Chapter 8

Belgrade's Protest Museum:

Digital Memorialisation as Continuing the Event

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Ceo taj period gledam romanticarski, suvise sam to emotivno prezivljavao, bilo je tu svacega, sad mozda neki ljudi iz svog ugla drugacije vide, pa im se sve to pobrkalo, a ja ne mogu, tacno znam od datuma kad je bilo, od tad do tad... Cak nikad sa ljudima sa kojima delim te uspomene ne pricam o tome niti se ikad toga setimo, eto bilo pa proslo.

(Savic 2007)

> [I view all of that period romantically, I was surviving it too emotionally, there were so many things, now some people maybe from their angle see it differently, so all of it for them is mixed up, but I cannot, I know exactly by the date when it was to when... I never even spoke about it to people with whom I am sharing those memories, nor we ever remember it, like it has happened and it is gone now.]

The digital map examined in this chapter is a memorial to the unsuccessful revolution Serbs attempted in 1996 and 1997 against Milošević's dictatorship[1]. I created it as a visual manifestation of the political awakening of many citizens during that election period, including myself. This chapter presents a theoretically and practice-informed artistic reflection, ruminating on the significance of creating a digital memorial museum of protest in both a Serbian and international context. Scattered throughout the chapter are images from and of the digital map which exists as the only memorial museum of this protest, or perhaps indeed as a counter-form of musealisation and memorialisation given the lack of any physical site to mark the protest – an event at risk of being forgotten.

Upon announcement by international experts and national media that the voting result had been changed a day after the election to uphold the victory of the ruling party, people of the Serbian capital Belgrade and other cities across the country took to the streets in protest. I have captured memories of this three-month long demonstration in an online map containing an archive of photographs, oral histories and objects carried onto the street. They were assembled with the aim to preserve the memory of protest and incite the excitement of their creation and interaction during the event. By emplacing those artefacts on a digital

1 As president of Yugoslavia from 1989, Milosevic pursued Serbian nationalist policies that contributed to the armed breakup of the socialist Yugoslav federation. He was indicted for war crimes in Kosovo in 1999 and overthrown in 2000 when he was extradited to the Hague war tribunal where he died in prison during the trial.

Figure 1. *Protest procession with Belgrade is the World banner. Credit: Facebook @studentskiprotest90ih*

map, I formed a virtual museum and made them exchangeable again through Internet.

Online encounters with records of the protest gave this map the quality of a live broadcast depicting Belgrade in eruption. This authentic value seizing the protest's space and time through digital technology allowed artefacts to

travel immediately into personal environments via computers and thus had the potential to congregate protesters around the event once more. Facing it from the comfort of their home, by talking about it or mingling with its artefacts physically and virtually, they were constructing a communal account of the protest and confronting it for the second time, albeit from a historical distance. In this sense, Belgrade's Protest Museum is a project of memory activism and digital continuation of that event.

The current members of the Serbian government insist on forgetting the protest as they come from the same political echelons the protesters fought against. The event is therefore not mentioned publicly, even though it gathered hundreds of thousands of people, and its participants do not celebrate it as they did not manage to overturn the regime. However, the protest procured exceptional and unexpected solidarity that deserves memorialisation. Whilst branded a nationalist, homogenised and violent crowd in the global media, the Serbs at the protest performed the opposite: welcoming, diverse, and peace-loving citizens of the world, challenging their established barbarous reputation. Their surprising, new image depended on embracing multiple perspectives, which is the only way to express a unified truth (Bakhtin 1940 [1984]). Hence, the protest's digital memorial also embodies a multi-vocal, open-ended, and dialogic approach to the past and like in the moment of protest, it suspends time, so the protesters can share and consolidate their experiences and perhaps plot their communal future.

The Belgrade's Protest Museum map aligns to a discursive: the Balkans' way of looking at things as firmly connected to the ground and vastly networked above it, with constant shifting of power, just like the territory of the region itself – bordering, but holding tightly to various states from all its sides that keep and lose their grip interchangeably. That logic of the multitude relies on Mikhail Bakhtin's construction of the 'carnivalesque' (1940 [1984]), which enfolds the memory of Belgrade in my work.

This chapter will reflect on the development of the project as a mnemography – historical ethnography and an artistic cartography. It will map out the journey of producing a digital memorial platform with relative permanence of display. Whilst the Internet is vulnerable as a space of presentation due to its frequent motion of servers, feeds, hosts, and codes, it offers a stable path for memory arousal, even though it does not have the authority of material heritage found in museums, especially if they have their own building. Instead, cyber space delivers a transient, but accessible and open collective experience of and for the public, which is an essential component in the process of encapsulating communal events.

