Poster of Ljubo Babić, *L'Art médiéval yougoslave* [Yugoslav Medieval Art], Musée des Monuments français, Paris, 1950

Yugoslav Fanonism and a Failed Exit from the (Cultural) Cold War

Ivana Bago

Yugoslavia's proverbial position at the crossroads between the First, Second, and Third Worlds opens up a unique perspective on the twentieth-century dialectic between decolonial claims for national independence and an ultimate dependence on world history—that is, the history of global capitalism. If the twentieth century signaled a shift away from Eurocentrism and a disintegration of the old age of empires,[1] Yugoslavia confirmed its twentieth-century status thrice: first in 1918, by forming as the South Slavic state and asserting itself as a new player on the geopolitical scene; then in 1945, when Yugoslav communists succeeded in a struggle against fascism and against the country's royalist past; and finally in 1948, when socialist Yugoslavia was expelled from the Cominform and was forced to invent its autonomous "third" path to socialism, soon to be aligned with a non-aligned and decolonizing Third World. This unintended exit from the Socialist Bloc and the resulting embrace of the politics of self-management and non-alignment turned Yugoslavia into a sort of actually existing New Left, with a promise of non-alienated socialism uncompromised by the Stalinist political economy of socialist realism.[2] At the same time, an increased dependency on Western capital made Yugoslavia the oxymoronic "American communist ally" in the 1950s, a period in which traffic in capital and financial aid was accompanied by traffic in "modern art"—exemplified by the *Modern Art of the United States* exhibition, organized by New York's Museum of Modern Art in Belgrade in 1956.[3]

At the center of attempts to navigate the adventurously open seas on which Yugoslav socialist culture found itself in the 1950s was Yugoslav writer, polemicist, and key post-1945 cultural authority Miroslav Krleža (1893–1981). The 1948 Tito-Stalin break had legitimized in retrospect Krleža's leftist yet anti-socialist-realist position in the interwar aesthetic debates of the 1930s, which had led him astray from the Yugoslav Communist Party.[4] In 1952, when Yugoslav communists were themselves estranged from their Soviet mentors, Krleža famously debunked socialist realism's aesthetic and ideological validity for Yugoslav art, which, he argued, had "always" fought for the "freedom of artistic creation."[5] Just two years later, however, noting the rising influx and emulation of what he found to be a reactionary, depoliticized, and historically overcome Western European modernism—painterly abstraction in particular—he reaffirmed his call for a socialist Yugoslav art that, rather than importing foreign models, would be grounded in its own material and historical conditions.[6] In a seminal history of interwar aesthetic debates, written during the country's student unrest of 1968 and its first major sociopolitical crisis, literary theorist Stanko Lasić described Krleža's negation of both socialist realism and modernism as a "Fanonist vision of Yugoslav culture," a never-realized program of releasing the local culture from its status as peripheral and imitative of Europe.[7]

Krleža's postwar polemical interventions were, Lasić further argued, a "desperate attempt to salvage [the interwar claim for] a synthesis of art and revolution," at a time when such synthesis had "disaggregated" and was increasingly reduced to a struggle for "freedom of artistic expression."[8] Countering that struggle, Krleža's postulation that "art without revolution is meaningless, while revolution without art is incomplete" was the kind of synthesis that rejected both art's autonomy and the socialist-realist synthesis that squarely placed art in the service of revolution.[9] Although Lasić conceded that both socialist-realist and Krleža-like syntheses of art and revolution were still existent in 1970 in Yugoslavia, he recognized that they were marginal—what was once "leftist literature" had almost fully been supplanted by "quests" taking place within the autonomous field of "Art," in the confines of which

the only current revolutions were being made. "This does not mean," Lasić concluded, "that such quests are outside reality, but it does mean that they are *inside* a single reality that no longer inquires about the other reality, only about its own reality. And this reality—Art—is one: it is in art that one must participate, one must develop art, one must live art, and go 'left' within art."[10]

In this text, I wish to take up and strategically exaggerate Lasić's implicit periodization of Yugoslav history into a history of revolution (with its "Fanonist" cultural vision), followed (and betrayed) by the history of art. Lasić's intervention was first presented in 1969 at the Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences' conference "University and Revolution" and should be contex-tualized within the moment of post-1968 disillusionment. It is thus not coincidentally analogous to, for example, German literary critic Peter Bürger's contemporaneous and equally post-1968 claim of the impossibility of the (neo)avant-garde breaking the confines of art's relative autonomy from within the conditions of bourgeois society, that is, without transforming art's social basis.[11] On a more general level, the dissolution of revolution into art could be related to the distinction between political and cultural freedom that is at the core of the "Parapolitics" project.[12] Indeed, the Yugoslav failure to truly realize the project of socialist transformation, and to break free from dependence on the Cold War order, was ironically accompanied by the blossoming of Yugoslav "freedom of artistic expression" and, in particular, the contemporary art scene in the late 1960s and '70s, in the midst of the major social and economic crisis of Yugoslav federalism and self-management. Unlike their neo-avant-garde precedent—the New Tendencies movement, which affirmed the bond between progressive art, science, and Yugoslav self-managed socialism during the early 1960s—conceptual and performative art practices post-1968 sought their allegiances primarily with analogous developments on the international art scene, and were thus increasingly distanced from the Krležian project of insisting on an autonomous, socialist Yugoslav art.[13]

