Hague into a book entitled *They Would Never Hurt a Fly. War Criminals on Trial in The Hague*. In her book Drakulić argues that comparing the history of the crimes of Nazi Germany with any portion of the recent past in former Yugoslavia is very far-fetched. However, she emphasizes the importance of one element – which is a common prerequisite for genocide – the construction and identification of "the Other" as an object of hatred (Drakulić 2004, 192). Thus, there is always a great deal of focus on the explanation of reasons for hatred to be legitimate. By trying to understand the beginning of the war in the former Yugoslavia, she concludes that it was no different to "what Victor Klemperer wrote in *I Shall Bear Witness*, his diary of the period from 1933 to 1941, in which he described how, little by little, anti-Semitism became a normal way of thinking and behaving in Germany at that time" (Drakulić 193).

While exploring mechanisms of forgetting by questioning references to identity construction, I will further focus on particular places of memory. There is no exact translation for the German word *Mahnmal*, most accurately translated as *memorial*: a special form of monument (*Denkmal*), which by its public presence, admonishes those who view it to remember. Both *Denkmal* and *Mahnmal* require viewer interaction, but *Mahnmal* carries an implication of guilt and the need to participate in mourning the war. At the same time, *Mahnmal* assumes continuity in regret for what was committed in the past that stretches forward to future generations. Therefore, the main focus of my research would stay the same – if we can get to know and understand the mechanisms for constructing an identity on the basis of oblivion, can we use our awareness of how these processes work to create mechanisms for an adequate preservation of memory?
The essential question that puzzles me is how to address human nature, that is to say, what is *human* in the context of dealing with the traumatic past and how to understand it outside of the dominant memory regime. Following Žižek (3) on the individual's inability to actually think properly in the face of overwhelming encounters with the true horrors of atrocities and a sense of empathy toward the victims, Christel Stalpaert points out that "genuine thinking comes to an end once we recognize the horror of the violence that is represented" and that creative thinking emanates "when the cognitive gaze stutters and stumbles, when any univocal recognition is thought through by means of many sideways glances" (69). The importance of sideway glances, through the notion of the socially displaced and neglected – as "whoever doesn't belong anywhere, will

always be repressed" (Stalpaert 69) – is the predominant focus of my artistic interest.

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[1] Zafranović, Lordan (director) *Tito – the Last Witnesses of the Testament,* KINO DOKUMENT for HRT, 2012.

[2] An exhibition review by Colette M. Schmidt, in *Der Standard*, February 10, 2015.
http://derstandard.at/2000011477410/Jelena-Juresa-Auf-der-Suche-nach-Miras-Geschichte

[3] The "annexation" of Austria to the German Reich in 1938.

[4] Despite being challenged within the cultural sphere since the 1960s, the "victim myth" prevented further questioning of past responsibility regarding the Holocaust, especially in the political realm (Zangl). The process by which the Austrian cultural sphere of the time has exerted an influence has been extensively discussed by many scholars, and includes the work of many artists and activists, as well as the influence of particular TV projects like the broadcasting of the US mini-series "Holocaust", which was aired on Austrian TV by ORF (Bischof). The crumbling of the hegemonic narrative in the public sphere came from the work of distinct critical voices, mainly playwrights and novelists like Elfriede Jelinek and Thomas Bernhard. Both authors have radically questioned the crimes done to *others* and in one's own name (See also Uhl), and the public reactions following the performances of Jelinek's play *Burgtheater* in 1985 and Bernhard's piece *Heldenplatz* in 1988 resulted in infamous scandals.

However, Jelinek's play *Burgtheater,* widely discussed in the media (and performed a year before the Waldheim affair took place), didn't enter the Austrian political sphere. After the performance of Bernard's play *Heldenplatz* – officially staged to mark the 100th birthday of the theatre house Das Burgtheater in Vienna, which also coincided with the 50th anniversary of the *Anschluss* of Austria – the debate took its own radical course among the political elite and newspaper editors (Zangl).

[5] Waldheim, who was twice UN Secretary-General, served as a soldier in the Wehrmacht in Nazi-occupied Yugoslavia.

[6] Eli Rosenbaum, who directed the World Jewish Congress investigation that resulted in the exposure of Waldheim, went on to state in an interview in 2012, that following Waldheim's exposure "the Austrian People's Party ran the first openly antisemitic election campaign in Europe, since the Nazi party in Germany had done so in the 1930s."

The interview was conducted at Chautauqua Institution, New York, on the occasion of the publication of Rosenbaum's book *Betrayal*, on June 12, 2012.

[7] In his will, Bernhard prohibited the publication of his unpublished work, as well any new productions of his plays in Austria for the duration of their copyright. He continues to be considered among the most important German-speaking authors of the post-war era.

[8] 1995 was the year of the Srebrenica Genocide, referred to as Europe's Worst Massacre Since World War II (See also Rohde, and Dembour and Haslam). The massacre took place in the town of Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina, when Bosnian Serb forces executed 7,000 to 8,000 Bosnian Muslim civilians (mostly men and boys) during one week in July 1995. The genocide happened in the presence of UN forces from the Netherlands who did nothing to prevent it. In 2013 and 2014, both the Supreme Court in the Netherlands and the district court in the Hague found the state liable for failing to prevent more than 300 of the deaths, but the state was cleared over the deaths of 7000 men killed in and around Srebrenica. Recently, new controversies have arisen in the light of a new survey of the mass of evidence revealing that the fall of Srebrenica was part of a policy by Britain, France, and the US, as well as the UN leadership, to bring the war to an end at any price. The UN resolution condemning and marking the Srebrenica massacre as genocide was vetoed by Russia on July 8, 2015. In Serbia and in the Republic of Srpska, the resolution was not welcomed by state representatives and was designated as an obstacle to reconciliation. On July 9, 2015, the resolution was adopted by the Members of the European Parliament and the House of Representatives of the U.S. Congress.

[9] *Genealogy of Amnesia* is a project "in progress" conceived by Jelena Jureša and Christel Stalpaert (Ghent University), and Aneta Stojnić and Marina Gržinić (Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna).

[10] Adolf Eichmann, a German Nazi responsible for the facilitation of the mass deportation logistics of European Jews to extermination camps and ghettos, grew up in Austria, after moving to Germany in 1933 to join the "Austrian Legion". Following the Anschluss, Eichmann was employed to set up the Central Office for Jewish Emigration (Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung) in Vienna, which served as a Nazi authority for the mass expulsion of the Austrian Jews, and later their deportation to extermination camps. The Nazi Jewish policy created by Eichmann (often called the "Vienna Model"), served as a template that was later copied in other European cities. (Rabinovitz, 2014).
After Eichmann's arrest in 1960, Austrian newspapers reported in great detail about the process against the Austrian "Eichmänner" (Garscha, 2005). Even though he had been charged for the deportation that led to the destruction of the Austrian Jews, the process had no influence to the Austrian hegemonic memory at that time (Bischof, 2004, Zangl, 2013).