



INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

MONUMENTS & PUBLIC SPACE
IN MUTUAL TRANSFORMATION

November 12, 2021

9:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Columbia Global Centers | Paris

Reid Hall - Salle de Conférence

4 rue de Chevreuse 75006 Paris

Abstract and short bio

Abstract

Boyan Znepolski “Preserving or Destroying Monuments: The case of “1300 years Bulgaria”

The presentation will focus on the monument “1300 Years Bulgaria”, which was constructed in 1981 in the very center of Sofia, close to the National Palace of Culture, and was demolished in 2017. The main purpose will be to reconstruct the central positions, which took part in the public debates concerning the destiny of the monument. This reconstruction allows us to distinguish between four types of reactions and subsequent argumentations: the critiques, the defenders, the reconcilers and the protesters. These positions differ in the specific articulation of esthetic and political arguments as well as in the specific sensitivity of each generation to the communist past and its cultural heritage. In conclusion the presentation will raise some more general questions: Who could make the decision to destroy a monument? What could take the place of a monument that has been removed?

Ina Belcheva “Heritage, Memory and Art Politics in Postsocialist Bulgaria: Platform “Mausoleum”

The Mausoleum of Georgi Dimitrov was the most important monument for Bulgaria’s communist regime, the pedestal onto which it stood. After November 1989, it became a focal point for political and social contestations, as well as memory negotiations. Artistic expression was used as a way to transform the site and its ideological charge. In August 1999, the mausoleum was destroyed and, on its site, it left an empty platform. Contemporary artists have since been interrogating this void in Sofia’s public space, and have thus contributed to writing the monument’s history and to constructing a new, artistic, memory of the mausoleum.

Since 2017, the site has been appropriated in a more institutionalized manner, and has been assigned as a permanent spot for temporary art installations. In our presentation, we would like to dedicate a special part to this last phase of the empty platform’s existence, its new institutionalized filling, and see whether this use is looking to add a new layer to the site’s history or, rather, is striving to neutralize the memorial charge of the platform through art.

Maté Csanda “Reactionary Remodeling Public Space: the Kossuth Square in Budapest”

The paper will focus on the historical stratification but also on the numerous commemorative and identity-political implications of the current appearance of Kossuth Square in Budapest. The public space surrounding the Hungarian parliament building is one of Hungary's most exposed squares thanks to its history and symbolic valence – and in recent years it has often been labelled the "nation's main square". The current scenery structure of the monuments on the square will be analyzed in terms of its

narrative-staging structures, especially in the context of the recent „Imre Steindl program“. In the summer of 2011, the 2/3 majority of the parliament decided on the comprehensive restoration of the square, which was understood to mean the restoration of its appearance from the interwar period - this also took place in the last few years, with the extensive exclusion of the civilian public and expert committees and the usual forms of civic participatory consensus building. But what exactly was reconstructed - and why exactly is the interwar era the historical reference framework? Which monuments were banned and why were signatures of discontinuity, ambiguity (or accentuations of other memory-political paradigms) literally erased from the appearance of the square? Why is the meticulous reconstruction of the status quo ante 1944 so important for Viktor Orbán's establishment? What are the official commemorative goals of this monumental project of restorative nostalgia, which, in addition to the restoration of certain monumental sculptures, provided a series of other reframings (facade reconstructions, architectural-urbanistic redesign, changes at the institutional level, status of the square from a legal point of view)?

Behind the manifest level of the seemingly coherent and well-planned monument ensemble of the interwar period, the lecture outlines the dimension of historical contingencies, of decision-making - the square as a successively emerged structure of partly disparate signifiers as a result of historical caesurae, adaptations and attempts at compromise - as a process of amalgamations and palimpsestations. On the basis of a few examples, certain structural moments will be illuminated in order to illustrate how the „today's“ monument ensemble as a thoroughly well-calculated set of props not only depicts political myths, but rather produces them? Which myths and how exactly are „produced“, embodied, inscribed and culturally stabilized here?

Can the square, as a staged totality, be said to have a coherent „rhetoric“? What symbolic logic of references, intertextual moments, dialogical relations, and forms of narrative modeling unfold in the square? And how does this relate to the new Basic Law in 2011 or the amendment to the Law on Hungarians Abroad (2010)? What does the scenery structure of the square tell about the history of Hungary – and which symbolic-rhetorical figures are responsible for the tendentious distortion of history for which the square provides a stage? What symbolic-identity-political function does the square fulfill from the FIDESZ party's point of view by articulating a seemingly very consistent, ethnonationalistically tinged story of victorious suffering and glorious mourning of the „Hungarian nation“?