As Lasić himself noted in the case of literature, the contours of this development were evident already during the 1950s. I propose to examine this by comparing two official, "parapolitical" presentations of Yugoslav art which could be said to mark the decade's beginning and end: *L'Art médiéval yougoslave* (Yugoslav Medieval Art), masterminded by Krleža and staged in 1950 in Paris, and the Yugoslav pavilion at the Expo '58 in Brussels. Both exhibitions affirmed the singularity of Yugoslav socialism in the international, cultural, and geopolitical arena. The one coordinated by Krleža, with the clear imprint of his "Fanonist" vision, did this by promoting the purportedly authentic, artistic expression of the self-taught sculptors of a heretic medieval sect, the Bogomils, while the Expo '58 pavilion, designed by sculptor and architect Vjenceslav Richter, mobilized the allegedly universal, modernist, abstract language of the (neo)-avant-garde.[14] Ultimately, the two projects can be seen as two failed attempts to emancipate a national culture from its status of peripheral dependency, one by explicitly articulating its position of colonial difference,[15] and the other by taking the Enlightenment promise of universal culture to task and claiming equality in the right to speak the international language of art. By examining the distance that separates the two exhibitions, I will argue that *L'Art médiéval yougoslave*, staged at the moment of Yugoslavia's historical exit from what Krleža called the "Antithesis" (of East and West), marks simultaneously the peak and endpoint of politicized, decolonial Yugoslav aesthetics, after which one can only speak of Yugoslav—and, following 1968, of post-Yugoslav—art.[16]

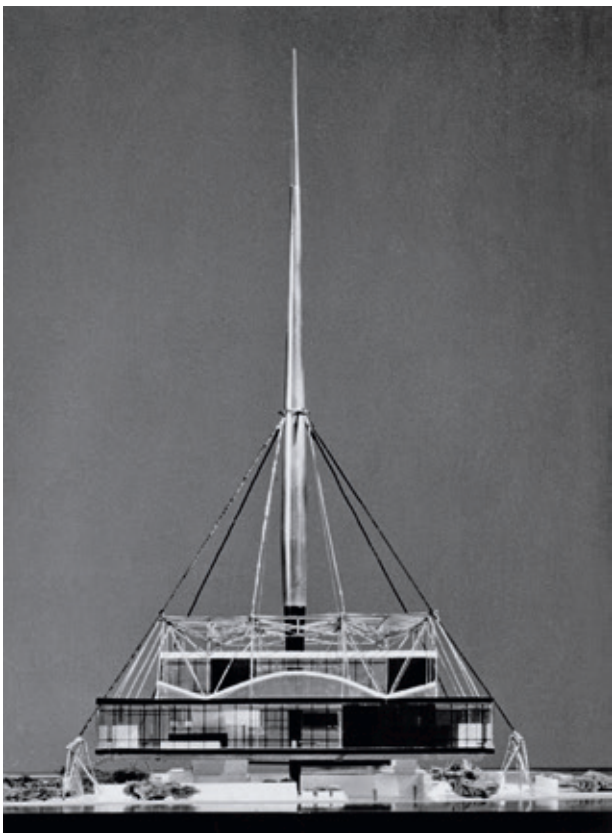
L'Art médiéval yougoslave opened in March 1950 in the Pallais de Chaillot in Paris, a representative space built for the 1937 Exposition Internationale and housing the Musée national des Monuments Français (National Museum of French Monuments).[17] The project's organizational committee consisted of Yugoslav and French medievalists and experts, but Krleža was the mastermind behind its conceptual and ideological framing. In the catalogue introduction, he articulates the exhibition as an unveiling of the lost "South Slavic medieval civilization," which "disappeared in the tumult of six-centuries-long Turkish, Austrian, and Venetian wars led from the fourteenth to the twentieth century."[18] Among the exhibits were Serbian and Macedonian church frescoes, early medieval Croatian sculpture, and tombstones of the Bosnian Bogomil heretical sect. The Bogomil rejection—in Krleža's reading—of the

authority of both Rome and Byzantium formed the ideological core of the exhibition and resonated with Yugoslavia's position between and against the two Cold War blocs.[19] Translating the heretic-Bogomil rejection into the register of visual expression, Krleža argues that their tombstones were "free of any suggestion of the European artistic and philosophical graveyard, not because [the Bogomil sculptors] were not familiar with it, but because, both in principle and conceptually, they denied it every moral and aesthetic significance."[20] With the aid of the felicitously ambivalent (literal and metaphorical) meaning of "graveyard," Krleža thus buries the entire European artistic and philosophical tradition, and he ambitiously locates, in the "naïve and fresh observations of an artistic *terra vergine*," a prime example of "tendentious[21] and propagandist art":