Carnival of Memory: Memorialising the Protest

In *Rabelais and His World*, a study of folk culture depicted by renaissance writer Francois Rabelais, Russian literary critic Michail Bakhtin, recognises carnival through history as a topsy-turvy world where laughter subverts authority. He suggests that it celebrated "temporary liberation from the

Figure 2. *Student mirroring the policeman. Credit: Facebook @ studentskiprotest90ih*

prevailing truth and from the established order; it marked the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions. ... It was hostile to all that was immortalised and completed" (1940 [1984], p. 7). Serbs embodied this approach to the protest by overtly disengaging with regular tyranny and staging a carnival instead. Their mass appearance in public spaces reflected an aspect of so-called 'abnormality' to which the opposition was reduced by the regime.

Bakhtin described "carnivalesque" as a catharsis of laughter which was fearless, festive, directed at everyone, triumphant and deriding at the same time (1940 [1984]). Its purpose was to invert the established order, spark the imagination to transgress protesters' reality and instigate change in governance. The protesters expressed their social, political and economic "stuckness" (Lauren Berlant 2011; Ann Cvetkovich 2012) on the street, simultaneously performing their local entrapment and the global framing as 'one nation against the world' the Serbs gained during the Yugoslav wars.

As protesters made their "extraordinary" behaviour visible, its absurdity became exposed and affirmed the carnivalesque - a "complete withdrawal from the present order" (Rabelais 275 in Lachmann et al. 1988, p. 118). Their play between oppressive reality and fictional, joyful life was demonstrated in the actions 'take a picture with your policeman', 'lighten the darkness', 'miss protest', 'on cordon with a book', etc. These initiatives held a dream of a better world and prompted visions of cohesion, collaboration, and comradeship.

Depressed by dictatorship that normalised violence, Serbs were unable to articulate their present, so instead they tried to express how it "felt" (Berlant 2011; Cvetkovich 2012). They indulged in a hedonic festivity and its carnivalesque atmosphere deflated antagonism with the police. Their interactive, relational, and contingent concepts were at the same time liberating and constraining cultural agencies, formulated by the dynamic of the group which created them anew every time it came together. As French

situationist Raoul Vaneigem ascertains in his book *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (1967); in carnivalesque moments, the individual celebrates unification with a regenerated society.

The protesters stood for a collective aesthetic that invited carnival through its use of objects, colours, and urban environment. People guaranteed that their presence was visible when gathering on public squares by purposefully wearing and carrying the marks of circus performers – jester hats, umbrellas, and masks. The effervescence of the protest was infectious and its persistence tactical as many demonstrators assured that daily stunts from walks to performances, and the distinctive iconography of wearables from clothing to placards were constantly encouraging attendance. If not for the political reason, one would come for the carnival that unravelled on the streets.

Local sociologists Velimir Curgus Kazimir and Milija Babovic give vigorous depictions of what was seen and experienced during the protest in their book *'Ajmo, 'Ajde Svi u Setnju* (1997). They open Belgrade up as a tableau of residents' comingling and provide an optimistic picture of the city. They note the persistence of well-mannered behaviour that pointed to polite society rather than the war-mongering nation as seen through the prism of Milosevic's dictatorship.

His election fraud was so scandalous that it deserved an equally spectacular depiction. By adopting carnivalesque as a method of resistance, protesters found themselves in a large community festival that invited interaction with landscape. Situated among the buildings, prohibited from walking where they wanted and pushed towards each other, the protesters acted as a well-rehearsed ensemble, delivering actions on cues, adopting roles as given or self-imposed, and following the rhythm of the mass.

The protest used the city as its stage and its digital memorial museum attempts to manage its artefacts similarly. By spilling the objects over its allocated

Figure 3*. Dragon puppet. Credit:* *https://www.facebook.com/studentskiprotest90ih*

compartments and allowing them to inhabit those categories, they win the space, like Belgrade was re-claimed by its residents during the protest through the symbolic popping-up in places. Protesters' sudden presence on streets and squares embodied the potential of these territories – their imagined architectural capacities, historical constellations, and social configurations. In delivering possible futures of those sites, which inspire emergence of different ideas about society's hopes and prospects, the protest's museum artefacts also lent themselves to digital translation, carnivalising the news dominions of cyber world that contributed to cementing Serbia's reputation as a hostile, destructive, and militant state.

Many museum, media and archive activists, artists, and public engagement organisations whose professional ethics arise from interests in social empowerment use digital tools to contest conventional, dominant and narrow representations of their communities. They engage in "agonistic memory" striving to re-politicise memory spheres by addressing representations of conflicts, civic passions, individual and collective agencies operating around their community (Cento Bull 2016).

Ethnographer Stef Jansen (2001) describes the relationship of the crowd to the broader European setting by juxtaposing the city with its representation in the world media at the time. He uncovers a Western propaganda machine that enthused much of the conduct of Serbia's youth, who appeared to embrace some of the EU's and USA's socio-cultural values, yet at other times, opposed them. For instance, the protesters welcomed a variety of subcultures, which in Serbia were regularly divided into exclusive groups. This was performed in public spaces that became busy with adopting 'foreign' principles and so, problematising citizenship – the national category that demarcated Milosevic's leadership. Noting this development in all levels of society, Jansen wrote: "In the Western media-ted gaze, at once, 'the Serbs' had changed from bloodthirsty Balkanese warlords to guardians of democracy in the face of an evil dictator" (2001, p. 37).

