

UrbanFestival 13

# Back to the Squ- are!

**Art, Activism and Urban Research  
in Post-socialism**



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# Back to the Square!

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# *Erased: On the Circularity of Misogyny on the Example of Female Representation in the Public Space of Zagreb*

**Sanja Horvatinčić**

*Somewhere high up, in the zone below the roof of four-storeyed historicist buildings, or above their robust transoms and lintels. In the zone of time that has been stopped, of deep shadows and dimmed street noise: that is where these scantily clad, mythological stone maidens chat and whisper surrounded by garlands, palm trees, and acanthus leaves.<sup>1</sup>*

A brief analysis of the discourse of this excerpt, which describes the male view of female representation in the medium of decorative sculpture in Zagreb's facades, will serve as a mental exercise for approaching the issue of the spatial distribution of female figures and the reproduction of women's narratives in public space. As early as the turn of the 20th century, the logic of architectural functionalism that underpin the modernist paradigm forbade all ornamentation in historicist and secessionist buildings, denouncing it as superfluous to such an extent that it was sometimes equated with crime<sup>2</sup>. A hundred years later, the female aspect of the repertoire of this marginal and often anonymous sculptural

<sup>1</sup> Višnja Slavica Gabout, review of *Djeve sa zagrebačkih pročelja* [Maidens from Zagreb's facades] by Vladimir Vučinović (Skener studio: Zagreb, 2004)

<sup>2</sup> As early as 1908, Adolf Loos, architect and theoretician of architecture, expressed this attitude succinctly in the title of his lecture *Ornament and Crime*.

production was popularised by the use of the photographic lens and described with striking metaphors, collocations, and expressions, the likes of which will be mentioned more than once in this analysis. The spatial markings that the author used to describe the position of reliefs on the facades of representative buildings may be interpreted as a metaphor for the marginal position of female representation in the entire spatial and temporal network of public urban space ("below", "above", "[in] the shadow", "dimmed"). The description continues with a spatial-temporal metaphor alluding to the temporal universality of gender stereotypes ("zone of time that has been stopped"), perpetuated in a circular return to the misogynous cultural tradition, whereas the term "stone maidens" resounds with a longing for fossilising gender power relations. Their conversation has been reduced to "chat[ting] and whisper[ing]", and their naked bodies – surrounded by "garlands, palm trees, and acanthus leaves" – to a mere aesthetic addition to the socio-political functions of public institutions and bourgeois residences.

## On Multileveled Oppression

Nevertheless, contemporary documentation of female presence in monuments and public sculpture, or in naming public areas in Zagreb, has not been reduced to such poetic descriptions of urban 'maidens'. Whether as a critical reaction or as an inherent part of the transition crisis of using and managing public space, an increasing interest in systematizing and classifying public sculpture in Zagreb can be noticed in the past decades, including – albeit only sporadically – some critical readings of the politics of public space. Thus, there is a relatively broad spectrum of research results and presentation formats at our disposal, ranging from conservationist documentations and listings<sup>3</sup>, to professional tourist guides<sup>4</sup> and projects of mapping Zagreb's monuments, to scholarly analyses<sup>5</sup>, and new interpretations of women's urban history.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, inspired by the need for documenting the consequences of passive and active devastation of public monuments to the People's Liberation Struggle, the Socialist Revolution and the Workers' Movement, including the devastation of memorial landscapes as a result of historical revisionism during the past two decades, important progress has been made in re-assessing this segment of public sculpture in Zagreb as well.<sup>7</sup>

The data used in our analysis have been largely taken from the guidebook *Spomenici i fontane u gradu Zagrebu* [Monuments and Fountains of Zagreb], the most comprehensive overview of public sculpture created and preserved before 2007: more than 630 monuments spread over an area

3 In the socialist period, listing public sculptures in Zagreb were primarily directed at the corpus dedicated to the People's Liberation Struggle, the socialist revolution, and the workers' movement. Cf. *Zagreb grad heroj: spomen obilježja revoluciji* [Zagreb, the City of Heroes: Memorials to the Revolution], ed. Stripe Ugarković and Ivan Očak (Zagreb: August Cesarec, 1979); *Spomenici i spomen obilježja radničkog pokreta i narodne revolucije u Zagrebu* [Monuments and Memorials Dedicated to the Workers' Movement and the People's Revolution in Zagreb] (Zagreb: Regional Institute of Monument Conservation in Zagreb, 1981).