Nazlı Temir Beyleryan, “Renovation of Armenian Monuments and Multiple Identities”

The collective memory of Armenian culture, uprooted a century ago, still has a presence through architectural remains in Turkey, which exerts influence on the recollection of today's inhabitants.

The long history of Armenians in Anatolia was destroyed and denied during the forced reconstruction of a Turkish national memory. The new nation-state felt it necessary to build a legitimizing national discourse, which claimed that Anatolia has always been Turkish.

In the aftermath of the 1915 Armenian genocide, the newly formed Turkish nation-state imposed the transformation of “time and space” in Anatolia to exclude “the other”. Even today that seems to be the source of the struggle for the society of Turkey in relationship with Anatolia’s Armenian heritage.

Having said that, it is important to note that the relationship between the current inhabitants and the vestigial remains of “the others” does not occur in a single way. There are also other dimensions of this relation that need to be questioned: What is the interaction between the subject and the object? How does the object influence the Subject? Do these architectural monuments, as an object, push Armenian space further into “otherness,” or help to break the boundary between the “self” and the “other”?

Niko Angell-Gargiulo “Aesthetic Transformations of Hagia Sophia”

In line with the MA History and Literature Symposium project, I will give a brief history of the transformations of the Hagia Sophia from its inception to the present changes. I will track some of the aesthetic transformations of the mosaics and rituals within the building. Then using Pierre Nora’s idea of a *Lieux de Mémoire*, I want to discuss what kind of memories have persisted, what is the character of the transformations, and what Hagia Sophia means to us today.

Daniel Gamper “Monuments, Absence, and Memory in Contemporary Barcelona”

The Spanish transition to democracy built upon the need to stress “consensus”. In the beginning of the 21st century, political and cultural polarization has reemerged. One of the issues of this polarized public discussion is the politics of memory. During the past five years the city council of Barcelona has intervened innovatively in the monuments of the past in the public space. We will look at one of these interventions aimed at exposing Barcelona’s ambiguous legacy.

Short Bio

Nilüfer Göle is a NOMIS board member and professor of sociology at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS, Paris, France). She is the author of several books, including *Islam in Europe – The Lure of Fundamentalism and the Allure of Cosmopolitanism* (Markus Wiener Publishers, 2011), *The Forbidden Modern – Civilization and Veiling in Contemporary Europe* (Michigan Press, 1996), *Islam and Secularity: The Future of Europe’s Public Sphere* (Duke University Press, 2015), and most recently *The Daily Lives of Muslims* (Zed Books, 2017), which earned her the Ambassador of the New Europe award for the best book on Europe’s future, awarded by European Solidarity Center in Gdansk. Her books have been translated into many languages, including French, German, Turkish and Polish.

Göle is currently conducting the Nomis research project AgorAkademi- creative inquiry for public space. Previously she held a project on Public Space Democracy and she was a laureate of the EuroPublicIslam

project from 2008 to 2012, funded by the European Research Council. She is also a member of the executive committee of the Istanbul Seminars.

Vladimir Yavachev, Christo and Jeanne-Claude Foundation.

Carol Gluck is Professor of History at Columbia University. A prize-winning historian, Carol Gluck's most recent books are *Shisōshi toshite no gendai Nihon* [Thought and society in contemporary Japan], coedited with Akio Igarashi (Iwanami shoten, 2016) and *Words in Motion: Toward a Global Lexicon*, coedited with Anna Tsing (Duke University Press, 2009). *Thinking with the Past: Modern Japan and History*, will be published by the University of California Press in 2017, and *Past Obsessions: World War II in History and Memory* is forthcoming from Columbia University Press.

Boyan Znepolski is Professor at the Department of Sociology, University of Sofia "St. Kliment Ohridski" (Bulgaria). His recent publications include: *Ruptures of the Era. Identity Crisis and Social Critique* (Iztok/Zapad, Sofia, 2020); *Unveiling the religious motives in radical social critique* (Philosophy and social criticism, SAGE, 2017); *How to Criticize Our Societies Today? Part I: Pragmatic Sociology and Pragmatic Social Theory as a Social Critique* (Dialogue and Universalism, Vol. XXVI, No 2/2016). His research interests are in the spheres of: social theory, political sociology, sociology of culture. He is member of the editorial board of *Critique and Humanism* Journal.