This positive representation of the Serbs did not last long, as stories of evil from the area overwhelmed the production of their new look. *Vampire nation* (Longinovic 2011) became a significant brand long before the 90s and it settled in the imaginary of the West with Balkans' populations mirroring characters from Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula* (1897 [1990]). Coupled with the protest's uncomfortable ending – a bleak triumph of the opposition that culminated with the assassination of Democratic party leader Zoran Djindjic – the Serbs were resigned to a villain role in an already scripted play.

Furthermore, established local historians expunged the protest from current state interests still revolving around national narratives and the sporadic global attention it garnered quickly moved elsewhere. This glancing over the event, which radically changed the view of the Serbian nation about itself and its potential, inspired the creation of my digital museum. I wanted to inform the public, in particular in Europe and US about the significance of their involvement in representational strategies of societies with less stability and celebrate the local democratising aptitude those societies can offer to the mighty Western states. Rather than being on the receiving end of economic sanctions and NATO campaigns, those societies can guide development of democracies away from capitalism and provide lessons from their history that successfully engaged with their neighbours and worldwide communities like they did for example, during the non-aligned movement[2]. In the protest museum map, Serbs give community support to all societies by revealing their struggle with the regime. The takings from protesters could be applied to re-imaginings of other democracies and lead to the acknowledgement that such community assistance might recuperate a difficult relationship between Serbia and the world. As Richard MacDonald maintains in an investigation of local photo memories, the digital protest museum can satisfy "a need for collective memorialisation shaped by a social context of profound dislocation and discontinuity" (2015, p. 10) and address systematic positioning of Eastern Europe as a backyard of the West.

Hybrid Community: Together Off and Online

Sociologist Jeffrey Alexander (2011) uncovers the narrative of the Egyptian revolution designed by its organisers, as a moral, youth-driven digital statement expressed through social media. He sees it as a performance,

2 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was an international organization of 120 states. It emerged in the wave of decolonization after World War II with an aspiration to represent the interest of developing countries.

which shows protagonists what a civil, egalitarian society might look like in the image of protestors' behaviour. Such familiar protest reflection is evidenced on Belgrade's protest museum map too, indicating the potency of protesters' performative initiatives. Memory mediated in such histrionic ways stabilises our communal identity. It ejects protesters from the gloomy portrayal of their nation in official histories by allowing creation of a positive alternative which opposes and concurrently enthuses our desire for anchoring (Huyssen 2003).

Unlike well-known memorial museums that mostly commemorate atrocities, lament over sorrowful events and remember suffering of the victims, Belgrade's protest map is about community at its best. However, my interaction with protesters in order to gather their testimonies and artefacts about demonstrations felt like similar acknowledgment of the event, but differed in an engagement with the victims, as a sort of activism because someone finally asked them what had happened there. Some of them had not seen each other for years and my coming 'home' to do this research was an opportunity for their assembly. Their internal referencing concealed experiences, which were bursting to come out, and so, were performed in jokes. The Serbia they live in now is the place they arrived to from the protest following bitter journeys of drugs, unemployment, and poverty. They managed it however they could, often living in depressive, exhausting and disappointed post-carnival mindsets.

They came together in hope to exchange their stories, but many failed to do so as if choked by so much that has happened to them. There was not time to reflect between the wars, to breathe between demonstrations and to learn between generations. The protesters' silence manifested what cannot be transferred. Still, everyone tried to come up with some recollection of the protest as a rope that could get them out of the whirl of events in the 1990s and articulate a version of what was.

> *Ovi drugari sa univerziteta umetnosti su svi bili sjajni, kao neka masina, svako je pronasao svoj neki srafcic sta ce da radi, svi smo bili tu u operaciji, kad bi jedan izgubio energiju, ovaj drugi bi dodavao, preuzimao i to je bilo odlicno. I mi se i dan danas cujemo. Svi smo pronasli neki svoje izvore... I morali smo da se cuvamo, jer smo bili zgodna platforma da svasta preturis preko nas, a objektivno smo bili klinci za tu svu istoriju koju mi imamo u tom trenutku – razne backgroundove, ljude na ivici svacega.*
>
> (Odic Ilic 2007)
>
> [These friends from the University of Arts were great, like some machine, everyone found their own screw in it, what they are going to do, we were all operative, when one lost energy, the other would add it, taking it over and it was great. We were in contact, even today, we all found our own sources... and we had to take care of each other because we were a useful platform to get things over us and we were objectively young for all of that history that we have at that moment, different backgrounds, people on the edge of everything...]

When we were on our own, some of the protesters could not stop talking. For example, 'artivist'[3] Mira Odic Ilic, set off through her life story and even though connected and relevant, the effect of so much history, culture, and happenings, left me numb. A recorded statement from the protest leader seemed useless because it made the problem of transmission even more present: how to convey the momentous experience that Mira and I share, to audiences who were not there?