4 The most comprehensive and exhaustive is the one from 2007, which has therefore served as a basis for my analysis. Cf. *Spomenici i fontane u gradu Zagrebu: vodič* [Monuments and Fountains in Zagreb: A Guide], (Municipal Institute for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage and Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Glyptothèque: Zagreb, 2007)

5 See the collection of articles *Rodno/spolno obilježavanje prostora i vremena u Hrvatskoj* [Gender and Sex-related Marking of Space and Time in Croatia], ed. Jasenka Kodrnja (Institute for Social Research: Zagreb, 2006)

6 Cf. Barbara Blasin and Igor Marković, *Ženski vodič kroz Zagreb* [Women's guide through Zagreb] (Zagreb: Meandar and B.a.b.e., 2006).

7 Cf. chapter on the city of Zagreb in *Rušenje antifascističkih spomenika u Hrvatskoj 1990–2000*. [Demolition of Antifascist Monuments in Croatia, 1990–2000], ed. Juraj Hrženjak (Zagreb: Union of Antifascist Veterans and Antifascists of Croatia, 2002), 219–347, as well as *Sjećanje je borba: spomen*

*obilježja Narodnooslobodilačke borbe i revolucionarnog pokreta na području grada Zagreba* [Remembering is Struggle: Memorials of the People's Liberation Struggle and the Revolutionary Movement in the Zagreb Area], ed. Mario Šimunković and Domagoj Delač (Zagreb: Union of Antifascist Veterans and Antifascists of Croatia, 2013), which deals exclusively with monuments dedicated to the People's Liberation Struggle in Zagreb.

8 The list is part of the *Listing of Public Monuments issued by the Municipal Institute for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage, revised in 1998 and later complemented with the data on newly erected monuments. However, it ignores sections of museum holdings, donations to the City, or private collections exhibited in the open, as well as architectural sculpture, chapels/oratories, crucifixes, and monuments in Zagreb's graveyards, as the authors have considered those to be out of their scope.*

9 Sanja Kajinić, "Spomenici – rodno mapiranje prostora na primjeru Zagreba" [Monuments: Gender-related Mapping of Space in Zagreb], in *Rodno/spolno obilježavanje prostora i vremena* (as in n. 6), 109.

10 Ibid. p. 111–112.

11 Ibid. p. 110.

12 Cf. Jasenka Kodrnja, "Rodna/spolna hijerarhija javnog prostora, ili žene u nazivima ulica i trgova u RH" [Gender/Sex-related Hierarchy of Public Space: Women in Street and Square Names in the Republic of Croatia], in: *Rodno/spolno obilježavanje prostora i vremena* (as in n. 6), 86–87.

of 640 m<sup>2</sup> throughout 17 districts of Zagreb<sup>8</sup>. However, this voluminous body of monuments has so far remained without an adequate critical analysis, and so have the socio-political context and cultural policies in the background of its creation and heterogeneity – there have been no fresh readings of particular thematic units or the symbolical positioning of motifs in urban landscape, and the problem of their politically motivated construction, removal, or demolition have likewise been largely ignored. The gender aspect of designing and inscribing social memory into public space has been equally bypassed, despite the fact that previous research pointed to an exceptional under-representation of women's monuments and authors in Zagreb. Sanja Kajinić's analysis from 2006 led to the conclusion that the gender-related presence of monuments and sculptures dedicated to women in Zagreb "obviously shows the level of gender inequality, which is deeply anchored in Croatian society and considered socially acceptable to such an extent that one rarely questions this lack of awareness about the city as a space that reflects its living discrimination and inequality."<sup>9</sup> Her research results have shown that 14.3% of public sculpture related to the female gender contains less than five examples dedicated to historic women.<sup>10</sup> Even though Kajinić's corpus and methodology do not entirely correspond to the needs of my analysis, one should certainly take into account comparative gender analysis, which I have not been able to do in great detail. Namely, the total ratio of male and female authors who have participated in the making of public sculpture in the city of Zagreb is 127:16. The corpus of sacral monuments largely consists of a disproportional number of recently erected monuments to meritorious Christian figures, whereby female gender remains represented exclusively through the Virgin Mary in her symbolic role as a mother and Croatian national patron. According to Kajinić, the reason for this continuing trend of the negligible presence of monuments dedicated to women or produced by women is "the oppressive nature of institutions and cultural practices that have created this situation, as well as the complete lack of challenge to this status quo."<sup>11</sup>