> This sculpture does not accept the cult of death. It negates, in principle—in Bogomil-like fashion, that is, materialistically—the stupefying thought of dying on one's knees, as in front of an enigma that points towards some trans-funerary hierarchy. Among thousands and thousands of human hands depicted on these monolith blocks, not a single one is folded in premortal prayer. Not a single Bogomil figure can be seen kneeling in front of the authority of religious symbols, whether earthly or unearthly.[22]

Although Krleža humbly concludes that the exhibition presented evidence of South Slavic contributions to great European culture, the closing paragraph is self-contradictory and begins, in a tone of historical *ressentiment*, by riding the wave of the Bogomil refusal to kneel: "The South Slavic civilization disintegrated in the cycles of wars, so that Western Europe could continue to live, and create in harmony the artworks without which it would be impossible to imagine the history of mankind."[23]

Here, the creation of "artworks" is predicated upon the internal "harmony" achieved by external violence and conquest—art is a harmonious layer of civilization that covers up centuries of historical struggle and erasure. Yet there was also a triumphant and anticipatory ending to Krleža's story, enabled by the autonomous victory of Yugoslav communists in World War II. This victory allowed Krleža to interpret the heretical "fragments" of the disappeared South Slavic civilization as anticipating the present-day South Slavic Socialist Federation, itself both a



Photograph of the model for the *Yugoslav Pavilion* at Expo '58, Brussels

Photograph of the *Yugoslav Pavilion* at Expo '58, Brussels

dialectical overcoming of the Middle Ages and an anticipation of "our future centuries."[24] Indeed, in his abovementioned 1952 speech at the Ljubljana Writers' Congress, Krleža likened the Yugoslav communist leader, Josip Broz Tito, to the medieval heretics, presenting him as the symbol of "resistance to all forces that wish to return the country to a subcolonial state. Tito opposes the Kremlin, just like Bogomils opposed the pope."[25] In the immediate aftermath of Tito's heretic "No" to Stalin in 1948, Yugoslav intellectuals, philosophers, and artists could dare to presume that the release from a century-long history of oppression would now enable them to not only catch up with Europe, but be its vanguard. Even before 1948, following the courageous partisan resistance to fascist occupation in World War II, communist writer, art historian, and painter Oto Bihalji-Merin claimed that were Yugoslav artists to create works equivalent to the value of the liberation struggle, their art, "born out of the depth and experience of the new life, will be so good, real, and true, that Paris will be able to learn, just as earlier generations learned in Paris."[26] As was also evident in Krleža's influential speech, however, this authentic art remained a vision, an anticipation of a future appearance: "If we develop a socialist cultural environment that is conscious of its rich past and cultural mission in contemporary European space and time," Krleža asserted, "our Art will inevitably appear."[27] Lasić's melancholic historicization two decades later, as already shown, put an end to this anticipation.

In the early 1960s, Yugoslav literary critic Sveta Lukić questioned the very assumption that one should insist on what is, or would be, "ours." Instead, he argued, we should measure up to others and "air" ourselves.[28] Lukić also harbored animosity towards what can be said to have defined Yugoslav interwar aesthetics of the Krleža lineage, namely its focus on a realist transcription of violent social reality, often associated with life in the countryside and to historical suffering and injustice: "the export value of our art is oriental and rural, dark instinct and murder, which overshadow our urban and socialist accomplishments."[29] It seems that the "airing" of the latter was precisely what was to be achieved with Yugoslavia's presentation at Expo '58. Unlike the medieval exhibition, which presented an endemic and anachronistic aesthetics that rejected European models and could thus be said to have preemptively negated the simultaneous influx of modern art from Paris, the Yugoslav Expo '58 pavilion spoke in the international language of avant-garde art. As Vladimir Kulić writes, Richter's design of the pavilion, originally intended to be suspended in midair, aimed to express "the self-proclaimed avant-garde status of Yugoslav socialism" from within the edition of the world exposition that marked "modernism's world-wide victory" as a paradigmatic symbol of the cultural Cold War.[30] Among the pavilion's four sections, a "Gallery of Contemporary Art" was to place Yugoslavia squarely within that competition, although Kulić argues—implicitly elevating art over and beyond politics—that Richter's avant-garde architectural vision surpassed the Cold War agenda and "the more explicit political statements shown inside [the pavilion]."[31]

But it can also be argued, as I hinted above, that precisely by insisting on his aesthetic, avant-garde vision—and despite his ideological alliance with Yugoslav socialism and his general adherence to the idea of politicized art—Richter unwittingly colluded with the Cold War ideology of art's autonomy, which elevated the supremacy of artistic vision above any political-utilitarian appropriation. In his work on the pavilion, Richter allegedly exercised "tyrannical aesthetic control," which included eliminating color photographs from the exhibition and even the Yugoslav flag, which was displayed only after the opening.[32] Ironically, this dramatic struggle to escape the lowly task of national representation was successful, and the pavilion was poorly visited. Even more ironically, the low turnout resulted in an ad hoc decision by Yugoslav organizers to add a presentation of dolls with folk costumes, which, in contrast to Richter's avant-garde accomplishments, proved an "immediate success."[33]