This collective charge was demonstrated on the map with the work of duo Skart (Djordje Balmazovic and Dragan Protic) who were always involved in the production of artwork with recognisable and affordable anti-regime

3 Using art as a tool for activism.

symbolism. Their graphic design was quickly adopted by activists, cultural circles, and educated social classes that also led the protest. Skart produced a series of coupons in 1993 that fitted later demonstrations perfectly as they predicted the inflation of all values in Serbian society. They offered coupons as compensation for what the country was lacking with Milošević rule – miracle, orgasm, revolution etc. The artwork spread like hotcakes on the protest and people understood the metaphor as the work of opposition. Those coupons are now downloadable from the map and remind of a performative relationship with protest artefacts.

The Belgrade protesters were urban, middle-class members of the community who were educated young or middle-aged (Bobovic, Cvejic, & Vuletic, 1997; Milic, Cickaric, & Jojic, 1997). Their accounts of collective memory overpower all other ones as they have access to the means of cultural production and their opinions tend to be more highly valued (Olick 1999, p. 338). However, as their integration into the many other societies of which they are part of now and often abroad, is more or less in

Figure 4.
Coupons.
Credit: Skart

Figure 5*. Free your mind with Munch. Credit: Facebook @studentskiprotest90ih*

progress, their memories and principles acquired moderation. Furthermore, the twenty interviewed frequently leapt through space and time in their stories, creating confusion for themselves. They were unsure about what they remember, but they knew how they felt at the time of experience. It was, hence, sometimes more beneficial to describe rather than transcribe their oral histories and so, abandon scientific rigour and instead work with arts practice. Another reason for this move was an understanding that even though oral histories challenge official memories, their own authenticity is questionable. I used those fractured accounts as creative work in the protest memorial, mobilising protesters with an interest to make their museum inspiring for generations to come.

Marianne Hirsch's (1999) notion of "post-memory" considers the legacy of memory and its transference to younger generations. Her writing about captured experience and its revival in the bodies of descendants, informed my position of the protest museum as a work for both the generations who took part in the protest and the ones who did not, so they can talk to each other. This discovery between ages includes one generation in the future of the other, rather than dismiss them as victims, perpetrators, observers, or survivors, which are disempowering, simple and reductive categories still prevailing in memory studies.

The protest memorial museum facilitates the meeting of different voices, which have been quietened or dissolved into the noise of contemporary political pressures. It commemorates the event by connecting body, space, memory, and movement. Dots on the map that appear or vanish, just like protesters who run away or inserted themselves into the cityscape relate to Michel Foucault's (1986) concept of heterotopia - a layered, "impossible space" of otherness where opposites can coexist. The map's topography makes the protesters present, but their mobility provides them with power as they can choose when and where to show up, provoking the potency for walking – a practice strictly controlled during the protest and only permitted by the police.

Foucault (1969 [2002]) celebrates such questioning of institutional authority and organisations of knowledge. Like the protesters, he positioned himself outside of the systems of power he was fascinated by and he scrutinised "regime(s) of truth" (Foucault 1975 [1979], p. 23 and p. 30). Represented as 'a handful of thugs' by the state-owned media in Serbia, people on the streets saw themselves excluded from broadcast truth. This resulted in their desire to trouble the condition of truth and so to reveal the autocratic state apparatus reliant on social discipline, corruption, and political uniformity.

Figure 6.
Slavisa Savic and Milos Miljatovic.
Credit: Facebook @ studentskiprotest90ih

Digital Artefacts: Mapping the Arts Practice

Classified through artworks, actions, sounds, walks, and more, Belgrade's protest museum discloses a wealth of activities that kept protest alive. Its visitors are able to join protestors by, for example, choosing to follow them on a daily procession or focussing only on happenings in a particular area. By adopting protesters' routines, the audience gains a trace of the city during the event. The creator of the procession banner "Belgrade is the world", Slavisa Savic speaks about it in an interview for the map:

> *Ta setnja je po mom vidjenju najbolja turisticka tura, grad nikad ne moze biti vidjen iz tog ugla kao na tim setnjama kada hodas na sred ulice Dzordza Vasingtona, samo onda mozes da dozivis tu arhitekturu...to je kompletno drugaciji grad.*
>
> (Savic 2007)

> [That walk is in my view the best tourist tour, the city can never be seen from that angle as in those processions when you walk in the middle of George Washington Street, only then can you realise that architecture… that is a completely different city.]

The protesters are now unable to observe Belgrade's architecture from the viewpoint they could obtain during the protest as one cannot just walk in the middle of the street. The map reminds them of that unusual experience and offers it to the audience too. By engaging the public via diverse encounters with the protest, this map provides discursive aesthetics for 'the reality' it tries to convey. Refashioning the memory of protest through these different discoveries of artefacts and their position on the map, the audience also employs a critical approach to reading this event and its memorialisation. Interpretation becomes free, infinite, and omnipotent through the public's gaze, because anyone can explore the interlaced terrain of diagramic abstractions from above and indulge in the map's optical play.