Similar reasons can be identified in the small percentage of public areas named after women<sup>12</sup>, whereby the prevalence of either gender should also be considered in regard to their centrality within the urban texture: whereas central streets are usually dedicated to male figures, female names are commonly found at the periphery. Up to 2001, not a single central street in Croatia had been named after a female figure, and the only square dedicated to a historical woman

13 In the period from 1990–2001, as many as 38 female names have been erased, mostly those related to the People's Liberation Struggle and the antifascist movement (Kata Pejnović, Anka Butorac, Kata Genzić, Kata Grdak, Ljubica Gerovac, Nada Dimić, and others). Despite some new streets named after women, the total of female names, especially those referring to historical figures and politically active women, has been considerably reduced as compared to the socialist period. Ibid. p. 99.

14 See <http://www.jutarnji.hr/stefica-je-miskecu-slomila-srce-poludio-je-poceo-piti-zavrrio-kao-prosjak-ona-se-udala-za-bogatog-nijemca-922221/> (last accessed on 23 April 2015).

15 Saša Šimpraga, "Po ženama je nazvano samo jedan posto zagrebačkih ulica" [Only 1% of Zagreb's streets are named after women], *Novosti* 770 (2014), <http://www.novosti.com/2014/09/sasa-simpraga-pozenama-je-nazvano-samo-jedan-posto-zagrebackih-ulica/> (last accessed on 23 April 2015).

16 The next widely present category includes sacral figures (29.4%), women from the history of People's Liberation Struggle (11.8%), history of the Croatian tradition (8.2%), and women scientists (3.5%). Cf. Jasenka Kodrnja (as in n. 13), 65.

was Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić Square in Slavonski Brod. This practice is most conspicuous in case of Zagreb as the centre of social, economic, and political power, where the presence of "female" streets and squares – including a considerable percentage of fictional characters – is only 5.8%. Among the 54 squares in Zagreb, only three bear a women's name and only one of them has been named after a historical figure (Katarina Zrinska Square)<sup>13</sup>.

In this respect, the "case" of The Baković Sisters' Passage, the only street named after female personalities in the heart of Zagreb, is particularly telling. Even though it is an extremely short and narrow section of the pedestrian zone, the names of murdered participants of Zagreb's antifascist movement, Zdenka and Rajka Baković, were from 1990–2009 substituted by that of beggar Miškec, a largely forgotten urban legend from the period before World War II<sup>14</sup>. This act of renaming does not only indicate a lack of gender policies in the naming of public urban areas, but the fact that such conscious erasure of the memory of women's participation in revolutionary activities during World War II, blocks the possibility of a positive attitude towards women's political struggle and emancipation during that period. The transitional practice of complete obliteration of the social memory of female antifascists and female communists, privileged in socialism through the practice of street naming, has recently been "mitigated" by ghettoizing them to the city's periphery. Even though civil initiatives of this type always act out of necessity of repairing the quantitative aspect of the under-representation of female memory in public space, by neglecting the symbolic aspect of its urban distribution they basically perpetuate the dominant spatial policy that marginalizes women's memory in public space<sup>15</sup>.

## Constrained, Nurses, Caregivers

The thematic presence of female names in Zagreb's streets and squares involves a considerable number of fictional characters, mostly protagonists from literature written by men<sup>16</sup>. The same trend can be observed in monumental sculpture: prominent urban localities are reserved exclusively for literary figures such as Dora Krupičeva from August Šenoa's historical novel *Zlatarevo zlato* [Goldsmith's gold], who can be seen in two symbolically important places in Zagreb: next to the Stone Gate and in the courtyard of the Academy of Fine Arts. In the analysis performed for the urban tour *Zagreb's Squares*

*Don't Remember Women*, we have decided to resort to three categories of women's presence in public space as monumental or decorative sculpture: as authors of public sculpture, as fictitious/symbolic/decorative representations, and as monuments dedicated to historical women.