Kulić reads this telling incident as the return of the repressed royal Yugoslavia of the interwar period, which marketed itself in the world-exposition arena through a contrast between "the modern and the traditional, the 'civilized' and the 'primitive.'"[34] I propose that the incident can instead be read as the irruption of Yugoslav colonial difference, intercepting the attempt to claim equal participation in the universal language of art. The "oriental and rural," those primary cultural "exports," could not

be contained and broke through Yugoslavia's "urban" accomplishments and their embodiment in avant-garde art. On the one hand, audiences' favoring of folk elements can be seen as just another instance of the well-known and oppressive contract according to which peripheral cultures and artists can only gain access to the global art circuit by representing their necessarily exotic cultural-political difference. On the other, it is difference—in the form of colonial difference and inequality resulting from the history of economic and cultural exploitation, which in the Yugoslav case dates back to its historical position between, and subordinate to, multiple imperial structures both East and West (the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, Venice)—that prevents successful integration under the enlightened promise of universal art, which in fact ultimately works to cover up persisting inequalities and injustices.[35] For this reason, despite its reaffirmation of the exoticizing logic of the international cultural market, there is something beautiful about the turn of events at the Yugoslav Expo '58 pavilion, in which the maker of the folk-costumed dolls, "an otherwise anonymous Belgrade schoolteacher named Dušanka Bulajić," temporarily and unexpectedly stole the stage from the great avant-garde (male) artist, whose monochromatic "tyrannical aesthetic control" had repressed the color of the persisting colonial difference of Yugoslav society.

Following the wars of the 1990s, the global rediscovery of Yugoslav art repeated the dynamic delineated by Lukić: first there was a fascination with "Balkan" murder and bloodshed (the oriental and the rural), then an analogous fascination with the struggle of "Eastern European" conceptual and performance art against the oppressive socialist regime, and, finally, a construction of Yugoslav art in relation to its difference from the Eastern Bloc and active participation in shaping the modernist canon (just as Lukić proposed "airing" oneself and one's urban accomplishments). If, in the first post-socialist decades, the artist's performing body, trapped behind the iron curtain, indexed "art *under* socialism," Yugoslav art has more recently displaced that image with those of futurist-socialist-modernist World War II memorials. These sculptural-architectural structures, which share the aesthetics of the Yugoslav Expo '58 pavilion, have even had their photogenic status confirmed by *National Geographic*.[36] Dazzling night-view photographs of the surviving Yugoslav monuments were recently featured as a kind of twentieth-century Pompeii in that weekly repository of the world's dead and dying biological and cultural heritage: "Haunting Relics of a Country That No Longer Exists," a socialist state with self-management and open borders, unlike the repressive Soviet Union.[37] This insistence on the singularity of the Yugoslav position in the Cold War, marked by the notions of self-management and non-alignment, repeats or identifies with the image of an avant-garde socialism nurturing an avant-garde art, as attempted at Expo '58. Or, as one recent exhibition put it—in terms that promise smooth global circulation—it is the image of a "non-aligned modernity."[38]

While there is certainly reason to research the specificities of Yugoslav socialism, and even its artistic expressions, the fetishized circulation of such readymade concepts and images of World War II memorials detaches them from the actual history of the "country that no longer exists." In the case of memorials, their ritualistic and didactic function as sites where new generations came to learn about their past (within existing historiographical and ideological frameworks) is also negated.[39] In fact, these objects have much more in common with the folk costumes made by an "otherwise anonymous teacher" than with modernist art, given that they embody a history grounded in the liberation claim of the Yugoslav people (*narod*), the majority of whom were of peasant origin and did not speak the purportedly universal language of modern art.[40] The cleansing of the popular element from the avant-garde aesthetics of partisan monuments is also evident, as Sanja Horvatinčić has shown, in an overlooking of the complex typology of World War II memorial sculpture, which ranged from modernist abstraction to conventional aesthetic solutions "stigmatized by the pejorative denomination of socialist realism."[41] The destruction, following the violent break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, of such "aesthetically 'unpleasing'" monuments was normalized or even supported by art historians, while the condemnation of violence against their modernist counterparts (whose symbolic and ideological content is less explicit) is "mostly enacted through the mourning for exceptional artistic works."[42]

Alertness towards this slippage into art's exceptional value is, I would argue, the essence of Krleža's "Fanonist" vision, and the reason why he was infamously dismissive of avant-garde modernist trends, both in the interwar period and following World War II. As he wittily concluded in his 1952 speech at the Ljubljana Writers' Congress—playing with the ambivalence of the Serbo-Croatian adjective *bespredmetan*, which simultaneously translates as "non-objective" and "pointless"—"Kandinsky was *bespredmetan* already in 1913, and especially from our perspective of the Balkan Wars and the Austrian liquidation."[43] At the same time, Krleža was equally critical of nationalist art, which based its aesthetics on recycling supposedly authentic folk patterns or romantic nationalist myths, although his own insistence on the Bogomils' naïve visual authenticity could itself be said to form such a myth as a basis for the yet inexistent Yugoslav/South Slavic nation (as opposed to Serbian, Croatian, etc.). It is this insistence on forming a culture based on "our perspective," and the torment caused by the impossible attempt to define what is culturally "ours," which makes Krleža's cultural vision "Fanonist," not least since the very ideas of art, culture, and nation are colonial constructs.