The map can be accessed with a world wide web address and from there, the audience can travel in whatever direction by clicking on the provided

Figure 7.
Protest trumpet. Photograph by the author

categories – from following the historical overview of the protest to its variety of sounds. Virtual mapping brings together the collected image, text, and sound indexes into a mathematical sphere in whatever shape they arrived – as GPS coordinates, photographs, or audio files. However, reading the protest museum demands an ability to sense information value rather than its exactness. One has to count on the "human intentionality and agency determining communication, expression and interaction" (R. MacDonald 2015, p. 9-10) to navigate the map. The engagement with it in this personal way mimics the protest which developed its own visual language to distinguish itself from the regime's aesthetics reflected in the national media.

Opposition media organisations like B92 supplied some of the images for the map and others were sourced from local news companies, including *Politika* (Politics), *Vreme* (Time), *Dnevni Telegraf* (Daily Telegraph). They mostly had ended up in a Reuters repository of more than 100 photographs stored in bulk by dates and without reference to original author. They are a mixture of monochrome and colour images taken mostly with analogue cameras assorted in the protest museum with drawings, posters, placards, and postcards, which emerged on the streets and were sometimes sold there. These pictures were either produced for newspapers and magazines or casually taken by protesters. Many come from private collections and Facebook pages that opened and closed during the project. The mnemonic value of these digital images lies in their circulation, rather than in their accrual. Like protest, which disperses transient energy, their currency is ephemeral more than their indexical quality, hence they are a great medium for depicting this event.

Images and other artefacts in the protest museum were taxonomised by the way they were displayed during the demonstrations. They were pinned, carried, printed, and shared on the streets as they were on the stage. Their theatrical status expresses a sentimental attachment to them and a desire that they perform the past. Many badly shot images, ripped posters, and blurred

Figure 8.
Hasta la vista poster.
Credit: [Facebook @ studentskiprotest90ih]

placards have contextual and historical worth through which the public can re-encounter the event, forging a life to it again and sustaining it by sharing. In the digital realm, this exchange also enhances communal endurance and encourages the engagement with memory.

Community sharing through the protest museum happened in parallel off- and on-line, generating data and advancing this research. For example, the protesters would email me some of the images of their objects before our meeting that would result in the communal exchange of artefacts or vice versa; they would swap the artefacts between them and continue the

transactions digitally, some even setting up a social media account for such activity. Protesters were informed about developments and opportunities to contribute to the project and encouraged to learn about digital mapping as arts, media, and cartographic praxis.

We were dealing with geometry, mechanics of time and architecture, despite following standard procedures of labelling. For example, I used 3DSMax to build one object (a trumpet) in graphics software, but I found myself spending hours digging a snapshot of it from memory and I never accomplished a decent result. It is only when holding the object in one of my hands and drawing it on the computer screen by clutching a mouse in the other that I achieved an adequate image. However, if I had to obtain the artefacts or their representation to create a 3D object, the point of this digital project was lost – I was not creating from memory. Instead, I was experimenting with shapes through numbers, following the computer instructions to gain an aesthetic outcome (i.e. 300dpi, 72 web resolution, JPG file format, etc.). It was only when objects collapsed from 3D in my hand to 2D on the screen that they seemed to fit the environment.

So, I sought to humanise their dimension, scale, and type in this map, as the objects on it were firstly narrowed to the simplest solutions, which injured the beauty of their incomprehensibleness. But, if we do not present those objects and make them noticeable somehow, how we are to know them? I submitted to accepting the map as a technical, yet subjective representation of protest that gives access to collective memory because it was a small cost to having that rich communal space. The price of the clumsy form was negligent to its non-existence. Initially, the amount of memory that I had on the computer did not allow for any software to be used for prototyping, so I found that it was not only quicker, but cheaper to make space in my home for the objects rather than acquire a computer or hard drive with paradoxically, more memory. What started as a digital revolution reverted to a traditional museum exhibit with physical object representation and a digital addition.

Figure 9.
Smile Serbia poster.
Credit: Facebook @ studentskiprotest90ih

The temporality of both of those conditions (physical and digital) is what connects the objects in this museum – the protest unexpectedly flashes through piles of artefacts of protesters' memory and global history, as we suddenly come across them while browsing the Internet. Searching for them on the web and in the physical archives, looking at pictures on screen and in my hands, we try to understand, remember, or rather, not forget the event. We are clinging on those fleeting artefacts, as they hold and carry our past, so it does not vanish before we manage to captivate it, like that was ever possible.

Mapping Eastern Europe: Politics of Memorialisation

Map-makers design history on the back of geography as in atlas naivete – a gimmicky sketch representing the flattened world. In this portrayal, relationships can be painted as perfect and evidently consequential so, mapping is always symbolic. As our mind remembers the images before they

are created and placed on the map, it can also be contingent on creative input and users' interpretation.