An interesting conclusion resulting from such classification is that female sculptors rarely participate in the symbolic-spatial representation of women in public space: the only example of a "female" monument dedicated to a historic woman is the relief portrait and memorial plaque dedicated to Marija Jambrešak, work of Ksenija Kantoci from 1939. The three other cases in which female authorship "coincides" with the subject matter are: the monument to female prostitution (*Window* by Vera Dajht-Kralj, 1991); the monument to children's suffering in World War II (*Mother and Child / Memorial to the Children of Kozara and Potkozarje Taken to Concentration Camps* by Jasna Bogdanović, 1987); and the monument to motherhood (*Mother's Lap* by Mila Kumbatović, 1980; stolen in 2012).

The treatment of "female topics" by male authors generally resorts to the traditional motif of a mother and child: originally sacral model that is used in the secular context as a symbol of female reproductive and didactic function in society. It appears at least fourteen times in several variants (breastfeeding, playing), even though these sculptures have been placed in Zagreb's urban space in different, often opposed ideological circumstances. Thus, in the socialist period, despite the legal and social emancipation of women, this subject continued to perpetuate established gender roles, acquiring new ideological layers in the process. It was, namely, through the traditional socialising role of the mother that the foundations of "brotherhood and unity" were consolidated as one of the constitutive ideas of socialist Yugoslavia. As observed by the feminist historian Lydia Sklevicky, "the logic of affective links, emphasised in the dyadic link between mother and child, serves as a symbolic image that emphasizes the common fate of our peoples and also as the motivation to offer solidarity and aid to women and children from other regions, whereas motherhood, burdened by actual difficulties (...) can motivate struggling for a new society. During the war and even more intensely after it ended, the 'mothers of (fallen) soldiers' were greatly praised; symbolically, the mother mediated between the People's Liberation Movement and the (son) soldier."<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, the nude figure has always been the prevailing mode of inscribing the female gender into Zagreb's

17 Lydia Sklevicky, *Konji, žene, ratovi* [Horses, women, wars], (Women's Infotheque: Zagreb, 1996, p. 43)

18 In case of using national symbols, the female figure is subject to new interpretations. Thus, Ivan Meštrović's *History of the Croats*, originally created in the context of interwar pan-Slavism, is today interpreted as an "unsurpassed and unique symbol of the Homeland. Meštrović shows the homeland as a modest, dignified, and strong woman, whom he entrusts with preserving our heritage, our tradition and identity. Meštrović did not represent this keeper as a fully armed, equestrian king with his sword raised in battle, but rather through the sublime figure of a mother!" Andro Krstulović Opara, "Meštrovićeva Povijest Hrvata – jedinstveni i neponovljivi simbol Domovine" [Meštrović's *History of the Croats: An unsurpassable and unique symbol of the Homeland*], [http://www.mhas-split.hr/Portals/0/docs/mestrovic\\_prilog.pdf](http://www.mhas-split.hr/Portals/0/docs/mestrovic_prilog.pdf) (last accessed on 23 April 2015).

public space: even though a sculptural genre of classical provenance, its frequency often justified by the commissioners' conventionality and the traditional patterns of formal sculptural training, it should be reemphasised that its continuity in Zagreb's public space both reflects and perpetuates prevailing social and gender relations. In Zagreb's squares, streets, and parks, this subject occurs at least sixteen times in various formal and morphological variations and interpretations. Mostly these are full figures or torsos, more rarely body parts that represent the female body in metonymy (such as *Legs* by Zvonimir Lončarić, 2006). Moreover, this corporal aspect of representation is often complemented by the stereotype of "female psychology", reflected in sculpture names such as *Constrained*, *Waiting*, *Shame*, *Longing*, and *alike*, or the essentialist notion of the "generic" (*Angelija*, *Dunja*, *Grozdana*) or "mythical" woman (*Diana*).