Similarly to Krleža's, Frantz Fanon's reflections on national culture were grounded in a rejection of both European cultural models and of local, tribal customs and myths, in which the "unconditional affirmation of African culture [succeeds] the unconditional affirmation of European culture."[44] In the essay "On National Culture," first presented at the Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists in Rome in 1959, Fanon traced the evolution of the native intellectual, who first assimilates the culture of the European colonizer until he realizes his own alienation and the colonizer's obliteration and denigration of local culture, and then "feels the need to turn backward toward his unknown roots and to lose himself at whatever cost among his barbarous people."[45] This transformation only leads the native intellectual towards a false solution to the problem of national culture, since, Fanon concludes, it is not the resurrection of a past culture that will create a nation, but the other way around: Only the struggle for national liberation can create a national culture, which arises out of that struggle and in response

Photograph of Brotinjac, *Stećak* [tomb] in the exhibition *L'Art médiéval yougoslave* [Yugoslav Medieval Art], Musée des Monuments français, Paris, 1950

to immediate reality.[46] What was left, for both Fanon and Krleža following their double rejection of European hegemony and local essentialism, was the idea of national culture born out of liberation struggles. This was, after all, the exemplarity of the Bogomil tombstones: not their specific aesthetic value, but the fact that this value resulted from counter-hegemonic struggle and negation. Placing Tito's 1943 speech about the progress of the Yugoslav liberation struggle on the first page of the *L'Art médiéval yougoslave* exhibition catalogue made it clear that Yugoslav national culture, as presented within the Parisian world exposition arena, could only be understood as arising from the history of struggle, from Bogomils to partisans—not from a collection of artifacts.

But what to do once the struggle is accomplished, once the revolution—both national and socialist, in the Yugoslav case—has been achieved? It seems that one can only commemorate and historicize it, and at this moment one must revert to culture and art, and to the exhibition space as the arena par excellence of national representation, itself inseparable from the structure of colonialism. Krleža's position is illustrative here, as he was not only the initiator of the medieval exhibition, but also of the *Encyclopedia of Yugoslavia* project (1955), in which a hegemonic form of knowledge production was taken up to tell a new, materialist history of Yugoslavia. From this contradictory space, in which decolonization can only proceed by appropriating the colonizer's tools—such as art, culture, encyclopedia, and nation—the path is easily opened towards the "disaggregation," as Lasić would say, of the synthesis of culture and liberatory struggle, and into the consolidation of the autonomous sphere of art. Following 1968 and Lasić's melancholic diagnosis of the failure of Yugoslav "Fanonist" aesthetics and, implicitly, of Yugoslav socialism, contemporary art—which thrived on proclaiming its distance from the state and the ideological apparatus—has increasingly distanced itself from the lowly aim of representing the nation, the people, and the state, or of trying to make them better, and thus entered its post-Yugoslav phase even before Yugoslavia was destroyed.[47]

1 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991*. London: Abacus, 1995, pp. 6–7.

2 For an elaboration of the difference between the Yugoslav political economy of workers' self-management and the Soviet political economy of socialist realism, in relation to performance and the critique of alienation, see Branislav Jakovljević, *Alienation Effects: Performance and Self-Management in Yugoslavia, 1945–1991*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016.

3 Tvrtko Jakovina, *Američki komunistički saveznik: Hrvati, Titova Jugoslavija i Sjedinjene Američke Države, 1945–1955*. Zagreb: Profil, 2003; and Radina Vučetić, *Coca-Cola Socialism: Americanization of Yugoslav Culture in the Sixties*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2018.

4 The Yugoslav polemics of the 1930s ran parallel to similar international debates around the nature and goals of Marxist aesthetics during the 1920s and '30s. On the one hand were radical, modernist, and avant-garde aesthetic experiments, and on the other were the various attempts by the Soviet intellectual and political vanguard to define an aesthetics in line with revolutionary principles. In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918–41)—where the Communist Party was banned in 1921 and where the persecution of political opponents was particularly grave following the introduction of royal dictatorship in 1929—the journals in which the polemics were published represented a crucial outlet in which Party members and sympathizers, working in exile or illegally, could discuss and propagate the leftist cause, at least on the level of literary and cultural concerns. By 1939, the journal *Pečat*, which Krleža edited with Belgrade Surrealist Marko Ristić, had been denounced by Yugoslav Party leaders for supporting "Trotskyist" tendencies. This event marked the culmination of the polemics and alienated Krleža from the Party until 1945, at which point he was "forgiven" for his interwar deviations and embraced as a leading cultural figure of the newly founded socialist Yugoslavia.