American historian Larry Wolff (1994) claims that the whole East European region is an intellectual invention of the economically powerful West, which devised its cultural zone through imaginative, philosophical, and creative travelogues, diaries, and maps. Maps in particular contributed to such knowledge production, hence I am using them to reveal their modes of framing and hopefully achieve a reverse effect, so the East can look at the West with that same downward gaze and we can examine consequences of such viewing and subsequent interpretation of the ground seen in that way.[4] I started this process of undoing the West in 2008 with the project *Balkanising Taxonomy* where I attempted Eastern rendering of the West through shifting my archive. Concerned with the false, standardised, and unfair representation of the Balkans in the EU mainstream accounts continued in continents with Anglo-Saxon majority population, I drew parallels between the position Balkan states were expected to adopt, exhibit, and perform and the position of Western colonies.

Wolff (1994) asserted that maps are social and ideological documents that project power. They are panoptical observations, which imply political, economic, and cultural ownership. Therefore, they make visible or hide the knowledge assumed not suitable to show. Through such technology of control, Eastern Europe has continuously been presented, from the Enlightenment period and colonial expansion, as a parochial, archaic, and Oriental spot in the world where paradox thrives. Problematising this arrangement exposes the interests of cartographers themselves who shaped Eastern Europe as this ideological construction. By positioning itself in the centre and adopting the connotation of 'civilisation', the West has invented a tradition by which it can stay in the middle, thus moving Eastern Europe

4 Some of my maps about Belgrade can be found at Kulturklammer website.

***Figure 10**. Screenshot of online map. Credit: Kulturklammer*

to the brutal fringes. The curator of any museum in Eastern Europe now works from that imaginary as if it is real and starts the interaction with every new object from that place. Belgrade's Protest Museum, like the protesters themselves, had started with the imperative to challenge those formulated, authoritative and official narratives. By placing data about the resistance on the Internet's global stage, I continued that urge acknowledging that it sometimes intensified helplessness in power relations with the West and positioned 'carnivalesque' as an illusory quality of counterculture.

With the further challenge of translation from Serbian to English and the dominance of the English language online, I wanted to uproot the map as soon as I established it in the UK, so I could immediately liberate it from the West. I was equally interested in capturing the protest and making visible "the unconscious of Europe" as Mladen Dolar (1990) described

the Balkans in the eyes of the Western states. The political aim of the protest museum project then became two-fold; to embrace opposition to Milošević's regime and to reject Western illustrations of the Serbs as an inherently violent peoples.

Pictured as a darker side of Europe in Maria Todorova's book *Imagining the Balkans* (1997), the region is understood as erected around nationalism. Its Asiatic Byzantine heritage is presented as alien to supposedly civilised European nations. Projected onto in terms of nationalism, the Balkans is blamed for what it has been given and cursed with having too much history (Todrova 2004). Drawing on Alon Confino (1997), Todorova writes about the concept of the nation as "an exploration of a shared identity that unites a social group" (2004, p. 5) whose need for memorialised past reveals its newness. European states had to imagine their own communities in relation to others, making the East dependent on their point of observation (1997, p. 58) and the Balkans an intimidating realm due to its profusion of culture (Gordy 1999). I am using that same technique of memorialising the protest as a significant happening in Serbia's national history to present it as resembling any other Western European state's landmark event.

Literary critic Edward Said (1978) also positions the authors of Western texts in relation to the Orient in his seminal work *Orientalism*. The protest museum thinks with this "Orientation" to unmask the Balkans' narrative imperatives and mechanisms of dominant visual media in the US and Europe that belittle the region. In popular discourse, the Balkans is reduced to a laboratory of Western capitalism, but its inhabitants are experimenting too, trying to find a solution that could release them from ideas the West has for their future. To imagine democracy in the East as it exists in the West is a misconception of democratic values themselves as it does not give liberty to Eastern European society to develop on its own terms.

Realms of memory scholarship as well as democratisation suggestions come from the West with a concept of equality and freedom that does not smoothly translate in the Balkans, especially after 'the allies' NATO bombed Serbia in 1999. Furthermore, it is one thing to question one's own society and another to associate it with primitivism imposed by outsiders who then ridicule it for that same imposition. The protest museum sits between those two approaches to memory: Western, perceived as global and local, aligned with "critical remembering" (Falkenstein 1999). Bakic-Hayden and Hayden (1995), Wolff (1994), and Todorova (1997) have tried to break that cycle of defining "dispossessed" Eastern Europe through liberal calls for EU accession, free markets, civil society, electoral democracy, and political culture. They warn against "nesting orientalism" (Bakic-Hyden 1995) where old twists are created anew and nurturing of the troubled relationship that the Balkans has with West European nations, which in turn, ought to be examined (Wolff 1994).

Mnemography: Media Mapping of Memory

The Belgrade Protest Museum brings together different disciplines; critical and counter-mapping, digital archiving, and participatory arts practice,

Figure 11. *Flowers for police. Credit: Facebook @ studentskiprotest90ih*

developing a methodology which weaves the city firstly in narrative – through oral histories, formal debates, and everyday conversations, then in physical display – on paper, wall or cloth before it gets transferred to a digital platform. Through categorising information on the map by the topics emerged in people's accounts or their actions, the memorial offers a rhizomatic depiction of events rather than a linear and sequential storytelling.