Fully clad women normally serve the male political subject (such as in *History of the Croats*<sup>18</sup>, *Widow*, the personification of homeland in the monument to Ante Starčević, the woman with children in the monument to the victims of the Croatian Liberation War in Sesvete) or is depicted performing apolitical, often banal activities, their function in public space exclusively aesthetic in nature. The social effect of such representation is yet another "contribution" to perpetuating gender stereotypes (*Dancer*, *Tennis Player*, *Woman with a Wheelbarrow*, *Woman with an Umbrella*, *Rose Garden*). In the thematic repertoire of Zagreb's public sculpture, only one depiction of a woman involved in intellectual work can be found (*Girl with a Book* by Frano Kršinić, 1941, in its present place since 1981), whereas the joint presentations of woman and man are reduced to romantic topics (*Newly Wed*, *In Love*, *Love Journey*).

## Female Authorship as Class Privilege

The spatial density of fictitious/symbolic/decorative representations of women is most conspicuous in representative cultural and political institutions of the City and the State: the building of the Academy of Fine Arts and the park of Presidential Palace. Moreover, it is in these localities that most depictions of naked, passive female bodies are found, as well as women in the role of wives, breastfeeders, and mothers. One should also note the fact that the publicly accessible part of the collections in these institutions includes not a single sculptural work authored by a woman.

On the other hand, women as authors are best represented in modernist building complexes constructed during the socialist period (Pioneers' Park, Zagreb Fair), and somewhat more moderately in Zagreb's recreational zones (the Sava River Promenade, Jarun Lake). Sculptures by women artists mostly take their motifs from nature (*Great Fiery Flower*, *Light*, *Bird*, *Flight into Space/Seagull*), archaic/symbolic/abstract sphere (*Time Wheel*, *Totem*, *Poetry of Space/Stairs*, *Pillar of Festivity*, *City/Barrow*) or "socialist" topics (*Pillar of Production*, *Hand Offering Friendship/Greeting*). Their realisation was made possible by a system of jury-evaluated public commissioning, as well as by sculptors' communities and festivals, which are no longer part of the policy that defines public space.

Artistic interpretations of male historical figures in the city centre have rarely been entrusted to the female imagination, and even when that is the case, the possibility of affirmation and of obtaining such "prestigious" commissions have been closely related to the artist's social class, personal merits and relentless persistence. In regards to the problem of female authorship in public sculpture as a socially and materially defined category, one should point out the results of the Institute for Social Research from 1985, which have shown that male artists largely originate from peasant and working-class families, whereas female artists come from white-collar (67.6%) and urban families (90%), which leads to the conclusion that the possibility of achieving a social and class "breakthrough" are far more limited for women, especially when it comes to their affirmation through public monument commissions.<sup>19</sup>

## Systematically Removed

With the exception of the memorial relief dedicated to Marija Jambrešak, women emerged as a political subject in Zagreb's urban public space only after World War II, either through portraits of real historic personalities (such as antifascist heroines) or by including women into the collective scenes of warfare, revolution, or working-class topics.<sup>20</sup> However, the individual representation of woman was limited not only by the conventional format of the bust, but also, as a rule, spatially bound to educational institutions (schools and kindergartens), which "softened" the socialist imperative of equally representing male and female political subjects, by establishing spatial and symbolical links to the

19 Cf. Jasenka Kodrnja (as in n.13)

20 These monuments are as follows: *Execution of Hostages* (Frano Kršinić, 1954), *Monument to the Fallen Partisans of Ciglenica* (Tomislav Ostoja, 1971), *Memorial Relief for the Graphic Workers Fallen in the People's Liberation Struggle* (Rudolf Ivanković, 1955), and as many as four monuments that have been removed: *Monument to the Fallen Members of the Union of Banking, Insurance, Trade, and Industrial Workers in Yugoslavia* (Ivan Sabolić, 1958), *Monument to the Students, Professors, and Workers of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry Fallen in the People's Liberation Struggle* (1951), *Monument to the Soldiers from Prvomajska Factory Fallen in the People's Liberation Struggle* (Luka Musulin, 1961), and *Monument to the Fallen Soldiers of Vrapče*.