5 Miroslav Krleža, "Govor na kongresu književnika u Ljubljani, 1952" (Speech at the Ljubljana Writers' Congress, 1952), in *Svjedočanstva vremena: književno-estetske varijacije*. Sarajevo: Oslobođenje, 1988, p. 44. My translation; all trans. Ivana Bago unless otherwise stated. In the same speech, however, he affirmed the pertinence of historical materialism as a method and labeled any resistance to it as a sign of right-wing politics (p. 15). Newspaper excerpts of the speech were published under the title "O slobodi kulture" (On the freedom of culture).

6 Miroslav Krleža, "Referat na Plenumu Saveza književnika, 1954" (Paper for the Writers' Association Plenum, 1954), in *Svjedočanstva vremena*, pp. 49–67. The 1952 and 1954 interventions were speeches Krleža made at conferences of Yugoslav writers: the Third Congress of the Association of Yugoslav Writers in Ljubljana in 1952, and the Plenum of the Association of Yugoslav Writers in Belgrade in 1954.

7 Stanko Lasić, *Sukob na književnoj ljevici 1928–1952*. Zagreb: Liber, 1970, p. 67. The literal translation of "Fanonovom vizijom jugoslavenske kulture" would be "Fanon's vision of Yugoslav culture," but I translate it using the word Fanonist, as the original misleadingly implies an attribution of this vision to Fanon.

8 Ibid., pp. 53–54.

9 Krleža's proposition, Lasić concludes, seeks an "authentic aesthetical socialist engagement." Ibid., p. 54.

10 Ibid. Original emphasis.

11 Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw. Minneapolis, MI: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. In the "Postscript to the Second German Edition," Bürger wrote that his book arose from of a "historical constellation of problems that emerged after the events of May 1968 and the failure of the student movement in the early seventies" (p. 95). The Zagreb conference was organized to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Yugoslav Communist Party. The important place of student rebellions in Lasić's interpretation of the relationship between art and revolution can be inferred from his comment that it was "only the contemporary student movement which brought into question the entire purpose of culture as we know it." He contrasted the novelty of this questioning to both sides in the interwar debates, to whom it never occurred that "culture and revolution *might* not be at all complementary" (Lasić, *Sukob na književnoj ljevici*, p. 17). Lasić's views on 1968 in Yugoslavia, and his disillusionment with the Yugoslav socialism he had helped build in his youth as a fervent communist activist, are explicated in his memoir, Stanko Lasić, *Autobiografski zapisi*. Zagreb: Globus, 2000.

12 See in particular Antonia Majaca's contribution to this volume.

13 There are, of course, exceptions: for example, the attempt of Belgrade's Student Cultural Center to examine the relation between self-management and contemporary art. See Jelena Vesić, "SKC (Student Cultural Centre) as a Site of Performative (Self-) Production: October 75 – Institution, Self-Organization, First-Person Speech, Collectivization," Život *umjetnosti*, vol. 91, no. 2 (2012), pp. 30–53. On the new art practice, see Ivana Bago and Antonia Majaca, "Dissociative Association, Dionysian Socialism, Non-Action and Delayed Audience: Between Action and Exodus in the Art of the 1960s and 1970s in the Socialist Republic of Croatia," in Ivana Bago et al. (eds), *Removed from the Crowd: Unexpected Encounters*. Zagreb: BLOK/Delve, 2011, pp. 250–309. New Tendencies was an international network of artists and artist groups, anchored in advocating for the scientification and democratization of art, and based at the Zagreb Gallery of Contemporary Art. See Armin Medosch, *New Tendencies: Art at the Threshold of the Information Revolution (1961–1978)*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016.

14 The Bogomils were a gnostic Christian heretic sect, originating in the Bulgarian Empire during the tenth century and spreading throughout the Balkans. Vjenceslav Richter was a member of a group of artists and architects that came together in 1951 under the name EXAT 51 (Experimental Atelier 51). The group promoted the synthesis of the "pure" and "applied" arts, and they countered the then-prevailing view of abstraction as an expression of "decadent tendencies." Although the details of his participation are not known, Richter was also commissioned to participate in the "didactic exhibition" on abstract art (*Contemporary Art 1. Didactic Exhibition: Abstract Art*), which opened at the Zagreb Gallery of Contemporary Art in 1957, with the aim of informing audiences about the history and meaning of nonfigurative art, along the lines of the then-consolidating Western canon.

15 The notion of colonial difference, particularly in relation to the production of knowledge, was developed by Walter Mignolo in "The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 101, no. 1 (2002), pp. 57–96. Mignolo differentiates between colonial and imperial difference, both standing in relation to the "two macronarratives: that of Western civilization, and that of the modern world" (p. 58). The "difference" defines a range of positions in relation to those macronarratives, and, in terms of critical scholarship, enunciates either an imperial difference or a colonial difference. An imperial difference position is a critique of the macronarratives made from within their systems of knowledge (the example here is Immanuel Wallerstein's world systems analysis, which is ultimately concerned with opening up the social sciences). A colonial difference, by contrast, steps aside from, or even outside of, these macronarratives to consider their historical formation, with racial difference being among the key determinants of this positioning.