The outlining of the event allows dipping into the past where one can be the protest participant once more and exit at will to be in the present. It shows how the "carnivalesque" illuminates "the freedom of imaginative creativity, enabling the fusion of contradictory and diverse phenomena and inducing liberation from the ruling view of the world, from all conditioning, from banal-truths – everything ordinary, well-known, generally accepted" (Bakhtin 1940 [1984], p. 85).

In the protest museum, memory operates in the same way, which is simultaneously obscuring our formal knowledge of the past and opening it up to interpretations from the present. The map format within which that memory is imprinted influences the way it is interpreted. Although I seek to contest users' understandings of the event, the protest museum is not simply 'a meaning machine', but a creative output and a historical site. It is negotiated by the visitors and myself as its author according to our needs and so, is potentially infinite (Eco 1994, p. 3). However, through systematisation of its empirical data, this virtual map and archive aims to provide harmony. It braids together memories and social frameworks evoked by the images travelling through the digital sphere. The cyber technology within which these files reside is a carrier of memory with means of collection, classification, and the analysis of collated data, which establishes media as method, mediator and creator of memory. This media permits existence of *mnemography*, a dialogical practice between theory and empirical research.

Digital depiction of protesters' memory highlights its plural and dynamic quality and allows enquiry into what happens to the past as it passes from one medium to another – from stories to ceremonies, souvenirs, maps etc. The entanglement of memory, particularly enabled by the Internet, absorbs multiple perspectives, asymmetries, and cross-referential mnemonic practices, which can be examined by the media itself (Conrad 2003). Besides amassing experiences through their use, flourishing technological advancements require acquisition of vast knowledge, which is what permits memory to be thought of, captured, handled, and stored. Digital technology, as media scholar José van Dijck recognises has enabled and increased comparative analysis thanks to the Internet. She sees the networked computer as a performative agent in the process of remembering which highlights the acts of recollection, "but also allows the user to make connections that would never have been discovered without the computer" (2011, p. 166–67).

For example, when positioned next to each other on the digital map, the protest images evidenced new links as the gestures, poses, and movements of the police were mirrored in the protesters' response on the street and were used for imitating the police in hope that they will 'see' themselves and be ashamed. This collective pressure to soften the police force by offering them food, flowers and cigarettes was visible throughout the protest and is now on the map too, assuring its creation from below by incorporating protesters' suggestions for the display of their artefacts on the online map.

Yet, when van Dijck (2004) tried to turn her shoebox archive into a digital one, she noted problems with transmission, because it fundamentally altered the meaning, the value, and the content of this collection. Our relationships modify when our memories change because they reposition us in relation to objects, other people, and ourselves. Digital cultural forms do not just replace or succeed analogue ones – photographs in a shoebox give the viewer a different experience than images on the computer screen. Moreover, digital depictions are often constrained by techno-logistics, algorithmic quantification,

and corporate templates that can encourage us to change the technologies we use for memory, from tying a knot on a handkerchief to creating a blog. This process of media alteration provides digital loses, but also additions in memory. For instance, some protesters combine their memories with other uprisings during Milošević's premiership and memory of the protest seems faded due to a desire to forget its inability to contest the regime. Furthermore, for people who were not at the protest, an interaction with the digital museum might create memories of that activity, suggesting participation in the event itself. Does having been there then make a difference?

Landsberg (1995, p. 178) states that authenticity is unobtainable as the original was never available and asks what is missing from primary experience if we want replacements? Those of us, who were at the centre of the happening are bound to enrich it with archival images, people's accounts, television broadcasts, and other sources, as the modern age makes those accessible via media. The original is always interpreted and mixed with 'limbs' of other experiences. It also evolves further because new technologies are influenced by remediation and merged with representational strategies of older formats.

Even though digital tools have given people unprecedented access to the archive, a possibility of keeping everything in an attempt to accomplish "total memory" (Hoskins 2016) and the sole practice of archiving being available to everyone might be in essence, anti-archival (Taylor 2010). Van Dijck (2011) and performance thinker Taylor (2010) propose this when they consider the Internet's influence on archival praxis. They acknowledge the democratising power of the web, but Taylor wonders if digital technology merely extends into cyberspace our embodied and material cultures or if it moves us into a "different system of knowledge and subjectivity" (2010, p. 6).

The presence on the web earned Belgrade's protest a reputation as the first Internet revolution (Bennahum 1997) because the protesters disseminated the information about the protest to the world, online. A different channel

Figure 12.
Protest accessories.
Credit: Facebook @studentskiprotest90ih

of communication was formed in which 'another' Serbia featured as a parallel universe to the one depicted on the regime's broadcast media and transmitted around the globe. The protesters used digital technology to successfully intervene in both local and global media representations and generated interest in seeing their community anew.