traditional role of mother and educator. But even with this controlled inscription of women's history into public space, the rejection and fear of ideologically and gender-wise opposed iconography, led in the early 1990s to the systematic removal of female busts as part of the ritual monumental "cleansing" which Zagreb was not spared from<sup>21</sup>. Unfortunately, despite the recently awakened interest in antifascist monuments and Zagreb's cultural memory, it is rarely mentioned that women have been perhaps the greatest victims of revisionism in public space. Since 1990, the faces of most historic women linked to Zagreb, whose number was negligible even at that time, have been erased: among the 77 busts of popular heroes, 12 were dedicated to women (Nada Dimić, Marica Pataki, Josipa Vardijan, Ljubica Gerovac, Dragica Končar, Zdenka Baković, Rajka Baković, and Kata Pejnović, as well as Anka Butorac and Kata Dumbović, who had two busts each). If we add the relief dedicated to Anđela Cvetković, the number of monuments commemorating female participants in the Revolution and the People's Liberation Struggle was three times higher than the total number of memorials to women erected before 1945 and after 1990<sup>22</sup>. Today, Zagreb is a city with only seven monuments dedicated to historic women, which is only one among the numerous symptoms of re-traditionalising both public and private spheres, a process that went hand in hand with the restoration of capitalism in Croatia along with its defamation of the socialist regime.

What are today's prospects of social "rehabilitation" for these dozen of defaced political activists? Considering the consequences of radical change in social memory and the construction of new ideological narratives over the past 25 years, one can hardly expect that restoration and conservation would reaffirm their social and historical significance, especially since the memory of the meaning of people's struggle and the political engagement of these women had been socially fossilised even before the destruction of their busts. Gender emancipation brought about by the mass participation of women in the People's Liberation Struggle and the construction of the new social order after the War gradually had lost its original potential and became subject to the fulfilment of the primary goals of Yugoslav socialist society, based on class equality. Female participation in the War was socially and politically acknowledged, yet without emphasizing the gender aspect of the struggle. This was reflected in an interesting way in the artistic representation of popular heroines, which never moved past the traditional monument types, primarily busts. Whereas the male history of the People's Liberation Struggle,

**21** In Zagreb, more than half (55.32%) of the 432 memorials (monuments, memorial plaques, and busts) erected in the period from 1945–1990 have been demolished or removed, not counting the renaming of 125 public institutions (87.57%) and 238 streets, squares, and other public areas (70.62%), which served as the utilitarian bearers of public memory in the socialist regime. Šimunković and Delač (as in n. 8), 492–495.

**22** Before World War II, the only monument was the memorial relief of teacher and feminist Marija Jambrešak (1939). In 1990, the statue of feminist, journalist and author Marija Jurić Zagorka was inaugurated, and in 2000 and 2001 the memorial busts of painter Slava Raškaj and scientist Vera Johanides.

with protagonists such as Ivan Goran Kovačić, Stjepan Filipović, or Ivo Lola Ribar, inspired original artistic interpretations, raising the individual partisan biographies to the level of abstract, universal symbols, women normally remained in the realm of the particular, documentary recording of authentic faces and the corresponding biographies. I will therefore use a brief and almost forgotten gender-based intervention into the symbolic epicentre of Croatian culture and politics to reflect on the (im)possibility of a monument to women's emancipation.

## An (Im)possible Monument to Women's Emancipation

*An Event happens when the excluded part appears on the social scene, suddenly and drastically. It ruptures the appearance of normality, and opens a space to rethink reality (...) Only in an Event can the excluded part be visible. An Event succeeds in representing a part which is previously unrepresented. This unfolding of new representations from an Event produces Truths, Subjects, and new social systems. (...) Existing hierarchies and value-statements must be destroyed, or falsified, by the Event. Such an act is taken to disrupt reality on a material level, because the formal arrangement underlies the material structure of a particular reality. It does not change the elements of the situation. Rather, it changes the structure of the situation, by forcing it to include a new element.*<sup>23</sup>