16 I do not have space in this essay to fully develop this argument or elaborate on the difference between aesthetics and art, but suffice to say that, in Lasić's terms, the first strives towards synthesis and the latter towards singularity and "disaggregation."

17 The building's symbolic relevance is evidenced also by the fact that the third United Nations General Assembly, at which the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948, took place there.

18 Miroslav Krleža, "Predgovor," in *Izložba srednjovjekovne umjetnosti naroda Jugoslavije*, exh. cat. Zagreb: Umjetnički paviljon, 1951, p. 5. In Tanja Zimmermann's reading, Krleža's text presented the theoretical foundations of the "aesthetics of the 'third way.'" See Tanja Zimmermann, *Der Balkan zwischen Ost und West: Mediale Bilder und kulturpolitische Prägungen*. Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2014, p. 232. "Yugoslavia" is an Anglicized transcription of "Jugoslavija," a name that first appeared in the nineteenth century to denote the desired common country of Southern Slavs. It should be noted that "South Slavic" (*južnoslavenski*) and "Yugoslav" (*jugoslavenski*) are not exactly synonymous. Krleža's use of "South Slavic" points to the avoidance of the adjective "Yugoslav," which bore the undesired legacy of King Alexander's royal dictatorship (1929–34), which attempted to impose a common, Yugoslav identity. For the same reason, the title "Yugoslav Medieval Art" could unproblematically appear only abroad (in the Paris exhibition), while the title of the Zagreb version (in 1951) was "adapted" as "The exhibition of medieval art of the peoples of Yugoslavia."

19 Traditional historiography, on which Krleža relied, brought the Bogomils into relation with both the funerary stone monuments exhibited in Paris (*stećci*) and with the Church of Bosnia, an independent church that defied both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox hierarchies. Although connections between these three phenomena exist, recent scholarship has contested the existence of any direct and exclusive links between the Bogomils, *stećci*, and the Church of Bosnia. See Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*. London: Pan Books, 2002.

20 Krleža, "Predgovor," p. 7.

21 The idea of "tendentious art" (from German *Tendenz*), taken from Marx and Engels' writings, was used in interwar aesthetic debates in attempts to define a normative Marxist aesthetics. Krleža's move here was to situate the medieval Bogomils as prophets of a leftist, engaged art.

22 Krleža, "Predgovor," p. 9.

23 Ibid., p. 11.

24 Ibid., p. 5.

25 Krleža, "Govor na kongresu književnika u Ljubljani," p. 37.

26 Oto Bihalji-Merin, quoted from Božidar Gagro, "Nadrealizam, socijalna umjetnost 1929–1950," *Život umjetnosti*, vol. 10 (1969), p. 166. Bihalji-Merin's comment points to the continuing relevance of Paris as the center of cultural influence for Yugoslav artists and critics. Exchanges with France were of great importance for the influx of exhibitions of modern art in the early 1950s following the Tito-Stalin break. Connections with the Paris contemporary art scene would remain relevant up to the 1970s. It should be noted that Bihalji-Merin was an internationally active cultural worker and

political activist, member of both the Yugoslav and German Communist Parties, and a Spanish Civil War fighter. During the 1920s he studied in Berlin, where he was part of avant-garde artistic circles, and he contributed as writer and editor to *Illustrierte Neuen Welt* and Party organ *Die Linkskurve*. In 1928, he founded a highly influential journal and publishing house with his brother Pavle, called *Nova literatura/* NOLIT, in Belgrade.

27 Krleža, "Govor na kongresu književnika u Ljubljani," p. 48.

28 Sveta Lukić, *Umetnost i kriterijumi*. Belgrade: Prosveta, 1964, p. 142.

29 Ibid., p. 142.

30 Vladimir Kulić, "An Avant-Garde Architecture for an Avant-Garde Socialism: Yugoslavia at Expo '58," *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 47, no. 1 (2012), pp. 161–84, here p. 178.

31 Ibid., p. 163. It should be noted that the political statement also included references to the medieval tradition, as did some of the exhibits at Expo '58. For a discussion of the merging of modernist and folkloric traditions in the paintings represented at Expo '58, which Branislav Dimitrijević sees as part of the Yugoslav cultural policy influenced by Krleža, see Branislav Dimitrijević, "Folklore, Modernity and Death: Wróblewski's visit to Yugoslavia," in Magdelena Ziólkowska and Wojciech Grzybala (eds), *Avoiding Intermediary States: Andrzej Wroblewski (1927–1957)*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2014, pp. 501–5.

32 Kulić, "An Avant-Garde Architecture for an Avant-Garde Socialism," p. 181.

33 Ibid., p. 182.

34 Ibid.

35 South Slavic territories were never officially "colonies" of either Austria-Hungary or the Ottoman Empire, and there is much debate on whether, for example, a "postcolonial" approach can be applied to the discussion of South Slavic or, more broadly, Eastern European history. Mignolo's term "colonial difference," however, is not limited to the history of colonialism, but to what he and other decolonial thinkers call coloniality and the colonial matrix of power: persisting structures of material and epistemic domination stemming from colonial history and involving the production of racialized hierarchies. The position of the Slavs, and in particular the Southern Slavs, in Western imaginations has been examined in this light, for example, in Larry Wolff, *Venice and the Slavs: The Discovery of Dalmatia in the Age of Enlightenment*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002.