Established as a platform for gathering, the project's development was led by the question: is it possible to receive the experience just as it was lived? For many of the protesters who now live abroad, the return to the Belgrade protest is a return home because it was their formative event. The images of it, emerging whilst travelling through the multimodal and interconnected protest map act as vessels to possibilities – of who we were, who we might have been, who we could have been and who we became, might be, or are yet to become.

Conclusion

The protest museum uses Belgraders' relationships to objects and stories to build a debate about the event. As with most heritage-making endeavours, it focusses on triumphs, achievements or sacrifices found in the effort for realisation and recognition (S. Macdonald 2009). Hence, it is a selective, morally driven process to commemorate the protest interested in propelling community remembrance as alternative history and juxtapose it with other histories already legitimised in public arena.

The protest museum incorporates what Sharon MacDonald calls "difficult heritage": "a past that is recognised as meaningful in the present but that is also contested and awkward for public reconciliation with a positive, self-affirming contemporary identity" (2009, p. 1). It is imagined as a living stage developed through and for participation with its audience, following the rationale that museums can no longer be closed organisations as they were in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries anymore.

To attract youth engagement with their heritage collections even if they are digitised, the museums need to engage with newer technology, so they have someone caring for their artefacts in the future. New digital tools such as simulations, virtual reality experiences, or sensory mechanisms inspire digital preservation and innovations that produce value in dissemination, reconstruction and development of knowledge and evaluation of the cultural offering context (Mannheimer and Cote, 2017).

Museum digitisation should be innovative and tied to the experience that is attractive to the audiences who are now interested in emotional encounters, inter-cultural dialogue, inputs of specialised industries, social return, and benefits to well-being. The protest museum aims to stimulate digital creativity, develop cultural relationships, produce artistic content, and enthuse research, beside its clear political agenda. It looks ahead with new

forms of engagement and learning methodologies that can still facilitate intimate experiences with artefacts. Its crucial faculty – re-enactment – encourages evaluation of the past in a forum where it is jointly discussed by the people who experience it in the past and those coming afresh to it, in the present.

Museums have long been theorised by art historians and cultural anthropologists who have positioned their work with objects as the practice of ordering. Settling the artefacts, usually in a timeline and within place promised an understanding of the human experience. The material world served as mnemonic prompt for finding the meaning in people's stories that accompany it. Their narrative sensibility around heritage was grounded in visual and embodied practices that often correlate with what was done elsewhere (S. Macdonald 2009).

However, the protest museum was not a product of the "politics of recognition" (Taylor 1994) we see with other conservation efforts, but rather of the place itself. Mediation of place's memory, which is a domain of heritage, was structured both discursively and materially through media. The project tries to update and upgrade Belgrade from the sad place featured in "grand narratives" (Lyotard 1979) to a happy one and prototype creative practice as activism that can capture the past. The protest spirit can be extended, nurtured, and continued in the digital realm to remind us that history can re-emerge so as to instigate a sense of community, inspire collective remembrance, or catalyse a social movement. By living online, largely outside of geographical boundaries, the protest museum provides an incubator for a democratic turn that Serbia is yet to see. It opens up a new view of the world with a perception of the unity and an entirely different order (Bakhtin 1940 [1984]).

As a toponym, Belgrade is localised in this protest map, but reading of it demands mentalisation of the world where one projects oneself outside

of the self. The scope of the imaginary in this public space raises tension between the present and the future and pushes the protesters to transition from one domain to the other, often depicting fantasies illustrated in artworks on the site. Protesters' memories of the event become visible through their illusory capture because "the act of imagination is bound up with memory" (Morrison 1995, p. 98). Online, even the museum curator is again with the protesters. A longing to gather their artefacts is a desire for reconstructing that community more than rebuilding the protest. A digital map creator knows that this virtual storage of cultural memory is dependent on a database which constructs, composes, congregates and so, dramatises the past, but provides consolation with it, nevertheless.

> To be part of a movement requires we find places to gather, meeting places. A movement is also a shelter. We convene; we have a convention. A movement comes into existence to transform what is in existence. A movement needs to take place somewhere.
>
> (Ahmed 2017, p. 3)

Many protesters associated their memories with the place (hence the map) rather than fellows. They opened up Belgrade of that time whilst reconstructing their networks based on then residential proximity then. The images in the protest museum were therefore placed in the neighbourhoods that represent Belgrade as a whole, even though the map's loose categories, like all the material in it, spill into each another. For example, one can look at the artworks produced during the protest that would inevitably adorn the walls of various buildings which are also visible if the map explorer chooses to follow its 'the walks' category.

The various paths one can take to arrive to and exit from Belgrade in protest is a way with which I hoped to memorialise the event in the digital sphere. The variety of artefacts in the protest museum transmits the experience of visual

plenty and a sense of abundance from the streets. I could not justify any other approach that would diminish the 'carnivalesque' as its main characteristic and inhabit the city with the same charge. The aim of this digital memorial museum is to inspire audiences to enquire about what happened in this place and to get acquainted with another face of Serbia that potentially holds its future.

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