Present-day reaffirmation of the meaning of women's emancipation during and after World War II requires an understanding the People's Liberation Struggle as an "event" in Badiou's sense of the word, realised through the process of international antifascist struggle and the socialist revolution as the beginning of "establishing different class relations and a transition to communism."<sup>24</sup> It is only by returning to the "event" that one can rethink the original content of a monument and consider the possibility of its political and social re-actualisation. It is therefore important not only to insist on the physical preservation and restoration of monuments, but also to understand and critically reflect upon all the socio-political and ideological parameters of their creation and their previous "life", conditioned as they were through the complex and changeable system of Yugoslav politics and culture of remembrance. Thereby I am referring to adopting a critical position as to the gender policies of the socialist society, variously reflected through the different phases of Yugoslav culture of remembrance: "By strictly observing the rules of ideological,

**23** Andrew Robinson, "Alain Badiou: The Event," *Ceasefire Magazine* (2014), online at <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/alain-badiou-event/> (last accessed on 23 April 2015).

**24** "The new and socialist Yugoslavia was an event in Badiou's sense of the word. That event had primarily two dimensions: the international antifascist movement, which was the foundation on which new Yugoslavia was constituted (as Yugoslavia was neither nation nor language), and the social revolution (see Buden /2003/, Kirn /2010/, and Pupovac /2006/)." Gal Kirn, "Sjećanje na partizane ili misao o partizanstvu?" [Remembering the partisan or the idea of the partisans?], *Novosti* 547 (2010), online at <http://www.novosti.com/2010/06/sjecanje-na-partizane-ili-misao-o-partizanstvu/> (last accessed on 23 April 2015).

25 R. Jambrešić Kirin and R. Senjković, “*Puno puta bi vas bili izbacili kroz vrata, biste bila išla kroz prozor nutra: preispisivanje povijesti žena u drugom svjetskom ratu*” [*Many times they would kick you out through the door, but you would come back through the window: Rewriting the history of women in World War II*], *Narodna umjetnost: hrvatski časopis za etnologiju i folkloristiku* 42/2 (2005), 116.

26 According to the official statistics, 43660 women actively – with a gun in their hands – participated in the antifascist struggle in Croatia during World War II, and 40150 lost their lives as civilians. Mario Šimunković, *Partizani kakve do sada niste vidjeli* [Partisans as you have never seen before], exhibition catalogue (Zagreb, Union of Antifascist Veterans and Antifascists of Croatia, 2013), 39.

27 Kirin and Senjković, “*Puno puta bi vas bili izbacili kroz vrata, biste bila išla kroz prozor nutra: preispisivanje povijesti žena u drugom svjetskom ratu*” (as in n. 29), 117.

28 Ibid. p. 118.

29 Josip Jelačić (1801–1859): viceroy from 1848 to 1859 under Austro-Hungarian ruler Joseph I, sculpture by Anton Dominik Fernkorn erected in 1866 on the main square of Zagreb. In July 1945, preparations started for removing the statue of viceroy Josip Jelačić from the square of the same name, which was a year later renamed into Republic Square. For two years, the monument was concealed behind wooden planks on several occasions, decorated with various artistic motifs – made by Croatian artists who would later become

class, and gender correctness, the post-revolutionary historiography was rewriting history *a posteriori* through its narration of the original and thorough integration of women into the workers' communist, and partisan movement.<sup>25</sup> Thus, despite the mass participation of women in World War II<sup>26</sup>, the authentic female experience of the People's Liberation Struggle often remains untold, while the dissolution of the Women's Antifascist Front (AFŽ) in 1953, and the fact that women were only rarely present in the leading military structures, indicate that the post-war distribution of power did not proportionally reflect male and female participation in the War and the Revolution.<sup>27</sup> In later phases, as signs of crisis appeared in the socialist regime, representation of women in the popular media was often reduced to romanticised narratives and to creating gender stereotypes about female participation in the War.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, one should base a contemporary reaffirmation of social memory on the “event” itself, rather than its various subsequent mediated and transferred forms. If in the social and political sphere we can today identify the event with the People's Liberation Struggle, let us in the sphere of female representation in Zagreb's public space declare a forgotten and nameless object as its counterpart. I have decided to call this object *An Impossible Monument to AFŽ*. (illustration p. 70)