36 Christine Blau, "Haunting Relics of a Country That No Longer Exists," *National Geographic*, August 28, 2017 <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/destinations/europe/former-yugoslavia-monuments> last accessed June 6, 2019. The most recent example of this photogenic craze is a *Guardian* photo-essay (in fact, just photographs by Donald Niebyl coupled with the monuments' names and locations): Donald Niebyl, "Crazy Concrete: Yugoslavia's war memorials—in pictures," the *Guardian*, October 24, 2018 <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2018/oct/24/donald-niebyl-crazy-concrete-yugoslavias-war-memorials-in-pictures-spomenik-tito>. The monuments also served as the key image for advertising the recent exhibition of Yugoslav architecture at MoMA. See Martino Stierli's announcement "Towards a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980," *e-flux Journal*, July 12, 2018 <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/206971/toward-a-concrete-utopia-architecture-in-yugoslavia-1948–1980/> last accessed June 6, 2019.

37 Blau, "Haunting Relics of a Country That No Longer Exists."

38 The Marinko Sudac Collection (Museum of Avant-Garde) at the FM Centre for Contemporary Art, Milan, held the exhibition *Non-Aligned Modernity* from October 26–December 23, 2016. A similar term, "non-aligned modernism," is used by Armin Medosch for the aesthetics of New Tendencies, having been used already in 2013 in Bojana Videkanic, "Non-Aligned Modernism: Yugoslavian Art and Culture From 1945–1990," PhD diss. York: University of York, 2013.

39 See also the seminar "Abandoned Soviet Monuments From the Future That Were Not" by the Institute for Duration, Location and Variables (Delve), organized by Antonia Majaca, which explored this theme, online at <https://delve.hr/projects/removed-from-the-crowd/abandoned-soviet-monuments-from-the-future-that-were-not> last accessed June 6, 2019.

40 Interestingly, the artwork that first brought the image of Yugoslavia's World War II monuments to the circuits of global contemporary art was David Maljković's video *Scene for New Heritage* (2004), which thrives precisely on the contrast between the primitive-rural and modern-urban. By having visitors to the abandoned partisan memorial at Petrova Gora sing *ganga*, a traditional type of song from the Dinaric region of the Dalmatian hinterlands, Maljković created a gripping figure of the level of alienation from socialist heritage in the aftermath of Yugoslavia's disintegration. But he also pitted the two Yugoslav aesthetics against each other and made them fundamentally incompatible, thus sealing off the possibility of deriving any progressive aesthetics or politics from the folk tradition or its potential synergy with modern art.

41 Sanja Horvatinčić, "Memorijalna baština i strategije otpora normalizacijskom diskursu zaborava u Hrvatskoj," in *DAI SAI 2018: Zbornik godišnjih aktivnosti Društva arhitekata Istre*. Istria: Društvo arhitekata Istre—Societta architetti dell'Istria, 2018, p. 63.

42 Ibid.

43 Krleža, "Govor na kongresu književnika u Ljubljani," p. 48.

44 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 1963, pp. 212–13.

45 Ibid., pp. 217–18.

46 Ibid., p. 223.

47 In 1990, immediately before Yugoslavia would vanish in a series of wars, the responsibility of artists for abandoning the state was recognized in a most unlikely place: the exhibition catalogue Fra Yu Cult—Fraction of Yugoslav Culture, which presented the contemporary art collection of the Franciscan Catholic monastery in Široki Brijeg, Bosnia-Herzegovina. While the existence of such a collection—which included works by artists like Vlasta Delimar, Mladen Stilinović, and the group IRWIN—within such an institution is itself evidence of the avant-garde nature of Yugoslav socialism, the catalogue essay by artist Željko Kipke sent a symptomatically ambivalent message on the persistence of "excess" and negativity in his colleagues' work. He argued that the Yugoslav artistic space was "a collection of anti-states and anti-behavior, arrogance, intolerance, various vows of silence, bitterness, from anti-film to anti-painting [...] withholding information, antedating, incorrect data, naïve complex, bizarre irony, masochism of someone forced to be anonymous, etc." This "pathological folklore," Kipke concluded, could only partly be explained by "the indifferent society [which] has created the arrogant and evil artist who protests and provokes scandal." The other part of the explanation should be sought in "those [artists] directly involved in the game of anti-state." Željko Kipke, quoted from Jadran Adamovic (ed.), Fra Yu Kult—Fraction of Yugoslavian Culture: Collection of Franciscan Monastery Široki Brijeg. Široki Brijeg: Muzej Široki Brijeg, 1990. It seems that by the 1990s, the disaggregation of the Yugoslav synthesis of art and revolution had revealed the truth of art's autonomy—a pathological and paranoid realm that turned not only against the affirmation of the state, but also against itself, in a mere reflex of uncontrollable negativity that would soon be played out en masse on the frontline.

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