Ina Belcheva is PhD Candidate & A.T.E.R. Art History Department, University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. After an M.A. in Arts and Languages at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), Ina Belcheva is now writing her PhD thesis at University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne under the supervision of Professor Dominique Poulot. Her research is centred on the artistic memory of Bulgarian socialism. She has a particular interest in artists' participation in the heritage processes and transformation of monuments in the post-socialist public space. She is a lecturer at University Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis and in 2019, she won the LabEx CAP "Immersion" Scholarship, in partnership with Centre Pompidou.

Maté Csanda studied at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (Department of Free Painting and Graphics), subsequently at the Kunsthochschule Kassel (Department of Graphics and Illustration). He obtained his Second degree at the University of Vienna, subject art history, and graduated in January 2020 with MA. Since April 2020, he is research assistant at the Institute for Art History at the University of Vienna, at the same time Pre-Doc assistant of Prof. Sebastian Egenhofer. His dissertation project focuses on contemporary positions of visual artists who critically and reflectively engage with dispositifs of ethnonationalist identity constructions in the context of recent Hungarian history (and memory politics). Lives and works in Vienna, Austria.

Nazli Temir Beyleryan is qualitative research manager in the project « **Armenian Diaspora Survey** » co-directed by Armenian Institute of London and Oxford University. She obtained her PhD. Degree in sociology in 2016 with her thesis « Collective Memory Against Politics of Oblivion: The Case of Armenians of Turkey through Three Generations » under the supervision of Nilüfer Göle. She is lecturing Sociological History of Armenians of Contemporary Turkey at INALCO since 2017 and editor at Armenian newspaper Agos in Turkey. She is the author of the chapter « Collective Memory Against Politics of Oblivion: The Case of Armenians of Turkey through Three Generations » in Annick Asso, Héléna Demirjian et Patrick Louvier, *Exprimer le génocide des arméniens*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2016.

Niko Angell-Gargiulo is graduated with a BA in liberal arts in 2020 from St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico. There she studied the great books of the western canon. She is currently pursuing an MA in history and literature at Columbia University in Paris. Her research interests are based in perfume and concepts of the sublime & their representations in nineteenth century literature.

Daniel Gamper is Assistant Professor at Philosophy Department in Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Research on political philosophy, specifically religion and democracy. Author of “Las mejores palabras. De la libre expresión” (Anagrama, 2019).

Mechtild Widrich is Associate Professor in the Art History, Theory and Criticism Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, United States. She is the author of *Performative Monuments. The Rematerialisation of Public Art* (Manchester UP, 2014) the co-editor of Columbia University's journal *Future Anterior* 15:2, *Ex Situ. On Moving Monuments*, and *Participation in Art and Architecture* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2016). Widrich's publications discuss the monument boom of the 1990s, the role of economics (monument tourism), activism and performance. Her essays have been published in *Art Journal*, *Grey Room*, *JSAH*, *Texte zur Kunst*, *LOG*, *The Drama Review*, *Performance Art Journal*, *Arcadia*, as well as books in Europe, the US and Canada. Her book “The Sites of History” will be published in 2022.

Pablo Ouziel is co-founder of the Cedar Trees Institute at the University of Victoria (www.cedartreesinstitute.org). He is an Associate Fellow with the Centre for Global Studies at the same university and is a visiting fellow at the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom. Pablo holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Victoria and his research interests include democratization practices, joining hands relationships, horizontality, nonviolence and interdependent social change. By standing within the tradition of public philosophy, the core of his work is centred on excavating networks of individuals governing themselves in numerous ways that supersede our current structures of representative government.

Cosima Crawford, née Blasy, has been managing program development and evaluation at NOMIS since 2016. Born in Germany, Crawford earned a PhD in political science from the University of Bremen (Germany). Prior to her NOMIS appointment, she had worked in the field of science funding for more than eight years. Most of this time she spent in Vienna, employed as a researcher and science policy consultant to the Austrian government and the European Commission. From 2014-2015, she worked in Geneva, Switzerland, where she advised the Global Vaccine Alliance (GAVI) on their preparations of a major donor conference under the auspices of the German G7 presidency. In her current role, she is supporting the development of a new approach to funding breakthrough science.