It is one of those temporary monumental constructions with sculptural features that were constructed in Zagreb's main square between 1945–1947 as a form of propaganda, with the obvious aim of concealing the ideologically undesirable monument to viceroy Josip Jelačić, whose counterrevolutionary role in suppressing the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 had no place in the Marxist evaluation of Croatian national history and its protagonists<sup>29</sup>. This act indicates the radical revolutionary character of the newly formed social and political atmosphere of the early post-war period, which was on the formal level, in conspicuously large and robust wooden constructions, manifested as a direct opposition to the schematized academic realism of Fernkorn's equestrian sculpture.

prominent – before it was finally removed in July 1947. Cf. Boris Kukić, “Uklanjanje Jelačićeva spomenika 1945.–1947.” [Removing the statue of Ban Josip Jelačić, 1945–1947], unpublished paper held at the conference *Ban Josip Jelačić (1801 – 1859 – 2009)* – *Novi prinosi*

*za život, djelo i ulogu bana Jelačića, prigodom 150. godišnjice smrti* [Ban Josip Jelačić (1801 – 1859 – 2009) – Recent research on the life, work, and role of Ban Jelačić, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his death], Zagreb, Croatian Institute of History, 20 November, 2009.

On the occasion of the 1st Congress of the Croatian AFŽ in 1945, the construction was complemented with plaster reliefs of colossal female figures with weapons and agricultural tools as their attributes<sup>30</sup>. The importance of this visual experiment resides primarily in the emancipatory potential contained in the unprecedented form of public representation of The Woman as a political subject. It was the first time that The Woman, depicted on the one side of the screen holding weapons and on the other with agricultural tools, was presented both as a participant of the military triumph and the member of the working class: that is, as an equivalent agent in building up the new socialist society. This type of official representation of female equality in the medium of monumental sculpture is undoubtedly an authentic document of the post-war gender and class emancipation of women.

However, as any real “event” it remained only a brief episode, documented by photographs. According to Badiou, the “excluded” social group – as women definitely were in this region before World War II, at least in the political and juridical sphere – can become “included” only if the situation radically changes, and that is what the socialist revolution, accomplished through People's Liberation Struggle, actually did.<sup>31</sup> Even though socially belonging to the public sphere of Zagreb, women were not included in it before the War, which is, among other things, evident from the analysis of their presence in the medium of monumental sculpture as presented above – and what is present, yet excluded, cannot be publicly represented.<sup>32</sup>

In the context of representing women in Zagreb's public space, the “event” that should be remembered is certainly the construction of the *Impossible Monument to AFŽ*. The fact that in that particular, relatively brief historical moment, it was possible, in the most representative public area of Zagreb, to create a monumental double depiction of The Woman as a soldier – the one who participated in the country's liberation – and as a worker – responsible for building up the new society – in order to cover another monument which is the paradigmatic example of male hegemony over public space, speaks clearly enough of a revolutionary act *par excellence*, as it was covered by colossal female figures that were neither naked nor beautiful, and certainly not ornamented with garlands and acanthus leaves. Nevertheless, one should not ignore the patronisation that was latently present in this act, as it gleamed through Tito's quotation on the side of the construction, announcing that the emancipatory zeal would soon become passive and that ideological monitoring over gender policy would continue, remaining in male dominance even in the most avantgarde moments of female history in this city.

30 When it comes to the authorship of these sculptural elements, a daily newspaper reports on collective work of a group of artists, members of the OLIKPROP (Department for Art Propaganda, People's Republic of Croatia Government's Presidency). “Iznad Jelačićeva spomenika postavlja se 14 m visoki obelisk”, *Vjesnik*, 20.7.1945. Sculptors such as Vojin Bakić and Kosta Angeli Radnovani, were most certainly part of this artist collective, however, they cannot be prescribed the whole authorship, as claimed in some of the existing sources, Darko Bekić: *Vojin Bakić ili kratka povijest kiposlavije*, (Profil International: Zagreb, 2006., p. 80)

31 Andrew Robinson, “Alain Badiou: The Event,” *Ceasefire Magazine* (2014), online at <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/alain-badiou-event/> (last accessed on 23 April 2015).

32 Cf. Andrew Robinson, “Alain Badiou: The Excluded Part and the Eventful Site,” *Ceasefire Magazine* (2014), online at <https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/alain-badiou-excluded-part-eventful-site/> (last accessed on 23 April 2015).